

The TRAIL OF '98

A Northland Romance

by Robert W. Service

ILLUSTRATIONS BY IRWIN MYERS

STORY FROM THE START

Athol Meldrum, young Scotsman who tells the story leaves his mother and brother, Garry, to seek his fortune. At San Francisco, practically penniless, he takes a laborer's job, and meets a fellow adventurer whom he dubs, the Prodigal. The Prodigal is anxious to fit the rush of gold seekers into Alaska, and Meldrum agrees to go with him after he (the Prodigal) comes back from a visit to his wealthy father in the East. Athol, in great need, is befriended by Jim Hubbard ("Salvation Jim"). When the Prodigal returns, the three men join the stampede into the Frozen North. On the boat is a young girl obviously out of place. She is traveling with her grandfather and a hard-looking couple named Winksteins who figures her uncle and aunt.

CHAPTER III—Continued

"Poor old beggar," I thought; "I wonder if I cannot do anything for him." And while I was thus debating, a timid knock came to the door. I opened it, and there was the girl, Berna.

There was a nervous anxiety in her manner, and a mute interrogation in her gray eyes.

"I'm afraid he's a little sick today," I said gently; "but come in, won't you, and see him?"

"Thank you." With some words of endearment, she fell on her knees beside him, and her small white hand sought his thin gnarled one. As if galvanised into life, the old man turned gratefully to her.

"Maybe he would care for some coffee," I said. "I think I could rustle him some."

She gave me a queer, sad look of thanks.

"If you could," she answered.

When I returned she had the old man propped up with pillows. She took the coffee from me, and held the cup to his lips; but after a few sips she turned away wearily.

"I'm afraid he doesn't care for that," I said.

"No, I'm afraid he won't take it. Oh, if I only had some fruit!"

Then it was I brought her one of the box of grapes. I had bought them just before leaving, thinking they would be a grateful surprise to my companions. Obviously I had been inspired, and now I produced them in triumph, big plump, glossy fellows, buried in the fragrant cedar dust. I shook clear a large bunch, and once more we tried the old man. It seemed as if we had hit on the one thing needful, for he ate eagerly. When he had finished and was resting quietly, she turned to me.

"I don't know how I can thank you, sir, for your kindness."

"Very easily," I said quickly; "if you will yourself accept some of the fruit, I shall be more than repaid."

She gave me a dubious look; then such a bright, merry light flashed into her eyes that she was radiant in my sight.

"If you will share them with me," she said simply.

So, for the lack of chairs, we squatted on the narrow stateroom floor. Under the old man's kindly eye. She ate daintily, and as we talked, I studied her face as if I would etch it on my memory forever.

It must be remembered, lest I appear to be taking a too eager interest in the girl, that up till now the world of woman had been terra incognita to me; that I had lived a singularly cloistered life, and that first and last I was an idealist. This girl had distinction, mystery and charm, and it is not to be wondered at that I found a joy in her presence. Her mind seemed dimly to outrun mine, and she divined my words ere I had them uttered. Yet she never spoke of herself, and when I left them together I was full of uneasy questioning.

It was on the third day I found the old man up and dressed, and Berna with him. She looked brighter and happier than I had yet seen her, and she greeted me with a smiling face. Then, after a little, she said:

"My grandfather plays the violin. Would you mind if he played over some of our old-country songs? It would comfort him."

"No, go ahead," I said; "I wish he would."

So she got an ancient violin, and the old man cuddled it lovingly and played soft, weird melodies, songs of the Czech race, that made me think of romance of love and hate, and passion and despair.

The wild music throbbled with passionate sweetness and despair. Unobserved, the pale twilight stole into the little cabin. The ruggedly fine face of the old man was like one inspired, and with clasped hands, the girl sat very white-faced and motionless. Then I saw a gleam on her

cheek, the soft falling of tears. I felt as if I had been allowed to share with them a few moments consecrated to their sorrow, and that they knew I understood.

That day as I was leaving, I said to her:

"Berna, this is our last night on board."

