

By the Author of "Well of Gold," "Christabel," Etc.

# A HOME ON THE RANGE

by BENTLEY RIDGE

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**CAPTAIN DAINTY:** An Englishman, forced by business difficulties to emigrate with his family to New Zealand.  
**MYRLE DAINTY:** His daughter, a modern young girl, who discovers a new way of living—and loving—in the wilds of the new country.  
**REX WILDE:** A gay, wealthy, irresponsible young man, whom Myrle promises to marry.  
**GEORGE TELLFORTH:** A young but sullen and secretive widower, who loves Myrle but who is already engaged to be married.

## CHAPTER XI RELIEF AT LAST

"Was the earthquake widespread? What had happened in Christchurch?" Myrle wanted to know.

"They had a considerable shake," Tellforth told her. "A few chimneys came down and some buildings were cracked. But the cathedral spire is still standing; it was a mere nothing compared with the damage done up here."  
 Myrle was instantly reminded of something.

"Have you heard anything of Jack Henty?"

"No. Have you, Joe?"

"I thought he was up here."  
 He went down to town on the morning of the quake. Something must have happened to him," Myrle said, thinking of Mrs. Henty and her baby.

"He might have stopped in Waihi," Joe suggested. "Everything that could, came down in Waihi; and half the town is burned to the ground."

"I must go back to Mrs. Henty at once," said Myrle, her face clouded.

"Can't I go up there and let Joe take you back to Petersdown?" suggested Tellforth, gently. "You look worn out."

Suddenly aware of her dusty hair, her tear-stained cheeks, her torn, soiled cotton frock, Myrle coloured deeply. She noticed, too, the change in his tone; no longer peremptory, there was a sympathy in it which sent a little quiver through her.

But she shook her head, saying doggedly:

"No, I must go back. Joe couldn't look after Mrs. Henty."

Both the men admitted that "If one of you will let my people know that I'm safe, I'll go back at once. Perhaps a nurse could be sent up to look after Mrs. Henty. I don't see how she can be taken away yet; we couldn't get her across the river yet."

"Very well," said Tellforth. "Joe will go back to Petersdown, and let your father know. Your mother is in Christchurch with Mrs. Barbour. Really, you ought to go down to Christchurch yourself immediately to have a rest."

"I don't know so much about a rest," said Myrle, with a more spirited smile than she had been able to manage for the past four days. "If you had said a hot bath, I might agree with you."

Joe turned back, towards "Petersdown." Before he went Tellforth told him to make inquiries about Jack Henty.

"Poor soul!" said Myrle, as Tellforth helped her to mount his horse. "I'm afraid she's going to be very upset when we can't tell her anything about her husband."

With Tellforth leading the horse, they set off for the Hentys' house. Myrle composed herself in silence to get used to the new situation: Ten minutes before she had been as miserable, and very much more frightened, than she had ever been in her life. Now she felt so relieved as to be almost light-headed.

All responsibility was off her shoulders, she was on a horse, being led along a sunny road, in a world that seemed quite normal again. In addition, she was with Tellforth—and that in itself made her feel a kind of naive intoxication.

One thought haunted her and shadowed her happiness.

What had happened to Rosemary? She wanted to ask him—and she

dared not. He walked briskly in front, and she gazed fascinated at his seemingly oblivious back.

Suddenly, after a few minutes, he spoke, and it seemed as if he had known what she might be thinking about.

"I didn't tell you, did I?" he said, just glancing round, then looking away. "Rosemary came through it without any harm. She was unconscious at the time of the quake, and knew nothing about it. There's been a considerable improvement in her condition since."

"I'm glad," said Myrle, a little haltingly. "I wondered—and I was afraid to ask."

For a minute or two her mood was shadowed by heavy thoughts. But she was too tired to think for long. About her was the bright day, the sun shining on a world from which fear had been miraculously lifted.

"You must have had a pretty tough time up here," Tellforth said, looking at her.

"I was anxious," Myrle admitted simply.

She brought her soaring spirit to earth with a jolt.

"I ought not to be riding on this horse," she said suddenly. "You ought to ride on—I'm keeping you from Evelyn."

"It won't make ten minutes difference," said Tellforth, walking on.

"But she's so anxious, poor little thing. You must let me walk and go on ahead."

Tellforth stopped irresolutely, and protested:

"But I'm damned if I'll leave you to walk—I won't do it!"

Myrle had already dismounted, her face bright with determination. She did not know where this new energy came from, this new life which sang through her veins. But she felt she could have walked another twenty miles.

"HE LOVES ME"

Tellforth looked at her, and she saw, all-suppressed in his eyes, something of the recklessness she felt herself. He smiled—and rather surprisingly, swung himself into the saddle without a word.

