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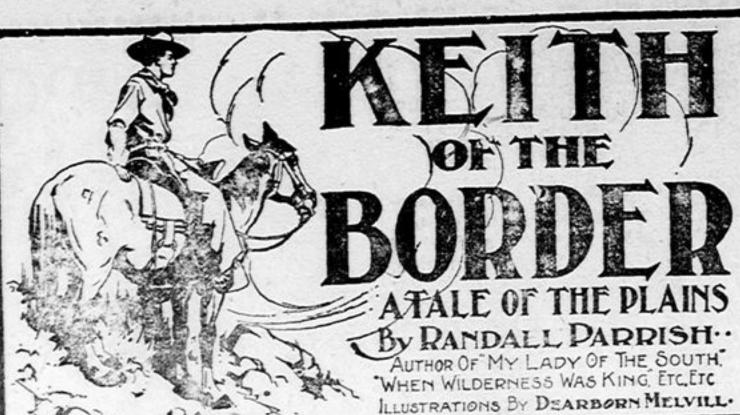
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Should also report additions and changes in their list of subscribers, either to the Local Manager, or direct | places! He staggered from weakness, to the Special Agent's Department, almost terror, and grasped the table compelled to trust myself to your pro-Montreal.

The Bell Telephone Company of Canada

> By the Sexton From the Vancouver Province.) dars have stolen the tongue of f a parish church in France.

as unaware of it until it was



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CHAPTER VIII.

The Wilderness Cabin.

The light was considerably farther away than they had at first supposed, and as they advanced steadily toward it, the nature of the ground rapidly changed, becoming irregular, and littered with low growing shrubs. In the darkness they stumbled over outcroppings of rock, and after a fall or two, were compelled to move forward with extreme caution. But the mysterious yellow glow continually beckoned, and with new hope animating the hearts of both men, they staggered on, nerving themselves to the effort, and following closely along the bank of the stream.

At last they arrived where they could perceive dimly something of the nature of this unexpected desert oasis.

The light shone forth, piercing the night, through the uncurtained window of a log cabin, which would otherwise have been completely concealed from view by a group of low growing cottonwoods. This was all the black, enshrouding night revealed, and even this was merely made apparent by the yellow illumination of the window. The cabin stood upon an island, a strip of sand, partially covered by water, separating it from the north shore on which they stood. There was no pairs, Cement Curbing or sign of life about the hut, other than the burning lamp, but that alone was sufficient evidence of occupancy. In JNO. SCHULTZ or myself at the shop spite of hunger, and urgent need, Keith hesitated, uncertain as to what they might be called upon to face. Who could be living in this out-of-the-way spot, in the heart of this inhospitable desert? It would be no cattle outpost surely, for there was no surrounding grazing land, while surely no professional hunter would choose such a barren spot for headquarters. Either a hermit, anxious to escape all intercourse with humanity, or some outlaw hiding from arrest, would be likely to select so isolated a place in which to live. To them it would be ideal, Away from all timils, where not even widely roving cattemen would penetrate, in midst of a desert avoided by Inlians becarse of lack of game-a mar might hide here year after year without danger of discovery. Yet such a one would not be likely to welcome their

> he stepped down into the shallow wa-"Come on, Neb." he commanded,

coming, and they were without arms.

But Keith was not a man to hesitate

long because of possible danger, and

"and we'll find out who lives here." The window faced the west, and he came up the low bank to where the door fronted the north in intense darkness. Under the shadow of the cottonwoods he could see nothing, groping his way, with hands extended. His foot struck a flat stone, and he plunged forward, striking the unlatched door so heavily as to swing it open, she made no attempt to reply; mer and fell partially forward into the room. As he struggled to his knees, clear eyes gazing frankly into h the lighted interior, he seemed to per- now for the first time, fairly-a su opposite, the yellow and red lights rough log walls plastered with yellow clay, and bung about with the skins of wild animals, a roughly made table, bare except for a book lying upon it, and a few ordinary appearing boxes, evidently utilized as seats, together with a barrel cut so as to make a comfortable chair. In the back wall was a door, partially open, apparently leading into a second room. That was all, except the woman.

