BOVRIL
ALL THAT IS GOOD IN BEEF
A MOST STRENGTHENING BEVERAGE

A SON OF COURAGE

BY ARCHIE P. McKISHNIE

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CHAPTER XXXVI.—(Cont'd.)

"Ho, Bill!" cried Maurice. "Bringin' bay Thomas up to the stable fer winter, eh? Gee! Jim, look at that horse; did you ever see such a change in anythin' in your life?"

"Thomas has sure fattened up," grinned Jim. "I guess it would puzzle old Johnston to know our horse now, eh, Bill?"

"You mean your horse, Jim," corrected Billy.

"No I don't either; he's only a third mine. One third's yours and the other third's Maurice's."

Maurice and Billy stared at him. "It was your money paid fer him," Billy asserted.

"Well, what of it? Maurice found him a soft hidin' place and good pasture on his Dad's farm, didn't he?"

"Sure, but then—"

"And it's you who's goin' to see that he gets cared for all winter, ain't it?"

"You bet it is," cried Billy.

"Well, then, I claim he's a company horse an' you an' me an' Maurice is that company. Now, that's settled, let me tell you what Maurice and me was talkin' about when you met us."

Billy unsnapped the tie-strap from Thomas' halter so that he might crop the wayside grass without hindrance and sat down on a log opposite the one occupied by his friends.

Jim nudged Maurice but Maurice shook his head. "You tell him," he said.

"Bill," Jim cried eagerly. "I got a bit of news for you that'll make you want to stand on your head and kick splinters off the trees."

Billy grinned. "An' I got a piece of news fer you fellers, too," he returned. "But go on, your news first, Jim."

"Teacher Stanhope has made over a deed of Lost Man's Swamp to you, Bill," said Jim. "I heard Dad telling Mr. Hinter all about it. Dad was there when Lawyer Maddoc drew up the deed—Maurice, you crazy hyena, will you keep quiet?"

Maurice had rolled backward off the log, while he emitted cries that would have done a scalp-hunting Indian credit. "Three cheers fer Bill!" he yelled. "He discovered Lost Man's Swamp oil field. Trigger Finger Tim ain't got nuthin' on our Bill."

Billy was standing up now, his perplexed face turned questioningly on his chums.

"That's right, Bill," cried Jim. "You really did discover it, you know. Hinter said he was the only one who knew the oil was there until you rafted out to the ponds and saw the oil-bubbles breakin' on 'em. He says that a fortune likely lies there, so you see—"

"An' Teacher Stanhope, he deeded the swamp to me," said Billy dazedly. He got up from the log and squared his shoulders. "Well," he spoke, "that was mighty good of him, but I ain't wantin' that swamp."

"But, Bill," urged Jim, "the oil they've found there'll make you rich."

Billy shook his head. "I'm as rich as I ever want'a be right now, Jim."

"Look here, Bill," cried Maurice. "You don't want'a hurt Teacher Stanhope's feelin's, do you?"

Billy glanced at him quickly, a troubled look in his eyes. "N-no," he said, "you bet I don't."

"Then that's all there is to it; you keep Lost Man, that's what you do."

Billy considered. "I ain't sayin' jest what I'll do," he spoke finally. "I gotta ask another person's advice on this thing. But if I do take it you, Jim, an' you, Maurice, are goin' to be my partners in Lost Man same's you are in bay Thomas. Here, Maurice, you take Thomas to our stable an' give him a feed. I gotta go somewhere else."

And leaving Jim and Maurice sitting, open-mouthed, Billy ducked into the timber.

Not until he had put some distance between himself and his friends did he remember that he had not told them the great and wonderful news that had been imparted to him by old Harry. Well, never mind, they would hear it soon. Harry would see to that. He turned into a path that strayed far up among clumps of red-gold maples and ochre-stained oaks. The whistle of quail sounded from a ridge of brown sumachs. Up the hill, across the deep valley, where wintergreen berries gleamed like drops of blood among the mosses, he passed slowly and on to the beech-crowned ridge.

Here he paused and his searching eyes sought the lower sweep of woodland. A clump of tall poplars gleamed silvery-white against the dark green of the beeches; far down at the end of the sweep of yellow tops of hardy willows stood silhouetted against the udying green of massed cedars and pines. Billy gazed down upon it all and his heart swelled with the deep joy of life, his nerves tingled to the tang of the woodland scents. Something deep, stirring, mysterious, had come to him. He did not know what that something was—it was too vague and incomprehensible for definition just yet.

His arm about the trunk of a tree, he laughed softly, as his eyes, sweeping the checker-board of autumn's glories, rested at last on the grove of coniferous trees. So that was the haunted grove? That dark, silent, spicy bit of isolated loneliness far below was the spot he had so feared! But he feared it no longer. She had cured him of that. She had said that fear of the supernatural was foolish; and of course she was right.

A fat red-squirrel frisked down a tree close beside him and halted, popeyed, to gaze upon him. "I tell you," Billy addressed it gravely, "it takes a good woman to steady a man." The statement was not of his own creation. He had heard it somewhere but he had never understood its meaning before. It seemed the fitting thing to say now and there was nobody to say it to except the squirrel.

