

THE TRAIL OF '98

CHAPTER XIV—Continued

In the days that followed I did much to bring about a friendship between Garry and Berna. At first I had difficulty in dragging him to the house, but in a little while he came quite willingly. His sunny charm returned, and with it his brilliant smile, his warm, endearing frankness.

I must say I tried very hard to reconcile Berna and Garry. I threw them together on every opportunity, for I wanted him to understand and to love her. I felt he had but to know her to appreciate her at her true value, and, although he spoke no word to me, I was soon conscious of a vast change in him. Short of brotherly regard, he was everything that could be desired to her—cordial, friendly, charming. Once I asked Berna what she thought of him.

"I think he's splendid," she said quietly. "He's the handsomest man I've ever seen, and he's as nice as he's good looking. In many ways you remind me of him—and yet there's a difference."

"I remind you of him—no, girl. He's as much above me as I am above—say a swish. In him, he has all the virtues; I, all the faults. He is the self I should have been if the worst had been the best."

"Hush! you are my sweetheart," she assured me with a caress, "and the dearest in the world."

"By the way, Berna," I said, "you remember something we talked about before he came? Don't you think that now—?"

"Now—?"

"Yes."

"All right," she flashed a glad, tender look at me and left the room. That night she was strangely elated. I was head over ears in work. In a mail just arrived I had a letter from the Prodigal, and a certain paragraph in it set me pondering. Here it was:

"You must look out for Locasto. He was in New York a week ago. He's down and out. Blood-poisoning set in in his foot after he got out side, and eventually he had to have it taken off. He's got a false mit for the one Mac sawed off. But you should see him. He's all shot to pieces with the 'hoops.' It's a fright the pace he's gone. Seemed to have a terrible pick at you. Seems you have copped out his best girl, the only one he ever cared a red cent for. Said he would get even with you if he swung for it. I think he's dangerous, even a madman. He is leaving for the North now, so be on your guard."

Locasto coming! I had almost forgotten his existence. Well, I no longer cared for him. I could afford to despise him. Surely he would never dare to molest us. If he did—he was a broken, discredited blackguard. I could crush him.

Coming here! He must even now be on the way. He was coming back to the scene of his ruined fortunes, and God knows with what wild schemes of vengeance his heart was full. Decidedly I must beware.

As I sat there dreaming, a ring came to the phone. It was the foreman at Gold Hill.

"The hoisting machine has broken down," he told me. "Can you come out and see what is required?"

"All right," I replied. "I'll leave at once."

"Berna," I said, "I'll have to go out to the Forks tonight. I'll be back early tomorrow. Get me a bite to eat, dear, while I go round and order the horse."

On my way I met Garry and told him I would be gone over night.

"Won't you come?" I asked.

"No, thanks, old man, I don't feel like a night drive."

"All right. Good-by."

So I hurried off, and soon after, with a jingle of bells, I drove up to my door. Berna had made supper. She seemed excited. Her eyes were starry bright, her cheeks burned.

"Aren't you well, sweetheart?" I asked, "You look fearful."

"Yes, dear, I'm well. But I don't want you to go tonight. Something tells me you shouldn't. Please don't go, dear. Please, for my sake. I'm afraid, I'm afraid. Won't some one else do?"

"Nonsense, girl. You mustn't be so foolish. It's only for a few hours. She clung to me tightly, so that I wondered what had got into the girl. Then gently I kissed her, disengaged her hands, and bade her good-night.

As I was rattling off through the darkness, a boy handed me a note. I put it in my pocket, thinking I would read it when I reached Olivebridge. Then I whipped up the horse.

As I sped along, with a jingle of bells, my spirits rose. Things were looking splendid. The mine was turning out far better than we had expected. Surely we could sell out soon, and I would have all the money I wanted. My life-struggle was nearly over.

Then again, I had reconciled Garry to Berna. When I told him of a certain secret I was hugging to my breast he would capitulate entirely. How happy we would all be! I would buy a small estate near home, and we would settle down. But first we would spend a few years in travel. We would see the whole world. What good times we would have, Berna and I! Bless her! It had all worked out beautifully.

Why was she so frightened, so loath

A Northland Romance
by
Robert W. Service
Illustrations by Irwin Myers
WNU Service

to let me go? I wondered vaguely and flicked up the horse so that it plunged sharply forward.

Bother! In my elation I had forgotten to get off at the inn and read my note. Never mind, I would keep it till I reached the Forks.

As I drew up at the hotel, the clerk came out to meet me.

"Gent wants to speak to you at the phone, sir."

It was Murray Dawson, an old timer, and rather a friend of mine.

