

HAWK in the WIND

By Helen Topping Miller

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"You've missed your road," she said. "This is nothing but a woods trail. You'll have trouble with that heavy car if you try to go any further."

"We're looking for a piece of land formerly owned by a man named Pruitt," the taller of the pair said. They were city men of a type Virgie Morgan knew well. All one tint of gray, close-shaven, milled like dollars, the cautious click of shrewd finance in their voices.

"Tom's land is on the other side of the ridge," Virgie told them. "You'll have to walk three-quarters of a mile. Do you belong to that Phillips' outfit? They defaulted on everything they bought in this country."

"We"—the older man had thin lips and a mouth that shut like a trap—"are victims of the Phillips' outfit."

Virgie kept silent. Very likely these were some of the crowd who had put up the money to back Phillips. Obviously they had no idea who she was. They thought her a quaint mountain character, probably, so she kept to the part, staring dully and curiously at them, as mountain people did.

Slamming her worn gears, she drove on up the ridge, turning south at her line and bumping across a stony meadow, sun-washed and pleasant.

She found her foresters eating their lunch, their legs dangling from the muddy tail of their truck. She shared their lukewarm coffee, inspected the damp little hillocks where baby spruce stood and shivered, feeling their cold, small bewildered roots groping in strange, chill darkness.

"I hope we get a snow so they don't dry out too fast," she said.

"We heard a car a while back," one of the men said. "See anybody down that way, Miss Morgan?"

"I was going to speak about that," Virgie screwed the lid on a thermos bottle. "Much obliged, you boys—I meant to get-home for lunch but I got delayed, as usual. About that car—I saw 'em. And I want you to quit early—you, too, Joe—knock off before three, leave the truck here, and go over the other side down toward Little Fork. There's a piece of hardwood down there—a hundred and sixty-odd acres. Take a good look at it and call me up to-night."

"Pruitt's stuff, eh?" said Joe, who knew these timbered slopes and ridges as well as Virgie did.

"It used to be Pruitt's stuff. Something's up. And I'm not going to let Tom be gypped by another bunch of slick talkers with blue-prints in their hands and black iniquity in their hearts. Don't call up till after seven, hear? And don't talk to anybody but me about this business."

"Sure, boss—we understand. You don't want it mentioned to Pruitt, then?"

"I'll talk to Pruitt. Crank this old caboose for me, will you?"

She was thinking so absorbedly as she drove in at the gate of the plant that she ran over a steam hose and ripped a sizable silver from the corner of the tool-house before she came to and stopped the truck.

Tom Pruitt heard the impact of her arrival and came slouching out of the back shed, picking gum off the palms of his hands.

"Anybody else bust up the premises like that and you'd fire him," he drawled amiably. "That steering-gear busted?"

"Oh, shut up!" grumbled Virgie, climbing down stiffly.

She was irritated by Tom. No man so huge should be so naive, so helpless.

"Whoever stuck that shanty out there in the way must have thought we'd be hauling stuff in here in oxcarts forever," Virgie continued to fume as she tramped into the office.

Tom opened the door for her. "I reckon Dave put it there," he said, calmly.

"Come in here," Virgie ordered. Tom followed her obediently and began punching at the stove. Virgie made a complicated task out of getting her hat off and her desk opened. She did not look at Tom. She was exasperated, and when her temper got the upper hand her tongue slipped, and she did not want it to slip. She had to say the right thing to Tom, who was so helpless in the presence of law and finance and the crisscross web men weave of these two strands to hide the simple intent of their acts.

you come back in . . . There may be worse smells than young Daniels invents, but Satan has got a monopoly on 'em."

"Tom draped his long legs over a stool and twisted his hat."

"I reckon you found a seeder tree cut that hadn't ought to be cut," he said. "I expect I done it."

Virgie swiveled her chair around. The darkened leather cushion on the back of it still held the print of David Morgan's lean shoulder-blades.

