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—BY—
CLIVE PHILLIPPS WOLLEY
 (AUTHOR OF "GOLD, GOLD IN CARIBOO," ETC.)

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**CHAPTER III.
 Cattle Thieves**

"Are you men up?"
 The mist wreathes of early morning, the very last of them, were slowly trailing away like dainty long-sarred dames from the hollow below the cabin, and the top half of the sun was showing through the timber which crowned the rise to the east of the camp, when Mrs. Rolt's head was protruded from the cabin door to ask the above question.
 But no one answered her. The fire had been made up and the men's blankets were hung on the bars of the corral, but there was no other sign of life if you except a grey bird like a jay, who was making a careful inspection of relics.
 "No one here, kitty," Mrs. Rolt called back into the cabin. "Now is our chance to make our toilet, and of course that dear old Jim has everything fixed for us, basin and water and towels. Makes me feel quite at home as he'd say."
 "How do you know that it was Jim?"
 "How do I know, you ungrateful girl? Hasn't Jim done these things ever since we came to the country? You don't suppose that your new chum would ever have thought of it?"
 "I think that you are very hard on my new chum," said the girl, showing a delightfully rosy face in a mit of disordered hair.
 "And I think that you are hard on your old friend," retorted Mrs. Rolt. She had almost said more than she had intended to, but caught herself up in time and buried her face healthily in the basin to hide her confusion.
 "Polly."
 "Well?" blowing the soapsuds out of her eyes and shaking the water from her wet hair.
 "What an object you do look dear, it's lucky your fringe is natural."
 "Is that all you wanted to say, Miss?"
 "I am all natural and so were you before you went back to England. Now you must needs wear that thing!" and she pointed indignantly to a portion of Kitty's locks which that charming maiden carried in her hand.
 "You must wear a toupee in England. How would you keep your hair smart without one?"
 Mrs. Rolt held up her hands with a little gesture of horror.
 "Spare me that word, Kitty, before breakfast at any rate. Smart! That is your gospel nowadays. Who said that you must be smart. I teach smart people."
 "You prefer—Jims."
 "Yes, infinitely. Jim is a man."
 "And Mr. Anstruther is not?"
 "I did not say so. I don't know. He may be one in embryo, but he'll take a lot of making."
 "Would you not rather that Jim had some of your pet aversion's 'makings' in the English language for instance. Or is it necessary to talk like a broncho buster to be a man?"
 Polly Rolt hesitated. She did not want to lie. Indeed downright truthfulness was one of her occasionally painful characteristics, but she did not like to admit any blemishes in her favorite.
 "Oh, well, fine English is as easy to put on, for a man like Jim, as your toupee is for you. A man must speak the language of a country if he wants to be understood in it. You used to understand Jim well enough before you went home."
 "And now I don't. He seems to me to have changed. In some way he does not seem to be natural any more."
 "I thought your complaint was that he was not sufficiently artificial—smart I mean."
 "He isn't that, either. But hurry up. Here they come," and the two ladies whisked round the corner and into the seclusion of their cabin, to put on the last finishing touches.
 A minute later they were congratulating Combe and Anstruther upon a fine buck which the two slung in the wagon.
 "Who shot it, Jim? You, of course," asked Kitty, her dainty head as trim as if she had just parted from her maid, though Mrs. Rolt's fringe was still a trifle damp and straight.
 "No, Mr. Anstruther killed him."
 "And that is all I had to do with it," added Anstruther. "Combe found his tracks; I went right away from them, walked all over the country until I was beginning to grow tired. He told me to get my rifle ready at the foot of a hog's back, and as we peeped over, said 'shoot!' That is all I knew of our hunt."
 "Jim had him picketed for you," said the girl.
 Jim laughed. "Picketted to his feed, Miss Kitty. T'aint much of a trick to know where a buck would be this time in the morning."
 "It is a trick you will owe your steak to, more than to my rifle," retorted Anstruther generously, and then betons for breakfast.
 Before that meal was over, the Indian, Pretty Dick, came up with the horses.
 "Plenty man track in the swamp," he said.
 "Fairclough's boys been hunting, I expect," said Jim, "though it's a long way for them to come for deer meat. I saw their tracks. Didn't you notice them going up that first rise to our right, Anstruther?"
 "No, I saw nothing. I was looking for a deer."
 "Not Fairclaw crowd, Jim. Milka tum tum Chilcootins," put in Pretty Dick.
 "What does he say?" asked Anstruther.
 "Says he thinks they were Chilco