A blue-jay and a yellow-hammer flashed by him, side by side, racing for the grubbing-fields of the soft woods below, their blue and yellow bodies marking twin streaks against the hazy light. Blue and yellow, truly the most wonderful colors of all the colorful world, thought Billy. The scene faded and in its place grew up a face with blue, laughing eyes and red, smiling lips, above which gleamed a halo of spun gold. Then the woodland picture swam back before him and the squirrel, which with the characteristic patience of its kind had waited to watch this boy who often threw it a nut-kernel, called after him chidingly as he dipped down into the valley.

Billy was still thinking of the only girl when he topped the farther ridge and descended into the valley where stood the haunted grove. He wondered what she would say when he told her the great news he had to tell her. He thought he knew. She would put her hand on his arm and say: "Billy, I'm glad." Well, he was on his way to hear her say it. As he entered a clump of cedars he saw her. She wore a cloak of crimson; her hat had slipped to her shoulders and her hair glowed softly through the shadowy half lights. She stood beside old man Scroggie's grave, a great bunch of golden-rod in her arms.

Billy called and she turned to him with a smile.

"Oh, I'm so glad you came, Billy," she said. "You can help me decorate uncle's grave."

She dropped the yellow blossoms on the mound and they went into the sunshine together and gathered more. When they had finished the task they went across to the weedy plot in which stood the tumble-down hut. There, seated side by side beneath a gnarled wild-apple tree, Billy told her all he had to tell her, and heard her say, just as he knew she would say, "Billy, I'm glad."

Then between them fell silence, filled with understanding and contentment and thoughts that ran parallel the same long track through future promise. Billy spoke, at length: "He's goin' to take the school ag'in. An' him an' me are goin' to build that sailboat we've always wanted—a big, broad-beamed, single sticker that'll carry all of us—you, me, teacher, Erie an' anybody wants to come along. Gee! ain't it great?"

The girl nodded. "And what will you name her?" she asked. Into Billy's cheeks the blood sprang as into his heart joy ran riot.

"I aim to call her Lou," he said hesitatingly. "That is if you don't mind."

The golden head was bowed and when it was raised to him, he saw a deeper color in the cheeks, a softer glow in the eyes. "Come," she said softly, "we must be getting back."

They crossed the sunflecked grass, hand in hand. As they reached the pine grove the girl pointed away above the trees. "Look," she whispered.

Billy's gaze followed hers. High above the trees a black speck came speeding toward them, a speck which grew quickly into a bird, a big, black bird, who knew, apparently, just where he was going.

"It's Croaker," Billy whispered. "Stand right still, Lou, an' we'll watch an' find out what his game is."

He drew her a little further among the pines and they peered out to see Croaker alight on the broken-backed ridge pole of the log hut.

Here, with many low croaks, he proceeded to search his surroundings with quick, suspicious eyes, straining forward to peer closely at scrub or bush, then cunningly twisting about suddenly as though hoping to take some skulking watcher behind him unawares.

Finally he seemed satisfied that he was alone. His harsh notes became soft guttural coos. He nodded his big head up and down in grave satisfaction, tip-toeing from one end of the ridge-pole to the other and chuckling softly to himself. Then suddenly, he vanished from sight.

"Where has he gone?" whispered Lou.

"Hush," warned Billy. His heart was pounding.

The watchers stood with eyes glued to the ridge-pole. By and by they saw a black tail-feather obtrude itself from a hole just beneath the roof's gable. A black body followed and Croaker came tip-toeing back along the ridge.

The girl felt her companion's hand tighten spasmodically on hers. She glanced up to find him staring, wide-eyed at the bird.

"Billy!" she whispered, almost forgetting caution in her anxiety. "What is it?"

He pointed a shaking finger at Croaker. "See that shiny thing that old rogue has in his bill, Lou?" he asked. "What do you 'spose that is?"

"Why, what is it?"

"It's one of the gold pieces your uncle hid away. Come on, now we'll see that Croaker throw a fit."

They stepped out into plain view of the crow, who was muttering to the gold-piece which he now held before his eyes in one black claw. Croaker lowered his head and twisted it from side to side in sheer wonder. He could scarcely believe his eyes. Then as Billy stepped forward and called him by name his black neck-ruff arose in anger and, dropping his prized bit of gold, he poured out such a torrent of abuse upon the boy and girl that Lou put her fingers in her ears to stop the sound.

"He's awful mad," grinned Billy. "He's been keepin' this find to himself fer a long time." At sound of his master's voice Croaker paused in his harangue and promptly changed his tactics. He swooped down to Billy's shoulder and rubbed the top of his glossy head against the boy's cheek, whispering low and lying terms of endearment.

Lou laughed. "What's he up to now, Billy?"

"He's tryin' to coax me away from his treasure," Billy answered. "Now, jest watch him."

"What you want 'a do, Croaker?" he asked, stroking the bird's neck feathers smooth.

"Kawak!" said Croaker, and jumping to the ground he started away, head twisted backward toward the boy and girl, coaxing sounds pouring from his half-open beak.

"No, sir," cried Billy. "You don't fool me ag'in. I'm goin' to climb up there an' see jest how much gold is hid in that hole under the gable."