"Good!" said Myrle. "That's very sensible!"

"Yes, but I'm not going to leave you to walk," he replied quietly. "This nag will carry two."

"I can very well walk," protested Myrle instantly, turning pink.

"Get up in front," said Tellforth. "No, really —"

"You're wasting valuable time." He squared his jaw obstinately.

To argue was more embarrassing than to obey. He gave her his stirrup and took her hand, and Myrle mounted easily enough; she sat sideways, leaning against his left arm while his right prevented her from falling forward; but as soon as they started she began to think she could never stay on.

She had nothing to cling to but Tellforth, and as the horse broke into trot she clung desperately, all but the necessity of the moment forgotten.

"All right?" said Tellforth.

Myrle nodded breathlessly.

"If this is what young Lochinvar's bride had to put up with," she thought wildly, as she lurched, pounded and swayed, "I don't think she can have liked it."

All the same, as she gradually found

her breath and her balance, the feel of the strong arms about her and the shoulder against which she had to lean her head, made her heart beat with something more than fear.

She surrendered herself to the moment and the blood ran warm in her cheeks.

"I shall never feel his arm around me again," she thought. "Never, never, never —"

Was he glad to be holding her like that? He never spoke or looked at her, but gazed ahead with bright, unwavering eyes. But she knew that he was glad; why else had he suggested it?

Time seemed to stand still, and they were alone and inconspicuous. There was only the sun above, the movement of the horse and the sound of its hoofs on the road.

Suddenly Tellforth spoke, so softly that she had to raise her head to catch the words.

"I thought you were dead," he said.

But when she looked up at him, his face was lifted, he was looking away. She might have fancied that he had never spoken.

But those words, so quiet, yet so tense with feeling, had told her all that she wanted to know. To have said outright: "I love you—" could not have told her more.

Myrle said nothing. She shut her eyes and her head rested gently against his shoulder; only her heart beat heavily, wayward and uncontrolled.

The horse trotted on steadily. Tellforth exclaimed once when they came to the great fissure in the road. But not another word was spoken until they came in sight of the cottage. They saw Evelyn's little figure dart out of the gate and come running towards them.

Myrle slid to the ground, and Tellforth dismounted. She stood by while Evelyn launched herself, yelling ecstatically into her father's arm.

"Oh, Daddy, why didn't you come before? Daddy, Mrs. Henty's got a baby! And, Daddy, Myrle and I swam the river. I thought you'd never come, Daddy!"

"Well, I can see you've got a lot to tell me," smiled Tellforth.

Mrs. Henty rallied remarkably when she heard that help had come; but it was a blow when Myrle had to break to her that nothing had been heard of Jack.

"I had a kind of feeling; I kind of knew something had happened. Oh, where is my husband?—where is he?"

But she soon pulled herself together bravely, as people in great trouble will.

"There's only one way of getting Mrs. Henty away from here," Tellforth told Myrle, after she came out of the tent. "And that's by plane. We can't get a car over the river."

"Would it be possible to get a plane?"

Tellforth said he thought he could arrange it, either through the Earthquake Relief Committee, which was running things in Christchurch, or by getting into touch with a friend at the airport.

"Can you hold on here for a few hours longer, if I take Evelyn with me, and get down to town immediately?"

"Of course, I can," said Myrle. "I'm afraid it's the only way."

"I assure you I don't mind staying a bit, now I know that everyone is safe, and that the world hasn't come to an end."

BACK TO REALITY

They had a meal of fried eggs and stale bread, and tea, sitting on chairs round Myrle's cooking fire in the open. Evelyn sat near her father, chattering excitedly.

"I was terribly frightened when the earthquake came—I was terribly frightened. But Myrle didn't seem to be frightened a bit. I hated it when we had to swim across the river, but Myrle tied our clothes on the top of her head, and she looked so funny I laughed, and we were nearly drowned Daddy—the water carried us away, and I could tell that Myrle thought that we had nearly been drowned afterwards, but she didn't say anything."

"Ah!" said Tellforth. "But that's because Myrle is a very brave person."

"What rot!" laughed Myrle, colouring brightly all the same.

But Evelyn looked at her with flushed cheeks and excited eyes.

"I think so," she said, and rushed on immediately into an account of how she had milked Mrs. Henty's baby would die," she ended breathlessly. "Like Lola's foal did. But, anyhow, it didn't."

When it was time for Tellforth to go, to Myrle's surprise Evelyn objected.

"But I can't go and leave Myrle, she can't milk the cow!"

When the child had been persuaded to go and say good-bye to Mrs. Henty, Tellforth said to Myrle with a smile: "You seem to have won her heart."