Keith must have perceived all these in that first hurried glance, for they were ever after closely associated to- secret, but I know you just the same. gether in his mind, yet at the moment | Saw you at the 'Gaiety' in Indepenhe possessed no clear thought of any- dence, maybe two months ago. I went thing except her. She stood directly three times, mostly on your account. behind the table, where she must have You've got a great act, and you can sprung hastily at the first sound of sing too." their approach, clutching at the rude; mantel above the fireplace, and staring fixedly at him, her bosom rising and toward him, her face white, her breath | falling, her lips parted as if to speak. coming in sobs. At first he thought Apparently she did not know what to the vision a dream, a delirium born do, how to act, and was thinking Carson City, but he employed a man from his long struggle; he could not swiftly. conceive the possibility of such a presence in this lonely place, and stagger- cision, "I am going to ask you to blot ing to his feet, gazed widly, dumbly that all out-to forget that you even at the slender, gray clad figure, the al- suspect me of being Christie Maclaire, most girlish face under the shadowing dark hair, expecting the marvellous vision to vanish. Surely this could not be real! A woman, and such a woman as this here, and alone, of all is sufficient that I am here alone with to hold himself erect. The rising tection. You may call me Christle wind came swirling in through the Maclaire, or anything else you please; open door, causing the fire to send you may even think me unworthy reforth spirals of smoke, and he turned, spect, but you possess the face of 2 dragging the dazed negro within, and gentleman, and as such I am going to snapping the latch behind him. When trust you-I must trust you. Will you he glanced around again he fully be- accept my confidence on these lieved the vision confronting him terms?" would have vanished. But no! there she yet remained, those wide-open,

rectly into his own; only now she had | slightly changed her posture, leaning toward him across the table. Like a flash he comprehended that this was reality-flesh and blood-and, with the swift instinct of a gentleman, his numbed, nerveless fingers jerked off

"Pardon me," he said, finding his voice with difficulty. "I fell over the step, but-but I didn't expect to find

his hat, and he bowed bareheaded be-

a woman here." He heard her quick breathing, marked a slight change in the expression of the dark eyes, and caught the glitter

of the firelight on a revolver in her lowered hand. "What did you expect to find?"

"I hardly knew," he explained lamely: "we stumbled on this hut by acci dent. I didn't know there was cabin in all this valley." "Then you are not here for any

purpose? to meet with any one?" "No; we were lost, and had gone into camp up above, when we discovered your light."

"Where do you come from?" Keith hesitated just an instant, yet falsehood was never easy for him, and he saw no occasion for any deceit

"Carson City."

"What brought you here?" "We started for the 'Bar X' ranch down below, on the Canadian; got caught in a sand-storm, and then just drifted. I do not know within twenty miles of where we are."

She drew a deep breath of unconcoaled relief.

"Are you alone?" "The negro and I-yes; and you haven't the slightest reason to be afraid of us-we're square."

She looked at him searchingly, and something in Keith's clean-cut face seemed to bring reassurance, confidence in the man.

"I am not afraid," she answered, soming toward him around the short table. "Only it is so lonely here, and you startled me, bursting in without warning. But you look all right, and am going to believe your story.

What is your name?" "Keith-Jack Keith."

"A cowman?" "A little of everything, I reckon," a souch of returning bitterness in the tone. "A plainsman, who has punched seattle, but my last job was govern-

ment scout." "You look as though you might be more than that," she said slowly. The man flushed, his lips pressing

Hightly together. "Well, I-I may have been." he con gessed unwillingly. "I started out all right, but somehow I reckon I just went adrift. It's a habit in this coul-

Apparently those first words of com ment had left her lips unthinkingly. stood there directly facing him. Neb's black face peering past him into own. He seemed to actually see her ceive in one swift, comprehensive ple, slender figure, simply dressed. glance, every revealed detail. A lamp with wonderfully expressive brown burned on a rudely constructed set of eyes, a perfect wealth of dark hair, a drawers near the window, and a wood clear complexion with slight oliva fire blazed redly in a stone fireplace tinge to it, a strong, intelligent face, not strictly heautiful, yet strangely blending in a peculiar glow of color. attractive, the forehead low and broad, Under this radiance were revealed the the nose straight, the lips full and inclined to smale. Suddenly a vague remembrance brought recognition.