tin Indians. Why do you think so Dick?"
 "Me see old camp. See plenty little sticks go this way," pointing south. "You come along, Jim, I show you."
 The two went away together, and after a short absence returned. What they did so, even Kitty could see that something had gone wrong.
 "What is it, Jim?" asked Mrs. Rolt.
 "Chilcootins. KheLOWNA's band, think."
 "That doesn't matter, does it? Oh, KheLOWNA is all right. They won't bother us."
 "I suppose not. No, of course, they won't. Old KheLOWNA is as tame as a wet hen, but I don't like that," and he held out for inspection a small piece of fawn-colored hide.
 Anstruther took it and turned it over in his hand. "A buck's ear," he said, in the tone of a squire who had found a rabbit wire. "The beggars have been shooting our deer, but you can't prevent them, can you? There's no game law in this free country."
 "No, we can't stop them shooting deer and don't want to. There's plenty for all, but that's not a buck's ear. The Risky Ranch don't mark deer."
 Anstruther saw then that the ear had been cut in a peculiar fashion, so as to make it swallow-tailed.
 "Why, that is our mark, Jim," cried the Boss's wife.
 "That's what I'm thinking, Mrs. Rolt. That's our mark sure. The Boss will have to keep an eye on those fellows. There's been a lot of stock missing lately."
 "The Boss won't like that."
 "No, nor I'm afraid you won't like what I'm going to say, but there's no help for it. We've got to give up our shoot and go back. We'll have to round up those cattle thieves right away."
 Kitty's face fell. She had looked forward to her shooting picnic and hated to give it up.
 "What should you do if we were not with you, Jim?" she asked.
 "Follow them right away."
 "But you couldn't take them all single-handed."
 "No, nor don't want to, but I could see who they were for sure, and maybe get proofs against them."
 "Why could we not go with you, Jim?" suggested Kitty. "It would be better fun than hunting. I'm a born detective."
 The girl's bright face was all alive with excitement. The thought of rear had never yet entered her head.
 "The Boss won't like that," she said, pointing to the hills beyond. "It will take you eight hours riding to get to the river where those big red bluffs creep up. You know them. You can see the ranche from there. It's nine o'clock now."
 "Then we could be in sight of the ranche by five."
 "Yes, but there's no place where you could camp."
 "Once we saw the ranche we shouldn't want to camp."
 "There's no telling. It looks fine enough now, but so it did this time yesterday."
 Certainly the day looked fine enough. The storm of the day before had cleared the air so that it was more brilliantly lucid than usual, and the long sloping lands, radiant in the morning sunshine and sweet with the strong scent of the sage brush, were eminently provocative of a gallop.
 Kitty's horse, not entirely innocent perhaps of his rider's heel, began to dance about and pull at his bridle as if he would drag the swaying girlish figure from the saddle.
 Jim's eyes dwelt on her hungrily. That was how he loved to see her. Had he not taught her to ride when she was but the ten-year-old darling of the ranche, and was not the handsome beast who carried her now the colt on which he had expended such long trouble whilst she was away in England?
 It was hard to give up this holiday, and harder to leave her to spend it with that haw-haw young fool from the Old Country.
 "I don't half like letting you go back by yourself, Mrs. Rolt," he said, "nor I don't like spoiling your pleasure, but those fellows will be out of the country before we can get on to their trail if I don't get a move on."
 "Don't worry about us, Jim, we can get home all right, only we must stand here talking any longer. What are you going to do with Pretty Dick?"
 "Send him along with you with your letas. I don't want him too near me. He is a Chilcoot himself, if he is half civilized. But hold on a minute."
 He stood shading his eyes and looking far away to the west.
 "You haven't got that pair of glasses with you, have you, Anstruther?"
 "Yes, here they are."
 Jim fumbled with them for some

time. Like many outdoor men in the West he was not very familiar with the use of binoculars.
 "They ain't no good to me. Guess I don't savvy them properly. You take a look through them for me. Ain't that smoke there to the west?"
 Anstruther looked and Jim watched him.
 "No, not there," he said irritably.
 "Lord! a man could count the rings on a rattler that far. Away beyond on the next big bench towards the river, near those clumps of pine."
 Anstruther could not see the pines. He saw a dark line, but that it meant pines was not obvious to him as it seemed to Jim's naked eye.
 Mrs. Rolt took the glasses from him. "Let me try," she said. "I know what to look for. That is half the battle, and then, after a short scrutiny, she said—
 "Yes, I believe that there is a column of smoke or mist just to the right of the pines."
 "It ain't mist. There's no swamp up there. I'll bet my socks that's the camp. Tell you what, Mrs. Rolt, if you've a mind to come along, I've almost a mind to take you. They might not suspicion anything if they saw ladies along and so give me a show to see more'n I would if I went by my lonesome."
 Kitty clasped her hands and let her horse go.
 "Hold on," cried Jim. "You'll want some blankets, won't you? We s'ant make it back to the ranche to-night. I mean to camp alongside those fellows."
 He turned, calling Anstruther to follow him, and rode after Pretty Dick's wagon, from which they returned with all the blankets they could carry.
 "You and me will have to rough it to-night, but it won't hurt us any, if we keep up a good fire."
 The other made no objection. In the warm sunlight the prospect of a cold, sleepless night does not seem very terrible. It is when the slow hours give you time to think of your discomfort that the pinch comes.
 Then you vow that you will for the future leave your grub, rather than your blankets, behind.

Continued next week.
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VICKERS
 Miss Bella Allan spent Sunday last with Miss B. Donnelly.
 Mr. and Mrs. John Torry, of Southampton, are spending the summer months in this neighborhood.
 Mr. and Mrs. Herb. Chittick, of Lamlash, spent Sunday last with the latter's parents here.
 Mr. and Mrs. David Donnelly visited Mr. and Mrs. Henry McCaslin, of Hutton Hill, on Sunday last.
 Mr. Thos. Wilson, and daughter, Mame, of Durham, spent one evening this week in the vicinity.
 Miss Macdonald, of Almonte, was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Vickers, recently.
 Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Lindsay, of Glenelg, visited their daughter, Mrs. A.W. Hunt, one day this week.
 Mrs. Wise, of St. Thomas, is spending a couple of months with her son, Mr. F. Wise.
 Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Burnett, and family, of Durham, visited with Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Livingston.
 Mr. Frank Vickers, of Renfrew, is visiting the parental home at present.
 Master Lindsay Hunt spent a few days with his grandparents, in Glenelg.
 Rev. Mr. Deller preached his farewell sermon here on Sunday last. Rev. Mr. Hampson will be our pastor for the coming year.
 Miss Ambrozine Bailey is spending a few days in Durham with her grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. McFadden.
 Mr. Herb. Hunt's house is nearing completion. Mr. Morton, and son, Alex., are doing the carpenter work.

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