Bovril prevents that sinking feeling

A SON OF COURAGE

BY ARCHIE P. McKISHNIE

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Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.

Billy Wilson, who lives with his father and stepmother and her son Anson, is the leader among the boys of Scotia, a pioneer settlement near Lake Erie. Cobin Keeler, one of the trustees, tells the new teacher, Mr. Johnston, about his predecessor, Frank Stanhope, who was blinded while trying to save horses from a burning stable. A will made by a wealthy hermit, Scroggie, in Stanhope's favor, could not be found. Scroggie's namesake and apparent heir takes possession. Twin Oaks store is robbed. Harry O'Dule finds the stolen goods in old Scroggie's cabin, known as the haunted house. Hinter, middle-aged and well-to-do, goes woolng Erie Landon, loyal sweetheart of Stanhope, and daughter of the invalid lighthouse keeper.

CHAPTER XIII.—(Cnt'd.)

Hinter held out his hand. "Well, good night, Miss Erie," he said. "I'll be up again soon, with some books for you."

"But you mustn't go without having a cup of tea and a bite to eat." she protested. "Please sit down and I'll have it ready in a minute."

He shook his head. "Not to-night, thanks. You're tired, and I've a long ride before me Next time I come we'll have tea," he promised as he turned to shake hands with Landon.

"Your guardians are with you I suppose?" said Erie, as he turned to go.

He laughed, "Sphinx and Dexter, you mean? Yes, they are out in the stable with my horse. By the way, they didn't see you last time we were here, and they seemed to feel pretty badly about it. Would you mind stepping outside and speaking a word to them?" he asked. "They are very fond of you, you know."

She shivered. "And I'm very fond of them, only," she added as she followed him to the door, "I never know whether they want to eat me up or caress me."

"You won't forget to come back again soon, Hinter?" called the sick man. "It does me a sight of good to see you and get the news from the Settlement."

"I'll return soon," Hinter promised. "Don't worry about anything. A speedy recovery—and good night."

A full moon was veiling lake and bay in sheen of silvery whiteness as Hinter and Erie went out into the August night. Eastward the long pine covered Point swept a dark line against the grey, shadowy rush-lands. Somewhere among the hidden ponds mallards and grey ducks were quacking contentedly as they fed. A swamp coon raised his almost human cry as he crept the sandy shores in search of the frogs whose tanging notes boomed from the boglands.

Man and girl paused for a little time on the strip of white sand to drink in the beauty of the night and the sounds of its wild life. Then Hinter stepped to the stable and opened the door. "Come boys," he commanded and the two great dogs came bounding out to leap upon him with whines of welcome, then on to where the girl stood, waiting, half eagerly, half frightened.

"Gently now," Hinter cautioned, and they stretched themselves at her feet, massive heads on outstretched paws, deep-set eyes raised to her face. She bent and placed a hand on the head of each.

"Surely," she said, "they are not as ferocious as they are said to be?"

Hinter knit his brows. "I'm afraid they are," he answered. "But my friends are their friends, you see. There is only one other person besides yourself and myself who can do what you are doing now, though."

She looked up quickly. "And may I ask who that is?"

"Certainly; it's young Billy Wilson. You know—the lad who is always roaming the woods."

"Yes," she said softly. "I know him perhaps better than most folks do. I am not surprised that he can handle these dogs, Mr. Hinter."

He glanced at her closely, struck by the odd note in her voice. "He seems a manly little chap," he said. "I must get to know him better."

"You may succeed," she replied, "but I'm afraid you would have to know Billy a long time to know him well."

She bent and gave the dogs a farewell pat; then moved like the spirit of the moonlight to the house. "Good night," she called softly from the doorway.

"Good night," he echoed.

Five minutes later he was riding the two-mile strip of sand between the lighthouse and the pines, the Great Danes close behind. When he reached the timber he reined in to look back over his shoulder at the tall white tower with its ever-sweeping, glowing eye. Then, with a sigh, he rode forward and passed into the darkness of the trees. Half way down the trail he dismounted and, after hitching his horse to a tree and commanding his dogs to stand guard, plunged into the thickly-growing pines on the right of the path.

Half an hour later he came out upon the lake shore. Quickly he scraped together a pile of drift wood. He applied a match to it and as fire leaped up stood frowning across the water. Then, as an answering light flashed from some distance out in the lake, he sighed in relief and seating himself on the sand lit his pipe. After a time the sound of oars fell on his ears. A boat scraped on the beach. Two men stepped from it and approached the fire.

CHAPTER XIV.

Old Harry Turns a Trick.

Maurice Keeler, wan, hollow-eyed, and miserable, was seated on a stool outside the door in the early morning sunlight. Near him sat his mother, peeling potatoes, her portly form obscured by a trailing wistaria vine. What Maurice had endured during his two weeks with the measles nobody knew but himself. His days had been lonely, filled with remorse that he had ever been born to give people trouble and care; his nights longer even than the days. Hideous nightmares had robbed him of slumber. Old Scroggie's ghost had visited him almost nightly. The Twin Oaks robbers, ugly, hairy giants armed with red-hot pitchforks, had bound him to a tree and applied fire to his feet. What use to struggle or cry aloud for help? Even Billy, his dearest chum, had sat and laughed with all the mouths of his eight heads at his pain. Of course he had awakened to learn these were but dreams; but to a boy dreams are closely akin to reality.