"I'm not going to talk about Morgan trees," she said. "I want to talk about yours. Do you know anything about that property of yours over the ridge—that hardwood tract? What shape is it in?"

Tom twisted the hat nervously. "I sold it. Way back in '28. You know about that I reckon. I sold it to that Phillips' outfit. They paid me the first payment. They ain't never paid any more."

"What sort of papers did you get? Have you got a lien?"

"They're all in the safe. Dave put 'em away for me. Dave told me I'd ought to foreclose—then he got down and you know how we been ever since—we ain't had time to think of nothing but keeping this here mill running."

Virgie sighed. "It's my fault, I suppose. I've got to take care of you—just like I've got to take care of Lossie and Lucy out yonder and some more helpless people."

"I got a good piece of money out of that land," Tom defended.

"They defaulted on the contract, didn't they? The company's out of existence. It will take a lawsuit, probably, to repossess it—but somebody's interested in it. I met a couple of men—bankers, they looked like—up on the ridge. They were asking the way to that piece you've got over there—that strip down Hazel Fork with the big poplar on it. You get those papers out, Tom, and let me look 'em over."

Tom lumbered out of his chair. There was one kind of action he could understand, indorse, and follow. Strange men had been on his land—land that Virgie said was his.

"I low them feelers better keep off, over yonder," he boomed, his eyes dour. "I don't know no law, but if that's my poplar them bankers better keep off my place."

"Well, you've got to have the papers first. I'll have Lucy open the safe for you."

But when Lucy came back, moon-eyed and absent, with a droop of unhappiness about her mouth, Virgie regarded her with impatience. Lucy had been strung tight as a fiddle lately, making mistakes and being rushingly apologetic about them jumping when the telephone rang.

Virgie knew what was the matter with Lucy. Young Stanley Daniels was flattered by the sight of Lucy's



"If that's my poplar them bankers better keep off my place."

little silver heart fluttering on her sleeve. He had grown arrogant and cagey.

Lucy needed shaking. So, because she was disgusted with Lucy's meekness, Virgie climaxed a day of exasperations by giving the girl a raise.

"Go out and buy yourself a new hat and some lipstick," she ordered, "and if that young Daniels is hanging on the gate when you start home give him the back of your hand and your chin in the air. I can do all the moping we need in this pulp business."

Lucy was tremulously grateful and husky. "It isn't—that exactly, Mrs. Morgan. It's—oh, everything! Old lamps and the rug wearing out—and food costing so much—"

"I know," Virgie was gentle. "We had a sofa that flopped over and made a bed and my brother had to sleep on it. It was always flopped down in the parlor when I had a beau. Don't let it get you down, Lucy."

At night Joe and Ed reported that the two strangers had walked over Pruitt's land, climbed back into their car, and gone away again. She would hunt up her lawyer, as soon as she had time, Virgie decided, and find out just what could be done for Tom.

Young Mr. Brantford Wills was still seriously ill. A half-dozen telegrams had so far failed to locate anyone who belonged to him or who might be interested in him. Virgie had that to worry about.

"As We See It"

By J. A. Strang

During a recent Sunday morning service the hymn "Just as I am, without one plea" was sung. We hadn't heard that hymn sung in church for a long time. Its singing recalled to mind that it was a favorite hymn during those Evangelistic services that were common some forty or more years ago. It would be at these services that we first learned that old hymn. Let it remarkable how words that are set to music stick in our memories? We sometimes wonder why more young folk are not found at church services. It is when we are young that those memories are formed that stick with us through life and if these younger folk don't learn these old hymns they will have missed something worth while.

