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## A TENDERFOOT'S WOOING

CLIVE PHILLIPPS WOLLEY

(AUTHOR OF "GOLD, GOLD IN CARIBOO," ETC.)

Supplied Exclusively in Canada by The British & Colonial Press Service,

CHAPTER XIX.

"What is your programme, Al?" whispered the Boss, when the ranch lights had died out behind the hog's

"I was calculating to make for that gulch as leads into Grouse Creek. We could leave our horses there, and do a sneak down it to Khelowna's camp." "How do you know he is camped

"It's the nearest water to the place where Jim saw the smoke. He might not be there, of course, but it's worth rying. We might get the drop on the whole outfit if we did a good sneak at

"We might, as they won't dream of our assuming the offensive, but it isn't likely. They aren't white men and the @<del>@@@##########</del> woods talk.

"That's so, but if they spot us before we get the drop, it's only three o one. They'll run, sure."

That is the spirit of the West. ANYONE ONE NEEDING | Three to one is about a fair match in New Pumps, Pump Re- the eyes of the Western man, if the nost cases, although some "fool ground. vhite," as Al would have put it, may ometimes "get left."

> The Boss, at any rate, seemed satised, and the five went on silently in ne darkness, which was of the kind hich absolutely obliterates everying. A chinook wind was blowing, ne of those curiously soft warm inds which occur in British Columew hours like a red hot knife. By eir ears they could tell when they ere riding over prairie, for then ere was only the whisper of the cas at their feet, or through timber,

scover the outline of a pine, or the and your efforts would have been in him

ng pigeon, old Al led them steadily a, never complaining of the dark less, never hesitating, or asking quesions, and his companions felt their ing. ray after him, trusting implicitly to 3 guidance and to the instinct of heir horses.

"Detter get off here, Boss," Al said t last. "It's bad going. Hold on to our stirrup leather and let your horse ome along after me," but he himself emained in the saddle.

It has to be more than bad going to ersuade an old cowboy to foot it. "Who's that blundering idiot?" he rissed a minute later as some one

broke a stick, "can't you move your hoof without knocking the trees down. if they ain't deaf they'll hear that in Sody Creek bar.' Though the old man's language was

more picturesque than accurate, a good many things seemed to have heard that unlucky stick. Until it broke, but for the solemn soughing of the trees, the dumbness of the woods had matched the darkness of the night. You would have thought that woods and prairie were alike untenanted, had you not remembered that all those who ing up to let some of the water drain move in them by night, are stalking or stalked, seeking the life of another or hudderingly trying to save their own. ree, unseen feet pattered, unseen

's the stick cracked, there was a rusling in every bush, a stir in every wings fluttered for a moment, and then again all was still,-listening. As the five paused with all their senses on the alert, a tiny bright red star showed for a moment in the gloom ahead of, and above them.

"Gosh! I didn't know that we were that close." muttered Al. "If that fool hadn't have touched his fire I'd have blundered right into them. Lie

everything that before the fifteen bed wearily far behind. there was any live thing in such a come silence as that. But Al did not share in this feeling.

Dan," and so saying he led them back the timber. by the way they had come.

crept into the sky the faintest suspi- imagine, lying as it did in a hollow cion of light. Black darkness it would and containing no timber big enough have appeared to most men still, but to serve as a shield against rifle bulto these whose eyes had become ac- lets; but there was nothing better in customed to the utter dark it sufficed sight, and it had just one thing in its to show a hollow land. "We'll tie the horses here, and wait

a bit. When we can pretty nigh see our sights, we'll begin our sneak. thought they was."

The black belt of gloom which surrounded the hollow in which they lay, was suddenly starred in a dozen places by quick red jets of flame, and timber, Rolt and his companions the silence shattered by the ringing raced over the space intervening bereports of as many rifles, after which tween the pines and the cherry bush the darkness came back again and at headlong speed. When Rolt crashed a wounded horse.

cover, boys, quick."