"Hello!"

"Hello! Say, Meldrum, this is Murray speaking. Say, just wanted to let you know there's a stage due some time before morning. Locasto's on board, and they say he's beel'd for you. Thought I'd better tell you so's you can get fixed up for him."

"All right," I answered. "Thank you. I'll turn and come right back."

So I switched round the horse, and once more I drove over the glistening road. A grim fear was gripping



Curse the Vile Wretch That Wrote Such Words!

me. Of a sudden the shadow of Locasto loomed up sinister and menacing. Even now he was speeding Dawsonward with a great hatred of me in his heart. Well, I would get back and prepare for him.

There came to my mind a comic perception of the awkwardness of returning to one's own home unexpectedly, in the dead of night. At first I decided I would go to a hotel, then on second thoughts I determined to try the house, for I had a desire to be near Berna.

I knocked gently, then a little louder, then at last quite loudly. Within all was still, dark as a sepulcher. Curious! she was such a light sleeper. Why did she not hear me?

Once more I decided to go to the hotel; once more that vague, indefinite fear assailed me and again I knocked. And now my fear was becoming a panic. I had my latch-key in my pocket, so very quietly I opened the door.

"Berna," I whispered.

No reply.

That dim, nameless dread was clutching at my heart, and I groped overhead in the darkness for the drop-light.

Instantly the cabin was flooded with light. In the dining room I could see the remains of our supper lying untidy. That was not like her. She had a horror of dirty dishes. I passed into the bedroom—Ah! the bed had never been slept on. What a fool I was! It flashed on me she had gone over to a neighbor's to sleep. She was afraid of being alone. Poor little girl! How surprised she would be to see me in the morning!

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Well, I would go to bed. As I was pulling off my coat, I found the note that had been given to me. Blaming myself for my carelessness, I pulled it out of my pocket and opened it. As I unfolded the sheet, I noticed it was written in what looked like a disguised hand. Strange! I thought. The writing was small and faint. I rubbed my eyes and held it up to the light.

Merciful God! What was this? Oh no, it could not be! My eyes were deceiving me. It was some illusion. Feverishly I read again. Yes, they were the same words. What could they mean? Surely, surely—Oh, horror of horrors! They could not mean that. Again I read them. Yes, there they were:

"If you are fool enough to believe that Berna is faithful to you visit your brother's room tonight."

"A Wellwisher."

Berna! Garry!—the two I loved. Oh, it could not be! It was monstrous. It was too horrible! I would not believe it. I would not. Curse the vile wretch that wrote such words. I would kill him. Berna! my Berna! she was as good as gold, as true as steel. Garry! I would lay my life on his honor. Dazedly I sat down. The paper lay on the hearth-rug, and I stared at it hatefully. It was unspeakably loathsome, yet I was fascinated by it. I longed to take it up, to read it again. Somehow I did not dare. I was becoming a coward.

Well, it was a lie, a black devil's lie. She was with one of the neighbors. I trusted her. I would trust her with my life. I would go to bed. In the morning she would return, and then I would unearth the wretch who had dared to write such things. I began to undress.

Wearily I took off my clothes. I lay in bed with the darkness enfolding me, and I closed my eyes to make a double darkness. Ha! right in the center of my eyes burned the fatal paper with its atrocious suggestion. I sprang up. It was of no use. I must settle this thing once and for all. I turned on the light and deliberately dressed again.

I was going to the hotel where Garry had his room. I would tell him I had come back unexpectedly and ask to share his room. I was not acting on the note! I did not suspect her. Heaven forbid! But the thing had unnerved me. I could not stay in this place.

The hotel was quiet. A sleepy night clerk stared at me, and I pushed past him. Garry's rooms were on the third floor. Through the hall I could see his light was on.

I knocked faintly.

There was a sudden stir.

Again I knocked.

Did my ears deceive me or did I hear a woman's startled cry? There was something familiar about it—Oh, my God!

I recoiled. I almost fell. I clutched at the door-frame. I leaned sickly against the door for support. Heaven help me!

"I'm coming," I heard him say.

The door was unlocked, and there he stood. He was fully dressed. He looked at me with an expression on his face I could not define, but he was very calm.

"Come in," he said.

I went into his sitting room. Everything was in order. I would have sworn I heard a woman scream, and yet no one was in sight. The bedroom door was slightly ajar. I eyed it in a fascinated way.

"I'm sorry to disturb you, Garry," I said, and I was conscious how strained and queer my voice sounded.

"I got back suddenly, and there's no one at home. I want to stay here with you, if you don't mind."