Perhaps if you were writing this column you would never think of mentioning that an elderly gentleman, aged 70 to be exact, had dropped dead in a Bloor Street drug store recently. However, this gentleman was different. Back on Sept. 5th, 1885, he was sentenced to be hanged for the murder of three people at Valleyfield, Quebec. His sentence was changed to life imprisonment and he spent several years in a Quebec prison, then was moved to Kingston Penitentiary. He was a model prisoner and later on was sent up to the Reformatory at Guelph where he was given the position of Head Baker for that institution. It was there that we met him as we were being shown through that institution. He was a fine looking tall gentleman and wore a Van Dyke beard. We had our son with us that day and knowing that we were bakers suggested to our son that going home he exceed the speed limit and get sent down, and that he would then teach him the baking business. Later on he was paroled from Guelph and while still having to report to the police regularly, enjoyed his freedom. He changed his name to that of Francis V. Cuthbert and conducted a small place of business on Yonge St. Former friends who called to see him were never recognized and he always claimed that he had never seen them before. He walked with the aid of a cane and wore a monocle. Surely a strange story but worth recording.

We are concluding our articles upon the subject of bread by using a poem that was written by Miss Edna Jacques formerly of Vancouver but who is now living in Toronto. This poem first appeared in The Vancouver Province and the title is "A Loaf of Bread."

A lonely field set wide to sun and sky, Brown furrows turned in crumbling rows to dry, A hundred dawns to blaze above the land, Staunch hearts to love the soil and understand.

The high black night set with a million stars, The call of cattle at the milking bars, The scud of rain above the stooiling wheat, The quivering waves of breathless noonday heat.

High winds that bear their clouds of choking dust, New virgin soil to feed its greedy lust, A hundred odors woven in the air, The rusted soil, the stubble brown and bare.

Old farmhouse kitchens warm with firelight, And swaying lanterns yellow in the night, Old threshing crews and teams about the yard, Frost in the morning, glittering white and hard.

The crunch of wagons on the frozen road, The horses straining with their golden lead, Men plodding weary miles to keep their warm, The whining cry of wind before a storm.

It isn't only loaves of snowy bread, It's the and and blood and bones instead, A hundred failures, sweat and toil and pain, Seed times and harvest, sun and wind and rain.