"Yes."

"Tomorrow our trails divide, maybe never again to cross. Will you come up on deck for a little while tonight? I want to talk to you."

"Talk to me?"

She looked startled, incredulous. She hesitated.

"Please, Berna. It's the last time."

"All right," she answered in a low tone.

She came to meet me, lily-white and sweet. She was but thinly wrapped, and shivered so that I put my coat around her.

"Berna!"

"Yes."

"You're not happy, Berna. You're in sore trouble, little girl. I don't know why you come up to this forsaken country or why you are with those people. I don't want to know; but if there's anything I can do for you, any way I can prove myself a true friend, tell me, won't you?"

She did not speak at once. Indeed, she was quiet for a long time, so that it seemed as if she must be stricken dumb, or as if some feelings were conflicting within her. Then at last, very gently, very quietly, very sweetly, as if weighing her words, she spoke.

"No, there's nothing you can do. You've been kindness itself to grandfather and me, and I never can thank you enough."

"Nonsense! Don't talk of thanks, Berna. You don't know what a happiness it's been to help you. I'm sorry I've done so little. Can't I be really and truly your friend, Berna; your friend that would do much for you? Let me do something, anything, to show how earnestly I mean it?"

"Yes, I know. Well, then, you are my dear, true friend—there, now."

"Yes—but, Berna! Tomorrow you'll go and we'll likely never see each other again. What's the good of it all?"

"Well, what do you want? We will both have a memory, a very sweet, nice memory, won't we? Believe me, it's better so. You don't want to have anything to do with a girl like me. You don't know anything about me, and you see the kind of people I'm going with. Perhaps I am just as bad as they."

"Don't say that, Berna," I interposed sternly; "you're all that's good and pure and sweet."

"No, I'm not, either. We're all of us pretty mixed. But I'm not so bad, and it's nice of you to think those things. Oh! if I had never come on this terrible trip! I don't even know where we are going, and I'm afraid, afraid."

"Well, Berna, if it's like that, why don't you and your grandfather turn back? Why go on?"

"He will never turn back. He'll go on till he dies. He only knows one word of English and that's Klondike, Klondike. He mutters it a thousand times a day. He's like a man that's crazy. He thinks he has been chosen, and that to him will a great treasure be revealed. You might as well reason with a stone. All I can do is to follow him, is to take care of him."

"What about the Winksteins, Berna?"

"Oh, they're at the bottom of it all. It is they who have inflamed his mind. He has a little money, the savings of a lifetime, about two thousand dollars;

and ever since he came to this country, they've been trying to get it. They'll rob and kill him in the end, and the cruel part is—he's not greedy; he doesn't want it for himself—but for me. That's what breaks my heart. "Surely you're mistaken, Berna; they can't be so bad as that."

"Bad! I tell you they're vile. I should know it, I lived with them for three years."

"Where?"

"In New York. I came from the old country to them. They worked me in the restaurant at first. Then, after a bit, I got employment in a shirt-waist factory. I was quick and handy, and I worked early and late. I attended a night school. I read till my eyes ached. They said I was clever. The teacher wanted me to train and be a teacher, too. But what was the good of thinking of it? I had my living to get, so I stayed at the factory and worked and worked. Then when I saved a few dollars, I sent for grandfather, and he came and we lived in the tenement and were very happy for a while. But the Winksteins never gave us any peace. They knew he had a little money laid away, and they latched to get their hands on it. I wasn't afraid in New York. Up here it's different. It's all so shadowy and sinister."

"I didn't mean to tell you all this, but now, if you want to be a true friend, just go away and forget me. You don't want to have anything to do with me. Wait! I'll tell you something more. I'm called Berna Wilton."

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The Wild Music Throbbled With Passionate Sweetness and Despair.

And how in the salons she held in the last years of her life she was treated to the honors of a princely court. Count her not incorrigible if, in those same last years, when she was nearing ninety, she had still her lovers. After all, Prince de Leon had crossed uncharted seas to search in vain for a secret of youth that Ninon found at home in Paris.—Mentor Magazine.