"Certainly, old man; only too glad to have you."

His voice was steady. I sat down on the edge of a chair. My eyes were riveted on that bedroom door.

"Had a good drive?" he went on genially. "You must be cold. Let me give you some whisky."

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Simple Questions That Often Prove Pitfalls

Why is winter colder than summer? How deep does a scuttled ship sink, and why does air in a closed room get bad?

A recent examination of presumably well-informed people revealed that many a man of more than average education can be caught in pitfalls of ignorance.

Most people were caught over the first question. More than four-fifths said that winter is colder than summer because the sun is then farther away. This, of course, is wrong, the sun being nearer in winter. The real reason lies in the earth's changing slant, which brings the sun directly overhead in summer and lower in the sky in winter.

Surprisingly common, too, was the idea that sunken ships do not go to the bottom, but float at some midway level. Heavy objects sink because they are denser than water. A ship sinks to the bottom because water's density remains virtually unchanged despite the enormous pressures encountered at great depths.

Air in a closed room gets bad because of the gradual exhaustion of the oxygen contained in the air, and

not, as many people suppose, because of carbon dioxide gas exhaled by its occupants.

Remarkable Woman
Old Silerius says in his memoirs that long after he became a widower and somewhat cynical, he associated with a woman he finally concluded he would like to marry. But she refused to marry; she said they got much out of their association as they were, but that marriage would probably spoil it. There was probably something in the woman's statement; just how much I do not know, but no other woman in history ever took that position.—E. W. Howe's Monthly.

Martyr's Big Mistake
The one real liberty we have is liberty of thinking, most of which a man should keep to himself, to avoid unnecessary trouble. Many a martyr might have avoided martyrdom by keeping his mouth shut, and without loss of usefulness.—E. W. Howe's Monthly.

Most of our time is passed getting used to the things we didn't expect.

I held the glass with a shaking hand:

"What's the matter, old man! You're ill."

I clutched him by the arm.

"Garry, there's some one in that room."

"Nonsense! there's no one there."

"There is, I tell you. Listen! Don't you hear them breathing?"

He was quiet. Distinctly I could hear the panting of human breath. He was going mad. I could stand it no longer.

"Garry," I gasped, "I'm going to see, I'm going to see."

"Hold on—"

"Leave go, man! I'm going. I say, You won't hold me. Let go, I tell you, let go—Now come out, come out, whoever you are—Ah!"

It was a woman.

"Ha!" I cried, "I told you so, brother; a woman, I think I know her."

Here, let me see—I thought so."

Woman Protects Dog As She Kills Self

San Francisco.—Before Mrs. Pearl Alspaugh turned on the gas and lay down to die, she took precaution that her pet dog should survive.

When G. C. Alspaugh, her husband, employed at night in a laundry, returned home, he found his wife dead from the gas fumes. The dog also was unconscious, but later was resuscitated.

Alspaugh could ascribe no reason for the suicide save that his wife had been in ill health.

MAKES QUEER DEAL FOR GIRL OF 13

Trade Involved Four Mules and Log Cabin.

Hopkinsville, Ky.—A queer bargain of the hill country, in which a thirteen-year-old girl was bartered as a bride for four mules, a log cabin and a wagon, has been revealed to authorities here.

An investigation resulted in the arrest of the girl's father, Henry Gibbs, on a charge of converting the property of another.

Some weeks ago Edward Green of Detroit, father of four children by a former marriage, took thirteen-year-old Louise Gibbs of Cadiz, Ky., and married her, showing the clerk a letter purporting to be from her father, giving parental consent.

Gibbs said the letter was forged. He threatened Green with criminal action. The parental wrath subsided, however, when Green gave his new father-in-law two teams of mules, a wagon and a log cabin.

Louise, a slim child weighing about 100 pounds, quickly tired of married life and left her husband at Detroit, returning here to relatives. Green, is forty-three years old, ten years his father-in-law's senior.

Green pursued his child bride here and when she refused to return to Detroit with him, he demanded back his price offering—only to find that Gibbs had sold mules, wagon and all for \$325.

Gibbs thereupon had Green arrested on a charge of forging the letter of permission under which the marriage was performed. Green made peace in some way, and the charge was withdrawn. Then he turned around and had Gibbs arrested for selling the wagon and mules.

The case is to be investigated by the county grand jury.

Girl, 3, Killed by Bear Which Breaks Into Home

Winnipeg.—The three-year-old daughter of Fred Gorrieuk, Louisville, Man., was killed there recently when a large black bear, driven out of the neighboring bush by fire and hunger, broke into the Gorrieuk home and carried off the little girl.