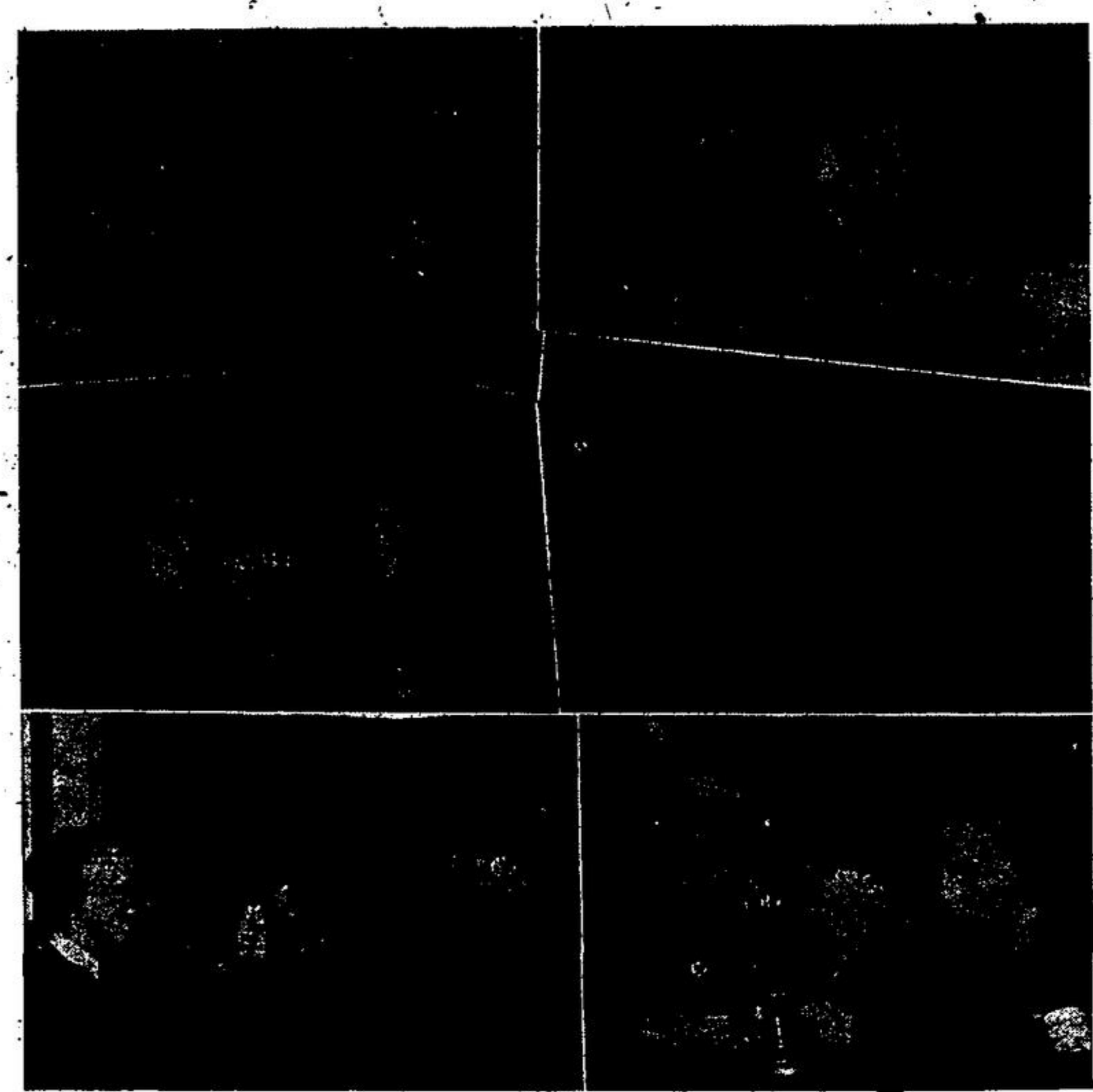
Only a loaf of bread baked white and sweet, Set in a bakery window by the street, Holding within its crust the golden span, Of all the struggles in the life of man.

The Fergus News-Record has been publishing some old-time pictures, during the last few months, and as we happen to be a Fergus Old Boy they are quite interesting to us. Recently Hugh Templin, who, by the way is the editor of the News-Record published a lacrosse group picture taken at Toronto around 1902. The following week he again published the same picture, this time giving the names of many of the faces shown in the old picture. We wish that Hugh would publish it once more and give the nick-names this time and perhaps a short story of how those nicknames were given the owner. We rather like nick names and they so often give us an idea of the personality of the owner that the real name never conveys. Just to give you an idea of how those nick names are obtained we give you this one which we can vouch for. The lad was attending public school at the time. His mother was active in the Ladies' Aid in their church and at noon had her boy gas-

She took time to hope that Lucy had found a decent hat. She did not know that Lucy was sitting alone at home, among the ravelings, and that Stanley Daniels was, at that moment, occupying a rocket in front of Wallace Withers' old wood-burning stove, smoking one of Wallace's five-cent cigars and thinking very well of himself.

(Continued next week)

"CHILDREN CALLING HOME"



"We know, everyone of us, that in the end all will be well." Last October, a 14-year-old English school girl broadcast these words to the British children who had been sent to temporary homes in America and the Empire. The speaker was the Princess Ella, heir to the British throne. Her listeners were the children shown here, and many more who have no doubt in their brave young hearts that "in the end all will be well." And in the meantime, while mothers and fathers and friends preserve their shining hour at home, North America's young war guests are gaining in health, experience and learning, and forming a valuable link between those who fight in Britain to save democracy and those who are supplying the tools. The happy scenes presented in the CBC's pictures represent moments in recent broadcasts of "Children Calling Home." From the cities of Canada, once each month, the CBC carries the voices of British children to their parents in Britain.

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