Historians at Fault in Depicting Lenclos

Two stubborn mistakes are often made concerning a famous French lady, Ninon de Lenclos: First, that she was a wanton by nature, second, that she made of love an actual business. Both errors are cruel, both false to the fame this remarkable and glamorous lady won from her admirers, the many gallant, wise, great men who loved her in her youth, adored her to her dying day.

To understand the celebrated Lenclos you must understand her times. Truly to know her you must know her lovers. Her century she personified, fairly glorified. Her lovers she inspired and enriched. One of the most devoted of them has testified to the degree of true ladyship she attained.

Old Fear Confirmed

A German professor is now convinced that rocks breathe. That explains the noises that a small boy hears in a lonely place on a dark night.—Toronto Globe.

Speedy Wild Birds

The average speed of wild ducks and geese in flight is about forty miles an hour.

"And I wish you happiness and success, dear friend of mine."

Suddenly a great impulse of tenderness and pity came over me, and before I knew it, my arms were around her. She struggled faintly, but her face was uplifted, her eyes starlike. Then, for a moment of bewildering ecstasy, her lips lay on mine, and I felt them faintly answer.

Poor yielding lips! They were cold as ice.

CHAPTER IV

Never shall I forget the last I saw of her, a forlorn, pathetic figure in black, waving a farewell to me as I stood on the wharf. The gray eyes were clear and steady as she bade good-by to me, and from where we stood apart, her face had all the pathetic sweetness of a Madonna.

Well, she was going, and sad enough her going seemed to me. They were all for Dyea, and the grim old Chilcott, with its blizzard-blessed steeps, while we had chosen the less precipitous, but more drawout, Skagway trail. Among them I saw the inseparable twins; the grim Hewson, the silent Mervin, each quiet and watchful, as if storing up power for a tremendous effort. There was the large unwholesomeness of Madam Winksteins, all jewelry, smiles and coarse badinage, and near her, her performed husband, squinting and smirking abominably. There was the old man, with his face of a Hebrew seer, his visionary eye now aglow with financial enthusiasm, his lips ever muttering: "Klondike, Klondike"; and lastly, by his side, with a little wry smile on her lips, there was the white-faced girl.

How my heart ached for her! But the time for sentiment was at an end. The clarion call to action rang out. The reign of peace was over; the fight was on.

Hundreds of scattered tents; a few frame buildings, mostly saloons, dance halls and gambling joints; an eager, excited mob crowding on the loose sidewalks, floundering knee-deep in the mire of the streets, struggling and squabbling and cursing over their outfits—that is all I remember of Skagway.

The Prodigal developed a wonderful executive ability; he was a marvel of activity, seemed to think of everything and to glory in his responsibility as a leader. Always cheerful, always thoughtful, he was the brains of our party. He never abated in his efforts a moment, and was an example and a stimulus to us all. I say "all," for he had added the "Jam-wagon" (A Jam-wagon was the general name given to an Englishman on the trail) to our number. It was the Prodigal who discovered him. He was a tall, dissolute Englishman, gaunt, ragged and venomous, but with a certain sense of a gentleman. A lost soul in every sense of the word, the North was to him a refuge and an unrestricted stamping-ground. So, partly in pity, partly in hope of winning back his manhood, we allowed him to join the party.

Pack animals were in vast demand, for it was considered a pound of grub was the equal of a pound of gold. We were lucky in buying a yoke of oxen from a packer for four hundred dollars. On the first day we hauled half of our outfit to Carson City, and on the second we transferred the balance. This was our plan all through, though in bad places we had to make many relays. It was simple enough, yea, oh, the travail of it! All days were hard, all expediting, all crammed with discomfort; yet, bit by bit, we forged ahead. The army before us and the army behind never faltered. It was an endless procession, in which every man was for himself. There was no mercy, no humanity, no fellowship. All was blaspheiny, fury and ruthless determination. It is the spirit of the gold-trail.