"Why, I know you now." "Indeed!" the single word a note of

undisguished surprise. "Yes; I thought you looked oddly familiar all the time, but couldn't for the life of me connect up. You're

Christie Maclaire." "Am I?" her eyes filled with curi-

"Of course you are. You needn't be afraid of me if you want it kept

She stood in silence, still looking

"Mr. Keith," she said, at last in deof the Gaiety."

"Why, certainly; but would you ex-

"There is little enough to explain. It you. Whether I wish to or not, I am

Keith did not smile, nor move. Weak from hunger and fatigue, he frightened brown eyes, with long lash- leaned wearily against the wall. es half hiding their depths, looking di- Nevertheless that simple, womanly ap-

peal awoke all that was strong at sacrificing within him, although h r words were so unexpected that, : 'r the moment he failed to realize their full purport. Finally he straightened

"I-I accept any terms you desire," he gasped weakly, "if-if you wil

only give one return." "One return?-what?" "Food; we have eaten nothing for

sinty hours." Her face, which had been so white, freled to the hair, her dark eyes soft-

"Why, of course; sit down. I ought to have known from your face. Thera is plenty here-sper as it is-only you

The Girl of the Cabin. He saw Nob drop down before the pleging fireplace, and curl up like a tired dog, and observed her take the lamp, open the door into the class



"I-I Accept Any Terms You Desire."

room a trifle, and slip silently out of sight. He remembered staring vague'y about the little room, still illumined by the flames, only half comprehending, and then the reaction from his desperate struggle with the elements overcame all resolution, and he dropped his head forward on the table, and lost consciousness. Her hand upon his shoulder aroused him, startled into wakefulness, yet he scarcely realized the situation.

"I have placed food for the negro beside him," she said quietly, and for the first time Keith detected the soft blur in her speech. "You are from the South!" he ex-

claimed, as though it was a discovery. "Yes-and you?"

"My boyhood began in Virginiathe negro was an old-time slave in our family."

She glanced across at the black, now sitting up and eating voraciously. "I thought he had once been a slave; one can easily tell that. I did not ask him to sit here because, if you do not object, we will eat here together. I have also been almost as long without food. It was so long. by here, and-and I hardly understood my situation-and I simply could not force myself to e-t."

He distinguished her words clearly enough, although she spoke low, as if she preferred what was said between them should not reach the ears of the negro, yet somehow, for the moment, they made no adequate impression on him. Like a famished wolf he began on the coarse fare, and for ten minutes hardly lifted his head. Then his eyes chanced to meet hers across the narrow table, and instantly the gentleman reawoke to life.

"I have been a perfect brute," he ac-It wiedge frankly, "with no thought except for myself. Hunger was my master, and I ask your forgiveness, Miss Maclaire." Her eyes smiled.

"I am so very glad to have any one here-any one-in whom I feel even a little confidence—that nothing else greatly matters. Can you both eat, o and listen?"

Keith nodded, his eyes full of interest, searching her face.