Probably no white man but Al could have led the ranch posse through those woods at night as silently as he had done. They had stirred no heavy beast to precede them and carry a an after suffering miserably for warning to their foes. There had been two days from bowel complaint, no fluttering of disturbed wings in was cured by one dose of Chamfront of their advance, except that berlain's Colic, Cholera, and Diar-

printed in large type for an Indian to

Ever since Dan "broke that tree"

suspecting it. When the volley was fired Dick Rolt had had his eye on the exact spot in to save it from detection. which one of the red stars of light had burst. He had heard the bullet sing past him, and for a fraction of a second had seen the prone figure of the man who fired the shot. But he and not replied to it.

The brilliance of the momentary flash had accentuated the darkn sa for him, and taken away from him all idea of locality, so that to have replied would only have been to waste a shot and betray his own hiding-

He was lying now behind the dead horse waiting to snap at the next star | into their borrows. which should appear or to meet the

He had no notion how close his fel- in his burrow. one is white, with rather heavy odds lows were. He could not hear them, on the one, and history has proved nor see the outline even of the nearest hat the handicap is not too heavy in bush. It was still pitch dark on the Al lying at full length in the scrub,

Suddenly a hand closed round his inkle, and a voice whispered. "We've got to wriggle out of this. Don't lift your head, but just slew round on your belly and snake it after me. There's no hurry. I'll go slow." "But the horses?" asked Rolt.

"Yours is dead, ain't it? If they fications look natural." want to shoot the others we can't stop ia, cutting the snow off the hills in a 'em, blank them. Come," and Rolt the Boss. who by this time had his head near away from him.

hat solid damp blackness you might and half by instinct that he managed open. ave burst your eyeballs in trying to to follow Al, of whose tortuous pro-

was growing softer and softer, until unmolested. at last he might almost as well have been swimming, but he could see noth-

to whisper, just when Rolt was be shoulder, and his own shot was echo ginning to wonder whether he would ed by two more from the cherry patch not rather be shot than go on any far- under the cover of which tiny voiley

"We're in the crik bottom." "I could have guessed that." Al gave a low chuckle.

"Pretty blanked cold, eh? Well. we'll cure that. We've got to move now like two-year-olds. Are you ready?" and he rose to a crouching

the timber. Now come, and we'll b at them yet," and stooping as he ran the old frontiersman led his companion along the creek bottom under the shelter of its banks, into the heavy pine timber. There they threw themselves on the ground, soaked to the bone and panting heavily.

"What now? Are we going to fight them here?" asked Rolt at last, stand-

"Fight Injuns in timber? Not much We've another five minutes before they'll miss us, but the light's coming. They're getting impatient. Hear

"That" was another volley poured into the hollow. "Hain't missed us yet, anyways, free, Are you good for another burst,

"If it's not too far." Rolt's running days were over, and he was a heavy

man, used to riding. "No, it ain't far," and the old man began to run again as if he had been five and twenty, Toma and the other For a quarter of an hour the five Indian loping along as easily as men lay motionless, and so still was | wolves, whilst Dan the big-footed, sob

minutes had passed, the Boss felt con- At last on the extreme edge of the vinced that the light which they had pine belt. Al paused. Beyond the timseen must have been born of their ber the open country rolled down toimagination. It could not be that wards the Fraser and the dawn had

"It's our only chance and a slim one. It's got to be that cherry patch," "It's a mercy none of the cayuses Al said, pointing out to the open. whinnied," he whispered, "but it won't | "There ain't another place in sight as do to trust them any longer. Let me would give us a show," and he set off git past you, Boss. Now foller me running again at top speed for a little back. Go easy, and for the love of four-cornered patch of wild cherry life, don't break any more trees. bush, about a thousand yards from

It looked about as bad a place to At last he stopped. There had hold against an enemy as you could

For seven or eight hundred yards at least on one side, and for seven or eight miles on every other side, there was no cover of any kind larger than They're a blanked sight nearer than the thin bushes of sage brush and the patches of bunch grass. A coyote As he spoke his words were justimight have crawled through that unseen. It seemed impossible that anything else should.