"I don't know why," said Myrle, but she was touched remembering how three days ago she had wished that Evelyn would dislike her less.

"I saw you riding in front of Daddy when you came along the road, said Evelyn when Tellforth lifted her up before him.

Both Tellforth and Myrle looked studiously indifferent. He held out his hand to Myrle before they started:

"Thank you for looking after her."

"I'm afraid all I did was nearly to drown her!" said Myrle, laughing again to hide the sudden tears which rose into her eyes.

"Goodbye."

His hand gripped hers convulsively for an instant. He looked at her as though he could not trust himself to speak. Then he was gone, Evelyn with him.

Myrle felt as though she were watching someone depart whom she would never meet again. He would go back to watch over Rosemary's sick-bed, to all that was expected of him.

Rex and her father would come, and Myrle would go back to the world which would claim her as it claimed Tellforth, and keep them always apart.

Tellforth had not been gone for two hours, when the world turned up in force. Three strange men on horseback

rode up to the gate, and dismounted expected her father to come through from "Petersdown" within an hour of so.

"We'll wait till then," said the tall man. "It ain't the thing for two women to be alone here and one of 'em sick."

They betook themselves to a peaceful spot under the gum trees, where they lay and smoked and slept in the sun.

At four o'clock Myrle was in the tent attending to the baby when she heard a shout from the road. She went out and saw her father and Rex dismounting at the gate.

She ran to meet them. Her father embraced her with great emotion, and with an almost total lack of British self-consciousness. He patted her back and hid his feeling by saying:

"Here we are at last—and here's Rex—ah—very glad to see you too, my dear!"

Rex kissed her, his hands shaking unsteadily.

"I've been absolutely frantic with worry about you, Myrle."

She was truly very glad, very glad to see Rex at last, glad to feel the kindly touch of his lips. Tears stood in her eyes. But as she walked through the gate between them both, she felt a kind of dread. The world had claimed her again as she knew it would.

(To be Continued)

### QUITE FRIENDLY

A truck driver was trying to make a hit with the waitress who served him, when he was told to get out of the kitchen.

"If you'll give me your phone number, I'll call you up sometime," he said.

"It's in the book," replied the waitress.

"Fine, and what's your name?" asked the driver.

"That's in the book, too." — Sudbury Star.

## Cochrane Council Urges Speed-up of Lignite Production

### Would Help Relieve Any Probable Wood Fuel Shortage Resolution Says.

There should be general interest in the North in the following from the last issue of The Cochrane Northland Post:

#### Council Asks For Lignite to Relieve Wood Fuel Shortage

Citing the fuel shortage as its reason for the action, the town council adopted a resolution on Tuesday night urging the use by the Ontario government of all possible measures to ensure the commercial production of lignite.

Decision to take this action followed debate upon two communications read at the council table. The first was a letter from the Dominion Fuel Controller again emphasizing the gravity of the fuel shortage, and outlining the ways in which the government is prepared to assist in meeting the situation.

The other was a letter from the Canadian Peat Fuel Committee, enclosing a resolution of the Toronto city council urging government support of peat developments, and requesting similar action by the Cochrane council.

Mayor Penney argued strongly for endorsement of the peat fuel resolution, and then adoption of a resolution on lignite. The majority of the council, however, felt that the peat beds were too remote to be of any assistance to Cochrane, and that this council should therefore not get mixed up in the agitation for development.

For the lignite resolution, an attempt will be made to obtain support from the councils of neighbouring municipalities.

Following is the resolution as adopted; copies are to be sent to the premier, to Mr. J. A. Habel, M.L.A., and to all municipal councils between Hearst and North Bay:

"Due to the difficulty experienced during the past winter in obtaining fuel for domestic consumption and a possibility of a greater shortage next winter, Resolved, that this council petition the Ontario government to do all in their power to make available the lignite fuel of the north, which in our opinion will assist in overcoming the present fuel shortage."

#### HIS ORDER

The waiter was taking the order of a pretty girl who was accompanied by a florid, podgy, middle-aged man. Waiter: "And how about the lobster?" Girl: "Oh, he can order whatever he likes." — Exchange.

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This is offensive year. One billion, one hundred million dollars are needed.

Let's put our savings unreservedly into Victory Bonds. Let's pledge our future earnings to buy MORE on the instalment plan. Let's back our boys up . . . to the last fighting dollar!

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A GOOD SIGN	
<p>The following is a sign in an Arkansas shoe repair shop — "If your shoes aren't ready, don't blame us. Two of our employees have gone after a heel to have your soles."</p>	
<p><b>Dean Kester, K.C.</b> Barrister-at-Law 13 THIRD AVE. TIMMINGS</p>	