At the canyon head was a large camp, and there, very much in evidence, the gambling fraternity. On one side of the canyon they had established a camp. It was evening and we three, the Prodigal, Salvation Jim and myself, strolled over to where a three-shill man was holding forth.

It was Mosher, with his bald head, his crazy little eyes, his flat nose, his black beard. I saw Jim's face harden. He had always shown a bitter hatred of this man, and often I wondered why. We stood a little way off. The crowd thinned and filtered away until but one remained, one of the tall young men from Minnesota. We heard Mosher's rich voice.

"Say, pard, bet ten dollars you can't place the bean. See! I put the little Joker under here, right before your eyes. Now, where is it?"

"Here," said the man, touching one of the shells.

"Right you are, my hearty! Well, here's your ten."

The man from Minnesota took the money and was going away.

"Hold on," said Mosher; "how do I know you had the money to cover that bet?"

The man laughed and took from his pocket a wad of bills an inch thick.

"Guess that's enough, ain't it?"

Quick as lightning Mosher had snatched the bills from him, and the man from Minnesota found himself gazing into the barrel of a six-shooter.

"This here's my money," said Mosher; "now you git."

A moment only—a shot rang out. I saw the gun fall from Mosher's hand, and the roll of bills drop to the ground. Quickly the man from Minnesota recovered them and rushed off.

That night I said to Jim:

"How did you do it?"

He laughed and showed me a hole in his coat pocket which a bullet had burned.

"How did you do it?"

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"How did you do it?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

DEMOCRACY AS WAR'S ANTIDOTE

By GENERAL SUMMERALL, Chief of Staff U. S. Army.

WAR will decrease as democracy increases among nations. Religion and patriotism always have gone hand in hand, and atheism seems ever to breed communism.

No man or group of men can formulate public opinion in this nation. It is the result of a national psychology, a great force aroused simultaneously throughout the land by some incident or experience, and carrying all before it when it moves. The people of this country have an innate love for peace. They have developed and will develop an aversion for war.

But in the last analysis the responsibility for the common defense rests upon the nation as a whole. The armed forces can only assist the people in the direction in which they wish to move.

No nation ever has survived a great military defeat. Each war has strengthened the moral fiber of our people and given them a greater love for their country. In observing Memorial day and in honoring the fallen heroes of other great wars, it takes no eulogies, no recital of their tragedies to interpret what their going means to America.

We take the army and navy for granted, and trust to those in charge the responsibility of keeping them sufficiently strong to protect our nation. We owe it to those who gave their lives, to take into consideration what they might have to say about it. We think of the Statue of Justice, and of the scales in one hand but we forget the sword in the other.

No government can or does exist without sufficient forces to protect itself. Self-preservation is recognized as a primary obligation.

EDUCATION IS ROAD TO WEALTH

By DR. J. S. NOFFSINGER, National Home Study Council.

Education is one of the greatest of all wealth producers in the nation's economic structure. The per capita wealth last year in the five states which maintain the most efficient educational systems was twice that of the five states whose schooling standards are considered the least efficient. Incidentally, the progress of adult education has made notable strides in the wealthier states. This fact is due to the expansion of industry, finance and commerce, which made it imperative for organizations to educate and train large numbers of their employees for advancement to higher positions.

The scarcity of skilled workers and trained executives is reflected by the latest statistics bearing on the national employment conditions. These figures show that more than 42,000,000 persons are gainfully employed in the United States, and of this vast army less than 4 per cent are installed in executive positions which carry the responsibility of directing the energies of these workers.

Moreover, the demand for trained executives, technicians and skilled workers still exceeds the supply found available.

INDIFFERENCE TO PUBLIC DUTY

By GOVERNOR CAULFIELD, Missouri.

Indifference to politics and disdain of politicians is tending to degrade government. No service is more important than service to the state. In the days of Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison, Franklin and their contemporaries, the government seemed able to command and attract the very ablest men of the nation.