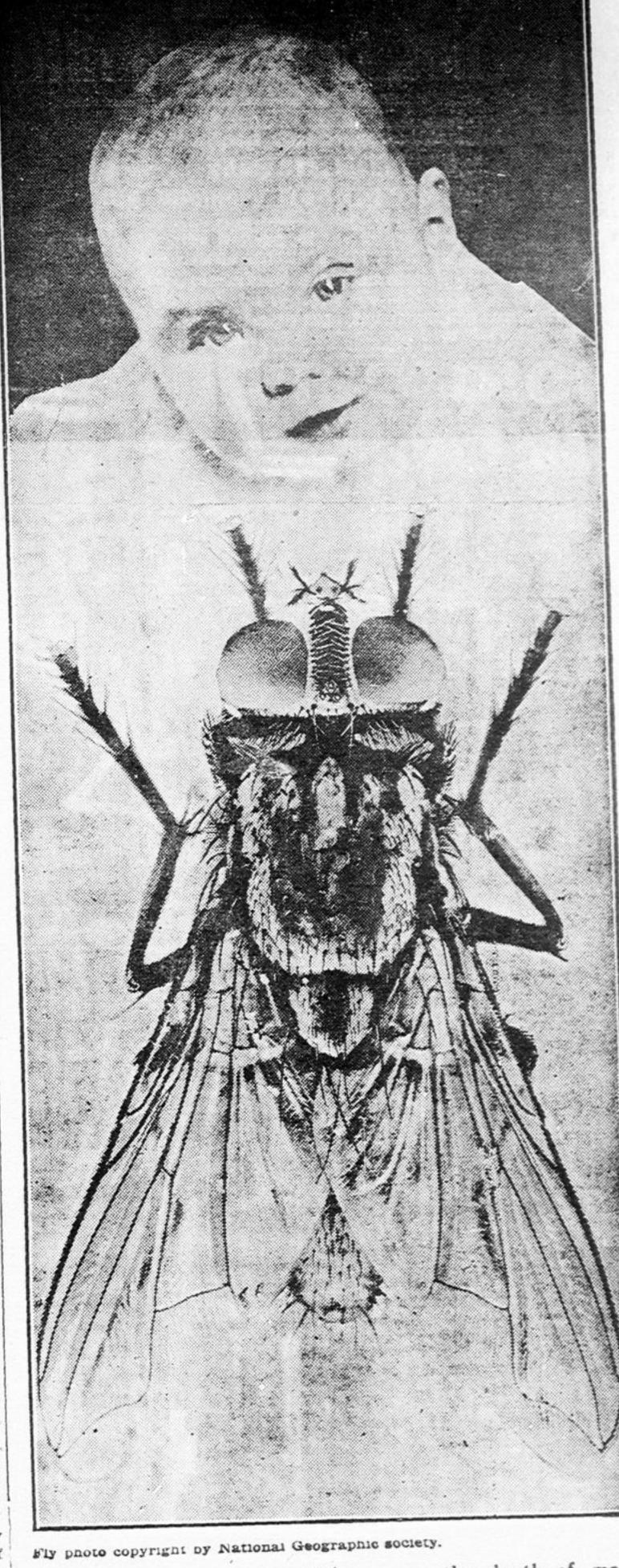
"Whoever I may be, Mr. Keith, and really that seems only of small importance, I came to Fort Rarned seeking some trace of my only brother, whom we last heard from there, where he had fallen into evil companionship. On the stage trip I was fortunate enough to form an acquaintance with a man who told me he knew where could meet Fred, but that the boy was hiding because of some trouble he had lately gotten into, and that l should have to proceed very carefully so as not to lead the officers to discover his whereabouts. This gentleman was engaged in some business at to bring me to this place, and promised to get Fred, and meet me here the following day. There must have been some failure in the plans, for I have been here entirely alone now for three days. It has been very lonesome, and -and I've been a little frightened. Perhaps I ought not to have come, and I am not certain what kind of a place | Programme Twice Daily. this is. I was so afraid when you came, but I am not afraid now."

"You have no need to be," he said soberly, impressed by the innocent ful that he was present to aid her. "I could not wrong one of the South."

"My father always told me I could \$ 12 trust a Southern gentleman under any circumstances. Mr. Hawley was from my own State, and knew many of our old friends. That was why I felt such unusual confidence in him, although he was but a traveling acquaintance."

"Mr. Hawley?" Continued on page 7.

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