

Tangled Trails

—BY WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINES

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CHAPTER XXIII.—(Cont'd.)

The eyes of the men fastened. Lane knew he was being given a hint that Foster did not want to put more directly.

"What are the interestin' points of the town?" asked the Twin Buttes man.

"Well, sir, there are several. Of course, there's the School of Mines, and the mountains right back of the town. Gold was discovered there somewhere about fifty-seven, I think. Used to be the capital of the territory before Denver found her feet."

"I'm rather busy." "Wouldn't take you long to run over on the interurban." The lawyer began to gather toward him the papers upon which he had been working when the client was shown in. He added casually: "I found it quite amusing to look over the marriage licenses for the last month or two. Found the names there of some of our prominent citizens. Well, I'll call you up as soon as I know about the bond."

Lane was not entirely satisfied with what he had been told, but he knew Foster had said all he meant to say. One thing stuck in his mind as the gist of the hint. The attorney was advising him to go to the court-house and check up the marriage licenses.

He walked across to the Equitable Building and dropped in on his cousin James. Cunningham rose to meet him a bit stiffly. The cattleman knew that Jack had already been in to see him or had got him on the wire.

Kirby brushed through any embarrassment there might be and told frankly why he had come.

"I've had a sort of row with Jack. Under the circumstances I don't feel that I ought to let you stay on my bond. It might create ill-feelin' between you an' him. So I'm arrangin' to have some Wyoming friends put up whatever's required. You'll understand I haven't any bad feeling against you, or against him for that matter. You've been bully all through this thing, an' I'm certainly in your debt."

"What's the trouble between you about?" asked James.

"I've found out that he an' Miss Harriman were in Uncle James's rooms the night he was killed. I want them to come through an' tell what they know."

"How did you find that out?" "The eyes of the oil broker were hard as jade. They looked straight into those of his cousin."

"I can't tell you that exactly. Put two an' two together."

"You mean you guess they were there. You don't know it."

A warm, friendly smile lit the brown face of the rough rider. He wanted to remain on good terms with James if he could. "I don't know it in a legal sense. Morally, I'm convinced of it."

"Even though they deny it." "Practically they admitted rather than denied."

"Do you think it was quite straight, Kirby, to go to Miss Harriman with such a trumped-up charge? I don't. I confess I'm surprised at you." In voice and expression James showed his disappointment.

"It isn't a trumped-up charge. I wanted to know the truth from her."

"Why didn't you go to Jack, then?"

"I didn't know at that time Jack was the man with her."

"You don't know it now. You don't know she was there. In point of fact the idea is ridiculous. You surely don't think for a moment that she had anything to do with Uncle James's death." "No; not in the sense that she helped bring it about. But she knows somethin' she's hidin'."

"That's absurd. Your imagination is too active, Kirby."

"Can't agree with you." Lane met him eye to eye.

"Grant for the sake of argument that she was in Uncle's room that night. Your friend Miss Rose McLean was there, too—by her own confession. When she came to Jack and me with her story, we respected it. We did not insist on knowing why she was there, and it was of her own free will she told us. Yet you go to our friend and distress her by implications that must shock and wound her. Was that generous? Was it even fair?"

The cattleman stood convicted at the bar of his own judgment. His cousins had been magnanimous to Esther and Rose, more so than he had been to Miss Harriman. Yet, even while he confessed fault, he felt uneasily that there was a justification he could not quite lay hold of and put into words.

"I'm sorry you feel that way, James. Perhaps I was wrong. But you want to remember that I wasn't askin' about what she knew with any idea of makin' it public or tellin' the police. I meant to keep it under my own hat to help run down a cold-blooded murderer."

"You can't want to run him down any more than we do—and in that 'we' I include Jack and Miss Harriman as well as myself," the older man answered gravely. "But I'm sure you're entirely wrong. Miss Harriman knows nothing about it. If she had she would have confided in us." "Perhaps she has confided in Jack."

"Don't you think that obsession of yours is rather—well, unlikely, to put it mildly? Analyze it and you'll find you haven't a single substantial fact to base it on."

This was true. Yet Kirby's opinion was not changed. He still believed that Jack and Miss Harriman had been in his uncle's rooms just before Wild Rose had been there.

He returned to the subject of the bond. It seemed to him best, he said, in view of Jack's feeling, to get other bondsmen. He hoped James would not interpret this to mean that he felt less friendly toward him.

His cousin bowed rather formally. "Just as you please. Would you like the matter arranged this afternoon?"

Lane looked at his watch. "I haven't heard from my new bondsmen yet. Besides, I want to go to Golden. Would to-morrow morning suit you?"

"I dare say," James stifled a yawn. "Did you say you were going to Golden?"

"Yes. Some one gave me a tip. I don't know what there's in it, but I thought I'd have a look at the marriage-license registry."

Cunningham flashed a startled glance at him that asked a peremptory question. "Probably waste of time. I've been in the oil business too long to pay any attention to tips."

"Expect you're right, but I'll trot out there, anyhow. Never can tell."

"What do you expect to find among the marriage licenses?"

"Haven't the slightest idea. I'll tell you to-morrow what I do find."

James made one dry, ironic comment. "I rather think you have too much imagination for sleuthing. You let your wild fancies gallop away with you. If I were you I'd go back to bronco busting."