Unfortunately there is a tendency on the part of our people to despise the public service and to shirk public duty. It is becoming fashionable to affect indifference to politics and a certain disdain of politicians. Such a tendency is deplorable, as it tends to degrade and ultimately destroy the people's government. It is manifest that it is a high public duty, upon the performance of which the perpetuity of this form of government depends.

The people should develop a fierce and militant passion for honest public service and should esteem those who render such services.

RELIGION NOT MERE COMFORT

By REV. DR. HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK.

Religion has its comfortable aspects. Folks want it. It is dreadful to be really irreligious, to think that creation has no spiritual origin, meaning or destiny, that the creative power cares no more for us than the weather for the grass. One flees from the arctic cold of irreligion to the gracious warmth of faith in God and His goodness and to the comfortable and sustaining power of His fellowship.

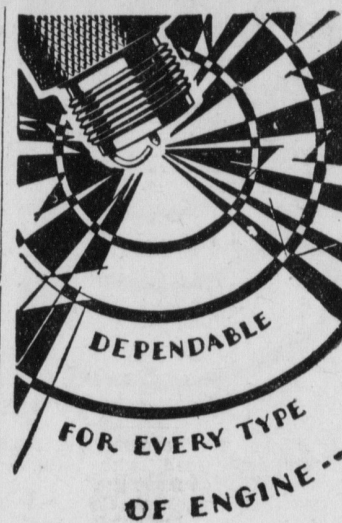
But it is easy to get a religion for comfort only. A man can love his family primarily for what he gets out of it. A man can love his country primarily for what he gets out of it. A man can love a friend and squeeze him like an orange into his cup; and a man can love God for what there is in it. There is a lot of that kind of religion today. Some of our most prominent modern cults face the tremendous temptation to be religious for comfort only.

MISPLACED SENSE OF "HUMOR"

By RABBI ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN, New York.

A sense of humor is destructive of the will to progress and achievement when it becomes a studied habit and pose. Most of the great leaders and reformers who left an impress upon their own and subsequent generations were not noted for their sense of humor. Moses, Mohammed and Jesus, in the sphere of religious leadership, and Alexander and Napoleon, in the sphere of national leadership, are outstanding examples. The great figures in public life today are on the whole very serious-minded men.

When it is an occasional relaxation a sense of humor is wholesome and cleansing. But scoffing and mockery for the sake of amusement, which has become the vogue of our blase youth, is a seasoned negation of the things that should matter most.



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Numbered Jurymen Next

Europe is watching with great interest the result of the plan of President Cosgrave of the executive council of the Irish Free state to circumvent the intimidation of jurors and witnesses. A bill introduced in the dail by him provides for the secrecy of jury panels, identification of jurors by numbers instead of names and secret hearings of all cases where the police superintendent testifies that it is necessary for the safety of jurors and witnesses.

Er, Plump "And is Wilbur as fat as ever?" "Fat? He had the mumps three weeks before we knew it."—Army and Navy Journal.

It May Be Urgent



When your Children Cry for It

Castoria is a comfort when Baby is fretful. No sooner taken than the little one is at ease. If restless, a few drops soon bring contentment. No harm done, for Castoria is a baby remedy, meant for babies. Perfectly safe to give the youngest infant; you have the doctor's word for that! It is a vegetable product and you could use it every day. But it's in an emergency that Castoria means most. Some night when constipation must be relieved—or colic pains—or other suffering. Never be without it; some mothers keep an extra bottle, unopened, to make sure there will always be Castoria in the house. It is effective for older children, too; read the book that comes with it.

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FINNEY

OFFICER! THERE'S A MAN OF THAT BUILDING HE LOOKS LIKE HE GETTING READY TO OFF!



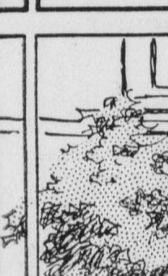
THE FEAT

FELLY—WE GO TO VISIT THE TO-NIGHT IF YOU CALL UP IF THEY'RE G BE HOME?



MICKIE

Do



The Clan Kid

Dubb Su



By PERCY

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