Croaker watched him reach for a chink in the logs and raise himself toward the treasure house. Then he became silent and sat huddled up, wings drooping discontentedly, his whole aspect one of utter despair.

Lou, bending to caress him, heard Billy give an exclamation, and ran forward. "It's here, Lou," he cried excitedly, "a tin box an' a shot-bag full of gold in a hollered-out log. The bag has been ripped open by Croaker. I'll have to go inside to get the box out."

He dropped to the sward and stepped through an unglazed window into the hut. Nailed to one end was a crude ladder. Billy climbed the ladder and peered closely at the log which held the money. To all appearances it was exactly like its fellows, no door, no latch to be seen. And still, he reasoned, there must be an opening of some kind there. He lit a match and held it close to the log. Then he whistled. What he had mistaken for a pine knot was a small button fixed, as he saw now, in a tiny groove. He moved the button and a small section of the log fell, spraying him with musty dust.

Another moment and he was outside beside Lou, bag and box in his arms. Croaker was nowhere to be seen; neither was the gold piece which he had dropped in his amazement at sight of Billy and Lou.

"He went back and got it," said the girl, in answer to Billy's look of amazement. "And, Billy, he flew away in an awful grouch."

"Oh, he'll soon get over it," laughed Billy. "We'll find him waitin' fer us farther on."

They crossed the lot and went through the pines to the sunny open. There, on a mossy knoll, Lou spread her cloak, and Billy poured the gold from bag and box upon it.

Lou started to count the money. Billy sat back, watching her. "Yes, sir," he mused, "it certainly takes a good woman to steady a man." For ten glorious minutes he built air castles and dreamed dreams.

"Two thousand nine hundred and forty dollars," Lou announced, and Billy jumped up.

"Whew!" he whistled, "an' all gold, too. The three pieces that Croaker took make the even three thousand."

They placed the money back in the box and bag. Then Billy, picking up the treasure, spoke gently.

"It'll make 'em a grand weddin' gift, Lou."

"Yes," she answered, "a grand wedding gift, Billy."

In silence they passed on through the upland gowned in hazy, golden spray. At the height of land they paused to look down across the sweeping country below them. Then blue eyes sought grey and hand in hand, with a new glad vista of life opening before them, they went into the valley.

(The End.)

"Season to Taste."

The subject of seasoning is indeed a delicate one, in culinary matters, and for this reason I hesitate before the words, season to taste. Not only do tastes vary, but to-day we find the average housewife quite willing to be satisfied with just pepper and salt.

The European housewife is familiar with chervil, sweet basil, chives, sorrel, leek, parsley, tarragon, thyme, garlic, nasturtium, marjoram, summer savory; sage, mint and dried parsley leaves, caraway, coriander and cumin seed, fennel dill, anise, cardamon, ginger, cinnamon, allspice, cloves and Indian curry powder. To this list I might also add nutmeg, mustard, turmeric, mace, white and black pepper and onion.

Have you ever tried adding just a few caraway seeds to a beef stew or ragout, or one-eighth teaspoon each of nutmeg, sweet basil, thyme, sweet marjoram. to dumplings to be served with meat.

Grated onion, a little garlic and some finely chopped tarragon to reheated meat dishes add zest to the flavoring. A pinch of mustard to egg dishes is attractive, while a little grated onion and a pinch of nutmeg to a dish of mashed potatoes will add real variety to the food.

Almost every herb and spice may be added to soups, stews, goulashes and ragouts with real improvements.

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Two New Sandwiches.

The first sandwich suggestion below comes to us guaranteed to be a favorite with men, no matter when or where served. The second we suggest as appropriate for a somewhat sophisticated tea table.

Have ready the required number of fresh baking powder biscuits, split and buttered lightly. Fry to a crisp light brown one slice of bacon for each sandwich. Drain and chop fine. Mix the bacon with equal parts of chopped celery and moisten with thick mayonnaise. Spread the mixture between the hot biscuit halves. These are delicious when served with coffee.

This is the sweet sandwich:

Orange marmalade (the stiff kind), almonds chopped fine and cream cheese. Mix thoroughly and spread between thin slices of white bread lightly buttered. This is also delicious on brown bread.

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Mother's Clever Boy.

A little boy wanted to give his mother a birthday present, but did not know what to give her.

At last he decided to give her a Bible. After he had bought it he was stumped again, as he could not think what to inscribe on the front page.

After a good deal of thought he decided on the following, which he had seen in several books:

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ISSUE No. 6—'21.

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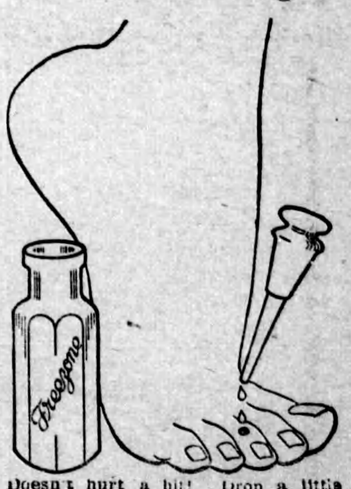

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