Kirby laughed. "Dare say you're right. I'll take your advice after we get the man we're after."

CHAPTER XXIV.

REV. NICODEMUS RANKIN FORGETS AND REMEMBERS.

By appointment Kirby met Rose at Graham & Osborne's for luncheon. She was waiting in the tower room for him.

"Where's Esther?" he asked.

Rose mustered a faint smile. "She's eating lunch with a handsomer man."

"You can't throw a stone up Sixteenth Street without hittin' one," he answered gaily.

They followed the head waitress to a small table for two by a window. Rose walked with the buoyant rhythm of perfect health. Her friend noticed, as he had often done before, that she had the grace of movement which is a corollary to muscles under perfect response. Seated across the table from her, he marveled once more at the miracle of her soft skin and the peach bloom of her complexion. Many times

Stories About Well-Known People

The Prince's Correspondent.

In the opinion of the Prince of Wales, who is as well qualified as anyone to speak on the subject, there is nothing like travel for educating and broadening the mind, says an English writer.

As an instance of the lack of knowledge that prevails in some quarters regarding even the best-known of our Dominions, the Prince stated recently that he had received a letter from a girl of fourteen who, in congratulating him on his safe return to this country, stated that she was anxious to know what the natives of Canada look like!

A Millionaire's Secret.

Not long ago Lord Leverhulme gave his secret remedy for "swelled head." Here it is—

If you meet anyone afflicted with a swollen head, advise him to go to some public meeting and ask himself these questions: 'How many present know me? How many have ever heard of me or my work? If I got killed right now, how many of the crowd would miss me? My work is important to me. I wonder if it is so important that all these people would be thrown out of their stride if I were to drop?'

His lordship says that this remedy has never failed. He knows. He's tried it himself!

A Modest Princess.

The Crown Princess of Sweden is a most charming and unassuming lady, and the Crown Prince may consider himself truly fortunate in having secured her for his bride. I have just heard a little story which accentuates her modesty.

She was working in a French hospital during the War, doing everything that was required without the slightest disinclination or snobbishness. A new doctor at her hospital noticed a nurse busily engaged in polishing the floor. He went up to her and said: "I hear there is a princess working

she had known the sting of sleet and the splash of sun on her face. Yet incredibly her cheeks did not tan nor lose their fineness.

"You haven't told me who this handsome man is," Kirby suggested.

"Cole Sanborn." She flushed, but looked straight at him. "Have you told him—about Esther?"

"No. But from somethin' he said I think he guesses."

Her eyes softened. "He's awfully good to Esther. I can see he likes her and she likes him. Why couldn't she have met him first? She's so lovable." Tears brimmed her eyes. "That's been her ruin. She was ready to believe any man who said he cared for her. Even when she was a little bit of a trick when people liked her, she was grateful to them for it and kinda snuggled up to them. I never saw a more cuddly baby."

"Have you found out anything more yet about—the man?" he asked, his voice low and gentle.

"No. It's queer how stubborn she can be for all her softness. But she almost told me last night. I'll find out in a day or two now. Of course it was your uncle. The note I found was really an admission of guilt. Your cousins feel that some settlement ought to be made on Esther out of the estate. I've been trying to decide what would be fair. Will you think it over and let me know what seems right to you?"

(To be continued.)

"Ma Name's No MacTavish!"

No one is prouder of his name and lineage than a Highland Scot. He is sensitive on the point of family above all others. In an amusing book of sporting reminiscence Maj. Harding Cox tells how one Highland man revenged himself on a jocosse foreigner who had made light of his family pride.

A certain French count, it seems, was a guest of a Scottish laird. After dinner the noble host called in Ronald Macalister, his very superior stalker, and said to him:

"It is my infernal luck, Ronald, that I should sprain my ankle just as the count here arrives; but you must take him out over the best ground and see that he has a fair chance."

"Oo, aye!"

"Ah, my friend," said the count, "it is zure I am zat ze good MacTaveesh—"

"Ma name's no MacTavish, ye ken!" the deestalker interrupted him.

"Ah, zat vas all right, Mac. I call you MacTaveesh because eet zounds so—so—zat you zay?—so Scottie!"

Next day all was ready for the start; Macalister was garbed and accounted for the hunt. The genial count slapped him on the back, exclaiming with hearty good will: "Zy foot ees on zy native 'earth; zy name's MacTaveesh!"

"Ma name's no MacTavish!" reiterated the stalker angrily, for he was fast losing patience.

In the evening when the count returned to the castle he was worn out and "fed up" with life in general and deerstalking in particular—not a stag had he seen all day. His lordship could not understand it.

Day after day the same thing occur-

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red until at last the count was "reduced to a shadow"; the soles of his boots were worn as thin as blotting paper, and his feet were grievously chapped and blistered. He gave in at last and departed for the south.

The laird called Macalister in and interrogated him sternly: "What in heaven's name has come to the forest since I have been laid up, Ronald? Are there no beasts left in it?"

"Oo, aye, yere lordship. Forby there's mony an' many a bonnie beastie i' the corries."

"How is it then that you have not even shown my esteemed friend the count a stag?"

Then the murder was out. "Ma name's no MacTavish!" exclaimed Macalister tersely, and, turning on his heel, he stalked majestically from the presence of his master.

Genesis of Shears.

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