And now, after days of loneliness and nights of terror, Maurice was up again and outside where he could catch the wood-breeze and smell the sweet odor of plants and clearing fires. He wondered how many years he had been away from it all. How old was he now? Why didn't his mother answer his questions? He did not realize that his voice was weak; he had forgotten that his mother was deaf. All he knew was that nobody cared a hang for him any more, not even his own mother. His weak hands clutched at the bandage at his throat, as though to tear it off and hurl it from him. His head sank weakly back against the wall, and the tears came to his eyes.

Suddenly those eyes opened wide. Was he dreaming again or did he hear the low croak of a crow? He twisted his head. There at his feet sat Croaker. The crow's beady eyes were fastened on him. Suspended from its neck was a cord and attached to the cord was a piece of yellow wrapping paper.

Maurice's white face slowly expended in a grin. He glanced in the direction of his mother, then held out his hand to the crow with a lowspoken, "Come Croaker, ol' feller."

But Croaker shook his head and backed away, emitting a string of unintelligible utterances.

"Come Croaker," pleaded Maurice again. But the crow was obdurate. It is barely possible that he failed to recognize Maurice owing to the sick boy's altered looks or perhaps he expected a glimpse of the reward which was always his for the performing of a service. With one backward look from his bright eyes, he spread his short wings and sailed across to Mrs. Keeler, settling on her shoulder with a harsh croak, whereat that greatly-startled lady sat down on the gravel, her lap full of dirty water and potatoes.

What Mrs. Keeler might have done is not known, for just at this juncture a high-pitched voice came to her from the garden gate. "Get hold of him, Missus Keeler an' wring his black neck."

Mrs. Keeler, who heard the voice without catching Mrs. Wilson's words, struggled up. Croaker promptly sailed over to Maurice for protection. The boy broke the string attached to the note from Billy and reaching behind him secured from a plate a scrap of the dinner he had left uneaten. "Here Croaker," he whispered, "grab it quick. Now, back you go where things are safe," and he tossed the bird into the air. Croaker flew to a tree-top and proceeded to enjoy the reward of service well rendered.

Maurice glanced at the message, then his face fell. "Oh blame it all!" he muttered, "another of Bill's sign letters; looks like a fence that's been struck by lightnin'."

The several long perpendicular lines were possibly intended to represent the forest, but what was meant by the two vertical lines and the crosses directly beneath them Maurice did not know. Also there was a crudely drawn circle and, inside it, a small square. Maybe this was supposed to represent a hollow stump with a squirrel-trap in it, thought the perplexed Maurice. With a sigh of disgust he turned the paper over. Then his eyes brightened. Written there in Billy's cramped hand were these words with characters:

Ke to sifer kode
woods
robers
me and old marie
beried lute
come at onse

Maurice stared. So that was it! Billy and old Harry had found the goods stolen from the Twin Oaks store. There were doin's—big doin's, and Billy wanted him in on 'em. He leaned over to secure a view of his mother and Mrs. Wilson. Mrs. Keeler had removed her wet apron and was now seated on the bench beside her neighbor, listening to the latest gossip.

"That Jim Scroggie, the heir, has come back, an' he's rented the Stanley house," Mrs. Wilson was saying. "They say he's goin' to cut down the big woods an' sell the timber. I guess he intends stayin' right on, 'cause he brought his housekeeper an' his two children, a boy and a girl, with him."

"Is he tol'able well-to-do?" Mrs. Keeler asked.

"Why yes. I understand he's rich as porcupine stew," said Mrs. Wilson. "What he wants to come here fer, stirrin' up trouble, is beyond all knowin'. They met up with my man, Tom, on the road yesterday an' they stopped him. Scroggie told him any time he wanted to bore fer water he'd put in a rig an' Tom needn't pay a cent if he didn't get him a well."

"Land o' Liberty! but he was generous!" cried Mrs. Keeler.

"Tom said he'd think it over an' let him know. I guess he was pretty short with Scroggie, knowin' as he does that the woods an' land rightly belong to young Stanhope."

"That it does," agreed Mrs. Keeler, indignantly. "An' him, poor young man, helpless through loss of his eyesight and all. You heard, of course, that Frank Stanhope and Erie Landon had broke their engagement?"

"Yes, everybody who knows 'em both an' loves 'em both has heard that. But what else could they do? He's not able to support a wife—the little farm is only enough fer himself, after that Burke an' his wife are paid fer workin' it and lookin' after the house, an' he's too high-spirited to ask Erie to share his burden and poverty."

Mrs. Keeler gulped and reached for her apron, but recollecting that she had hung it up to dry, rubbed her eyes on her sleeve. "Cobin says that young man is jest about heartbroke, spite o' the smile he wears," she said. "Tries so hard to be cheerful, too, in spite of all. Preacher Reddick had supper with us last Sunday night an' he said the teacher was the finest specimen of Christly example he'd ever seen."