Realizing that at any moment their enemies might reach the edge of the the silence, but for the screaming of into the edge of the cherry patch he had not another yard of running pow-"Guess they beat us on the sneak," er left in him. With a feeling that he muttered old Al coolly. "Get into had not known since he had won the quarter at Rugby, he dropped where

he was and lay still. "Euchred them so far," panted Al

A well known Des Moines womhoea Reemdy. For sale by Gun's Drug Store.

take some killing. Out with your jack knives, boys, and I'll show you a trick as I learned of the Crees," and he began to hack down the boughs and young trees all round him, bui ding with them a kind of "wicky up. or small circular bothy, such as Indians use for bath houses. Over the top of this he threw his blanket, which he had carried strapped to his back until then, and over that again he piled loose soil and soda, keeping a nervous eye all the time on the edge of the timber.

"Chuck your coat over your sti ks i you haven't got a blanket," he said to Rolt, "and then fix it this way, and he went down on his knees and began to scratch with his knife like a dog who is going to bury a bone.

All the earth he took out he piled upon the blanket, throwing with i moss and leaves and small boughs, unthe stalkers had been stalked without til when he had finished with it it looked like a great ant heap just suffi ciently within the cover of the brus!

Then he lent Rolt a hand with hi mound, ordering the boys to do the same at their respective corners, and | "Shove boys; shove like hell, if you ever want to eat bull beef any more They ain't here yet, but they can't be |

When men are working for the lives it is marvellous how much car be done in a minute, and these me. knowing how much depended upo: their speed, had their shelters fil ished, when a low "hist" from Al son them all into their holes like rabbit.

There was no sign of Indians that rush which might have followed had Rolt could see, but as Al lay motion he attacking party consisted of white less he imitated him, and for a full fifteen minutes almost held his breat!

At the end of that time he heard a voice behind him, and turning, saw calmly whittling a pipeful of tobacco "They can't see me here," he said. "I'm too far back in the scrub. Have you got your bury good and deep, Keep a whittling of it out so as you

you. Savvy? I'm agoin' out now to take a passear and see if them forti-"Don't be such a fool," commanded

can lie low and the bullets'll go over

"I ain't no fool, Boss. No Injun Often the Cheapest old Al's heels, saw these draw quietly ever hit a man at a thousand yards, and I've got to know how our little Imitating his companion, Rolt show will strike the gallery. Likesquirmed on his belly through the wise I'm anxious to know if we have r then the soughing of the trees bush which closed over him, so that a full house," and so saying, he struck hade weird music for them, but in it was only with the utmost difficulty a match and wandered out into the

In the most unconcerned way in the gress he could see but little, even world the old fellow strolled along edge of the timber against the sky, when he was within arm's length of straight towards the timber, smoking as he went, and looking back occa-He knew that he was going down sionally at his handiwork, and for And yet with the instinct of a hom- hill, and that the ground under him about three hundred yards he went

Then a shot was fired, the dry "We're all right now," Al stopped the ground whilst his rifle went to his he dashed back to his lair.

"All right," he said, as he crawled inder his mound, "the seats is all took and the currain's up. It's just three jundred yards to where I dropped my ap, and now I'm goin' to put in time liggin'. If I was you I'd do the sam . t's goin' to be safer underground thaip a tree by and by," and after that "Keep your head low till we're in or a long time the Boss saw no more

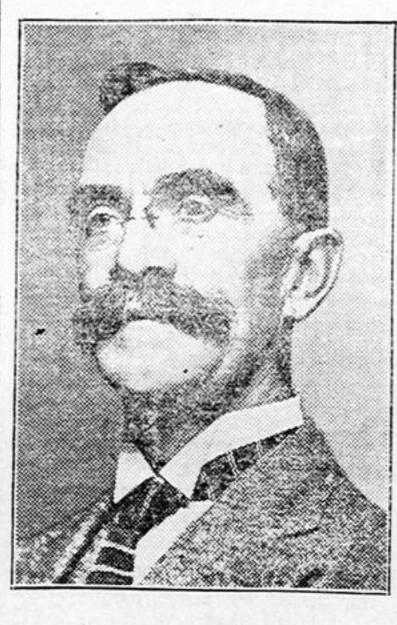
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