

Second Time West

by
T. C. BRIDGES

CHAPTER XVIII WHO IS FISHLOCK?

Jim decided that his only chance of escaping Farnie's eye was to duck down under the manger. It was a slim chance, for if either of the men should stop to look at Gray Boy—the horse was worth looking at—he could hardly fail to see Jim. Then as he turned Jim noticed that the trap above the stall, leading to the loft, was open.

Quick as a flash, he stepped on the manger, reached up, caught the timbers above with both hands, and drew himself slowly up. By the time Farnie and Lopez were opposite the stall Jim was lying flat on his stomach in the deep hay.

"That's a might nice horse," he remarked to Lopez.

"Looks like one of Dave Condon's string," replied the other. His voice was as hard and clean cut as his appearance and, unlike most breeds, he spoke excellent English. "Most of his crowd are in town to-day. Heard he'd hired two men," Farnie swore.

"Looks like he was getting wise," he growled. Lopez laughed.

"Be a fool if he wasn't after all the fuss there's been over that water hole," Farnie turned on him.

"And a sweet mess you and Buck have made of it," he said harshly. "If you was going to start a war why didn't you do it properly. Young Bud's going to get well and Condon's hiring fresh hands and Buck says he's fencing the whole North range."

"Don't blame me," Lopez answered with a faint sneer. "You left Buck in charge and I did what he said. And Bud would have been dead right enough if it hadn't been for a fellow that happened along and stopped his horse just as it was going over into Cross Canyon."

"What did you want to shoot at Bud for?" Farnie demanded. "If you'd put a bullet through Mart Dowling there'd have been some sense in it."

"You're wrong there, Farnie. With Bud dead, the old man would lose heart. Like as not he'd quit," Farnie grunted.

"You may be right but I don't think so. Dave Condon's old, but he's a fighter and I reckon he'll fight to the end." He paused. "I ain't going to wait much longer. Fishlock was here to-day. You know what that means."

He had lowered his voice and instinctively Jim pushed his head a little further over the edge of the trap in order not to miss a word. Suddenly the piled hay on which he was lying began to slip. He felt himself falling and he knew he could not stop. He was going to drop almost on top of Farnie and Lopez.

Instinctively he reached out for the far side of the trap and his fingers clutched the rim. Then, even as he fell, he saw his chance. Farnie, hearing the rustle overhead, was in the act of turning when the toe of Jim's right boot driven by the whole weight of his swinging body, caught the big man under the jaw. The force of the blow was irresistible, and Farnie folded up, fell against Lopez and brought him to the ground. At the same time Jim landed almost on top of the two.

Jim was aware that Lopez was quick as a rattlesnake and twice as dangerous, but he was hardly prepared for the lightning-like speed with which the man still flat on the floor, went for his gun. Jim hadn't even time to stoop.

All he could do was to kick. The gun flew out of Lopez' hand and rattled across the cobbles. Lopez came to his feet like a coiled spring, but Jim was taking no chances, and before the breed could get set, hit him with all his strength. His fist cracked home with a force that jarred his whole arm up to the shoulder. Lopez' eyes glazed, he slumped backwards and fell with a heavy thud.

Jim watched him for a second or two, but the man was as completely out as Farnie. Jim took one glance down the stable, but nothing moved. He turned to the terrified Gray Boy, soothed him, then quickly saddled and bridled him and let him out. Within two minutes he was outside the town and riding sharply towards his rendezvous with Joan. He was laughing a little as he rode. The thrill of his swift short battle still ran through his veins. Luck was with him. Farnie had not recognized him, and Lopez' description would not help Farnie to identify him. Best of all, he was going to see Joan again.

Live Oak Spring lay a couple of miles outside the town. Here a strong stream burst from the limestone in the centre of a grove of heathery-leaved firs. It was a perfect spot for a meeting, for the ground all round was bare and open so that no one could approach without being seen or heard. Jim rode to the edge of the grove, dismounted, tied Gray Boy and walked forward. The moon was well up and by its light he saw Joan standing close to the source where the bright water gushed silently from a gap in the rocks. She heard him, turned and gave him both hands.

"Oh, Jim!" she said, "why did you come?" Jim laughed. He was so glad to see her again that he did not want to speak. It was enough just to stand and hold her hands. She released herself gently. "What made you come?" she asked again. In her anxiety she looked so charming that Jim had a crazy impulse to fling his arms round her and say "You, darling." He remembered Nita and took hold of himself.