Mrs. Wilson cleared her throat. "They do say that Mr. Hinter visits the lighthouse regular every week. Have you heard that, Missus Keeler?"

"Yes, an' I'm wonderin' why?"

Mrs. Wilson rose and smoothed down her skirt. "Well I wouldn't go so far as to say I know why, but I have my suspicions," she declared. "One thing I do know, it's not 'cause he's so interested in a man sick with the asthma."

Mrs. Keeler looked at her sagely. "Erie would never marry any man like Hinter," she asserted.

"You can't tell what a girl 'll do fer her father," said the other woman dubiously. "But there now," she broke off, "here I am visitin' away with you, jest as though there wasn't a batch of bread riz and kneaded at home, ready fer the oven. When I looked fer my bread-pans blest a one could I find. I know that Billy has lugged 'em off somewheres to use as bath-tubs fer his birds and lizards; so, thinks I, I'll jest run over an' ask Mrs. Keeler fer the loan of hern."

(To be continued.)

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"Well, will you let me be yours?"

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Woman's Sphere

The Baby's Birthday.

Candles that burn for a September birthday,
Wreathed round with asters and with goldenrod,
As you go upward in your radiant dying,
Carry my prayer to God.

Tell Him she is so small and so rebellious,
Tell Him her words are music on her lips,
Tell Him I love her in her wayward beauty
Down to her finger tips.

Ask Him to keep her brave and true and lovely,
Vivid and happy, gay as she is now;
Ask Him to let no shadow touch her beauty,
No sorrow mar her brow.

All the sweet saints that came for her baptizing,
Tell them I pray them to be always near;
Ask them to keep her little feet from stumbling,
Her gallant heart from fear.

Candles that burn for a September birthday,
Set round with asters and with goldenrod,
As you go upward in your radiant dying,
Carry my prayer to God.

—Aline Kilmer.

A Partnership.

I think the "money" question has and does cause more dissatisfaction and trouble between man and wife than any one thing. In my girlhood I learned with many a heartache how unreasonable some men are.

My father allowed my mother the butter and egg money after the feed was paid for. From this sum she was supposed to provide food, furnish the house, clothe herself and four children, buy schoolbooks, and send the children to school.

Fortunately, we were very healthy, so she did not need to pay any doctor bills. If she ran short of funds and asked my father for more, she was thoroughly cross-questioned.

I found there were many other homes conducted in the same manner, and I was so disgusted that I almost decided never to get married. However, the right man finally came along. But before I said yes I decided the money question must be definitely settled. He was more than willing to come to an agreement, as his home life had been very much like mine. Our plan has been a great success, and after more than twenty years of married life we think it the only way, especially for farmers. We keep a strict account of everything bought and sold, and all the money taken in goes in a general fund upon which we both draw. I keep all the books, and understand our business perfectly, as we always talk everything over.

We bought a farm and had debts to pay and all kinds of family expenses, but we always had the money ready to meet the obligations. Now we are out of debt, have a good home, a fine bunch of Victory bonds, besides a generous amount of other stocks and bonds. We have a joint bank account, and my name on a cheque has never been questioned.

My husband has great confidence in my business ability, and never makes an investment without dscussing it first with me. I accidentally overheard him telling a friend, "If my wife say's it's all right, that settles it."

If more men would make partners of their wives, as they promised in the beginning, there would be more happiness and fewer heartaches. Some men say their wives can't manage. No wonder—they never have anything to manage with.—B. S.

Suggestions From Other Women.

When you discover that your bedspreads are becoming thin and sleazy at the ends, you may make them almost as good as new by making use of the following method:

Take a strong piece of muslin about twelve inches or more in width and as long as your spread is wide. Arrange this strip or facing on the wrong side of the spread on that part which is worn. Fold under raw edges of the facing and sew to position. Treat both ends the same way. It is only a few moments' work and fully repays one for the little extra expense and time involved. A spread thus reinforced will put off the evil day a year or more before it will be necessary to diminish a ten-dollar bill to buy a new one.—Mrs. R. S.

Make a bag of cretonne or some suitable material the width of the right-hand end of the sewing machine. The length may be as liked, say about 15 inches. Hem both top ends, and just tack one of them to the right hand end of the machine. You will find it a great time and labor saver, as you can throw all small scraps into it when you are sewing. Then they are not on the floor.—E. W.

A great many people have admired the sturdy little suits of heavy blue denim which my little two and three-year-old boys wear on the farm for everyday. Some say, "But I didn't know you could buy suits for such small boys!" You can't. I could not even purchase a pattern for them, but I found it an easy matter to adapt a one-piece pajama pattern to the purpose. The pajama pattern will, of course, have a drop seat, but, instead, lay the sections of pattern together and cut with a seam straight down the middle of the back, and then the little garment will open only down the front. Put a stitched pocket on each hip and one in front, so it will look like Dad's, and double-stitch all the seams to give a tailored effect.—Mrs. N. H. D.

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