Leaving her three children in the house, Mrs. Gorrieuk had taken her husband's supper out to him in the field. When she returned she found the front door of the house battered in and the children missing. Crying to her husband, she rushed around to the back of the house and out into the yard, where she found the body of the little girl.

The other two children, seven and four years of age, had run to a neighboring farm, where it was learned later from the eldest child that the bear had attacked her first, but she had eluded it and, with her younger sister, had fled from the house.

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Dies Among Strangers as Relatives Hunt Him

Raymond, Wash.—John Carlson, sixty-one, Naselle, Wash., died among strangers and was buried as an unknown only a few miles from relatives bending every effort to locate him.

He left Astoria, came here and registered at a local hotel. The clerk, in signing for him, wrote "John Cook," by mistake. The next day he was found dead in the room from natural causes.

His long stay from home caused anxiety in his family and search was made. Trailing him to the hotel, Arthur Carlson identified the clothing of the dead man as that of his father.

Bandit Is Chivalrous When Widow Is Victim

St. Louis, Mo.—Chivalry on the part of a bandit saved Mrs. Caroline Baldwin, a widow, of this city, from the loss of her money.

"Surely you wouldn't rob a poor defenseless widow," she exclaimed when the culprit walked into her confectionery store and brandished a pistol in her face.

"So you're a widow?" he replied, haltingly. "No I couldn't rob you then." He walked from the store.

Golfer Drives in Ditch; Ball Kills Big Snake

Fayetteville, Ark.—W. M. McRoy of Fayetteville killed a snake with a golf ball. McRoy drove and followed the ball into a small ravine. A snake, several feet long, was in its death wriggle. The ball had struck it squarely in the head and administered the fatal blow.

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ON THE AIR—Atwater Kent Radio Hour, Sunday Evenings, 9:15 (Eastern Time), WEAF network of N. B. C. Atwater Kent Mid-Week Program, Thursday Evenings, 10:00 (Eastern Time), WJZ network of N. B. C.

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MY BEGINNER'S BOOK will enable your child to read. My youngest pupil of 2 years to California. Formula, instructions \$1.00. 8 months recites real lessons. COPY 50c. SAMUEL HOWARD, COLUMBUS, IND.

His Modest Conclusion
The great trouble with the people who don't like us is that they have such poor taste.—Los Angeles Times.

Now Everybody Is Happy
Dentist—And will you take laughing gas?
Patient—I should smile.
Never was a king crowned that didn't think he deserved it.

Hitting on All Eight!

Doctor Gives Hint to Lucky Salesman

IT'S a wise man that knows when he's slipping. Mr. R.F. Myers of 711 Rosedale Street, Baltimore, had the good fortune to get his tip straight from one of his doctor customers (he was selling for a pharmaceutical house) and since that lucky visit he has increased his business 50 per cent.

For two years he had been driving from town to town, and naturally this threw his elimination out of shape. He felt himself slipping. Catholics only made him worse. Then one day he was calling on a wise old physician, and asked his advice. "What you need, my boy," said the doctor, "is a simple, easy, normal way to clean the poisons out of your system—we all have them—and with your kind of work they certainly cut down efficiency. Why don't you try Nujol?"

"Well, believe it or not," says Mr. Myers, "in a few days I felt like a new man. What's got into you?"

asked the home office, "your business has increased 50 per cent!"

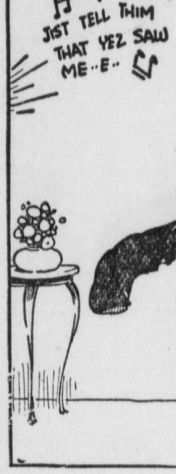
"That's the great thing about Nujol. As soon as it begins to clean the poisons out of your system it makes you feel so well that you can almost always do a much better job. Nujol is not a medicine and contains no drugs. It is perfectly harmless, forms no habit. It is simply bodily lubrication, which everybody needs. You, like everybody else!

Why put off good health any longer? Go into any good drug store and get a bottle of Nujol in a sealed package. Costs so little and means so much! Maybe you can increase your efficiency 50 per cent too

Try this treatment for pimples!
AN OINTMENT WITH
Cuticura Ointment
After a while bathe gently with
Cuticura Soap
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You will find nothing better for soothing and healing all forms of skin troubles. Ointment 25c and 50c. Soap 25c. Talcum 25c. Sample each free. Address: "Cuticura," Dept. B7, Malden, Mass.

FINNEY



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HERE COME CHAMPION FISHED TO CANOUE

Clancy

At That Rate Take a Cr for a K