"That's a silly question, Joan," he said. "For you know the answer. I came to get you away from Bignal and Farnie."

"I'm not afraid of them," Joan said. "Then you're either very brave or very foolish," Jim retorted. "You must know that Farnie is mad about you, and that he is as dangerous and unscrupulous as any man in the West."

"He can't make me marry him again, my will."

"I wouldn't put it past him," Jim told her. "There's no more law and order here than there was five years ago—less if anything. So long as you're in Loomis you're in danger." Anxiety clouded her eyes.

"But so are you, Jim—much worse danger than I. Why, I saw through your disguise in a minute and so will Farnie."

"I don't propose to give him the chance," Jim said. "I'm living at the Painted Cross and this is the first time I've been to town. Besides, Farnie believes that I am in England. I had my return announced in the New York papers," Joan was not convinced.

"The wonder is you didn't run into him today."

"I'd," Jim answered.

"And he saw you?"

"He saw my feet but not my face."

He told her of his encounter with Farnie and Lopez in the livery stable and laughed. Joan did not laugh. She was terribly troubled.

"This is worse than anything, Jim. Now Lopez will never rest till he has got even with you. That man is a devil."

"You can't tell me anything worse

about Lopez than I know already, Joan. He shot Bud Condon in the back," Joan wrung her hands.

"And he will do the same with you. He will know you by your horse. Oh, Jim why couldn't you have stayed at home? Even if you don't think of yourself you might consider Miss Vaughan."

"Nita was the first to tell me to bring you back," Jim answered. "After all your mother was British, Joan. England is as much your country as America," Joan lifted her head.

"You would have me run away, Jim—leave our ranch to Farnie or anyone who chooses to steal it."

"But surely it has gone already to the State for taxes," Jim said.

"It has, but I have been saving every penny from my salary. I have nearly five hundred dollars. I mean to buy it in at the next tax sale. I am not going to give up the ranch that my father worked so hard to make." Jim shook his head.

"Farnie means to have your land, Joan. He will outbid you," Joan's eyes widened.

"Why should he want it? It is valueless, without water."

"I can tell you," Jim said and quickly explained what Ward Haskell had told him about Farnie's diverting the big spring. Joan listened in silence. When Jim had finished her face was white.

"So that is why he wants to marry me," she said slowly.

"To be fair, I believe that Farnie is as much in love with you as he can be with anyone but himself," Jim said, "but I don't think he is after. He wants to own the whole country. That man's ambitions are boundless." He stopped a moment to remember of Farnie's words to Lopez came back to him. "Joan, who is Fishlock?" he asked suddenly.

"Someone coming," she said swiftly. "Get to your horse."

(To be Continued)

Suggests Big Vice Ring at Rouyn, Que.

Chief of Police Believes Clean-up Will Help Legitimate Business

(Rouyn-Noranda Press)

Two Rouyn businesses, estimated to have yearly profits running well into the tens of thousands of dollars have been closed down. And if there are any more such large and profitable operations dealing in the same wares, they will probably meet a similar fate.

Last week in Magistrate Court, two people, a man and a woman, were sent to penitentiary for trafficking in wares of the Criminal Code of Canada puts it, "living wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution"—white slavery.

The amount of money passing through the hands of these well-organized houses is almost unbelievable large. Indications are that one proprietor was making a profit of between \$25 and \$50 a day. That would be a minimum of \$175 a week or, if businesses were allowed to operate a full year, well over \$5,000 in that time for one man.

The total "take" at the house was said to be \$12,000 a month—nearly \$50,000 a year.

The Per centage System:

Evidence showed that the two places now closed up had set up a system of percentages to encourage those in the house in their activities. Money paid by frequenters to the women (anywhere from \$5.00 to \$20.00), was supposed to be divided two-thirds to the woman, and one-third to the proprietor.

Twenty per cent. of the profit was supposed to have been set aside for buying liquor. The barkeep had a rake-off of twenty per cent. on total liquor sales.

An unending supply of women seems to be available for certain of these bawdy houses, believed by police to be part of some gigantic north country vice ring that includes in its sweep at least Kirkland Lake, Rouyn, Val d'Or and Amos. Girls either move voluntarily from one town to the other or are moved by the management. At regular intervals there appears to be an influx of women from Montreal.

In this illegal traffic are a group of men, many of whom have long police court records. One of those sentenced here had been convicted of four offences here within the past year and a half, all of which involved him with either gambling houses or bawdy houses.

Some Here Approve

Realizing that there is an element in Rouyn that believes the existence of these places is good for business, Chief of Police Tissot issued the following statement to The Rouyn-Noranda Press yesterday afternoon: "The closing of these places of corruption will protect our younger generation from all kinds of evil and will in no way hurt the business or material standing of the town of Rouyn."

"On the contrary, the tremendous amount of money squandered on vice will be applied to better purposes, such as the household budget of the family man, and should in this way be of some help to business establishments."

The Chief pointed out in the interview that the smashing of the vice ring, with its tremendous profit—a good part of which probably finds its way out of Rouyn to the larger centres—

can mean only good for everyone in town, he believes. The campaign against disorderly houses will be continued, he says, with the same vigor shown recently.

Los: \$200 Cheque

There was no evidence in either of these cases that visitors to the two bawdy houses had been "rolled," but many in this district have had the experience. A case was brought to the attention of The Press this week in which a diamond drill runner came to Rouyn from the bush with a \$200 pay cheque. He immediately went to a well known "joint," now closed, and left his cheque with the proprietor. Next day, asking for his money, he was told that his bill was well over a hundred dollars and that the remainder had been given to "one of his friends." Not a cent of that man's cheque found its way into the hands of any merchant in Rouyn and he had come here not only with the intention of enjoying himself, but also of purchasing some needed clothes.

Want All to Vote in Township of Bucke

By-Law Disfranchising All Ratepayers in Arrears Is Not Popular

Cobalt, Dec. 30.—(Special to The Advance)—The allegedly tangled financial affairs of Bucke township provided meat for much of the discussion which took place at the annual meeting of the ratepayers of that municipality at North Cobalt on Monday afternoon, and at which a group of citizens made an effort to have members of the

council withdraw the by-law which disfranchises for civic purposes voters who are in arrears with their taxes. Councillors O. Ayotte, James Phillips and Fred Radley all signified their willingness to drop the measure, when asked for their views, because of the present circumstances, but Frank Mountford, township clerk, said the last meeting of the 1937 council had been held and a suggestion from the sidelines to take a vote of those present got no further.

Reeve Alex McRae, who is seeking his sixth successive term in the chair, told the meeting there would be no financial statement for this year available until after the auditor from the Ontario government who has been checking the books for some weeks past had completed his work. The reeve said an overdraft of \$5700 when he took office in 1933 had been reduced to \$1400 this year and he expected it would be still lower "when things are straightened out." There was no direct reference to alleged shortages during the proceedings on Monday, but Reeve McRae told The Advance the auditor had informed the council that \$952.20 was unaccounted for, although he did not anticipate the municipality would be the loser in this respect.

C. D. Cherner, clerk until recently, was at the meeting, but took only a brief part in the discussions, while his successor, Frank Mountford, occupied the chair at the gathering. Councillor James Phillips, who is opposing the reeve next Monday, thought it "a very good principle" to hire an auditor to examine the books every three months, or "he might drop in at any time." It developed during the proceedings that the auditor had sent out accounts to the ratepayers, and instances were cited where citizens were being billed

allegedly for money already paid, and it was because of this reputed uncertainty that arguments were advanced to have the defaulters' by-law dropped. Charles Pirie, nominated for council, led the attack on the measure, contending he could not see how the defaulters' list—which The Advance was told later was ready in the clerk's office—could be prepared "if they did not know exactly who had paid." Councillor Ayotte, who had moved the motion to adopt the by-law because he thought some citizens were neglecting their obligations—he said the clerk had told him only 55 per cent. of the taxes had been paid—favoured rescinding it on some grounds. Councillor Phillips was ready to "sit at any time" to strike it out, and Councillor Radley, asked for his view, said "My opinion is that I don't like it myself, although I think

I seconded the motion to let it go through." Mr. Pirie wanted everybody to have a vote in the circumstances, a sentiment echoed by another nominee, Thomas Fenton, Jr.

Kitchener Record—Hydro load in Kitchener continues to reach new peaks. And to summit all up this is the sort of mountain climbing that leads to a point of vantage from which one can look down on the depression clouds.

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