

A Tenderfoot's Wooing

By CLIVE PHILLIPPS WOLLEY
(Author of "Gold, Gold in Cariboo," Etc.)

CHAPTER IV

"It was a glorious and memorable ride for all of them. Four perfect horsemen in a horseman's country. Such a taste of paradise as, in this weary old world, generally precedes trouble."

"How much of this belongs to the Risky Ranch, Mrs. Rolt?" asked Anstruther.

"All of it as far as you can see."

"None of it," corrected Jim, "except a few meadows and some water front on the Fraser as you can't see."

"How annoying you are, Jim. You know what I mean perfectly well."

"Only you don't say 'it,' and he doesn't know."

"Well, if it isn't yours," persisted the puzzled Anstruther, looking from one to the other, "why should, not anyone run their cattle over it?"

"They might if they did not need water or hay. These two Harrison boys are trying it now."

"What Jim means, Mr. Anstruther, is that we have corralled, oh, I beg your pardon, Kitty, secured the exclusive right to all the water and all the hay meadows in the district, and without these the run would not be worth anything. Stock must have water, and in winter must sometimes have hay."

"I see, but how do you keep your cattle. I don't see any fences."

"We don't keep them. They keep themselves in summer, and in winter—" she broke off abruptly, and pointed to where a number of slow-moving beasts were strung out in line of march towards the river.

"Do you see that band? Those are the first of our beasts coming in. For the next fortnight you will see them wandering in by hundreds. They know the seasons as well or better than we do."

"Do you mean that they have been out all the summer and are coming in now of their own accord?"

"Just that. In all sorts of beautiful little parks islanded in that black timber, in groves of hardy, seen, little stream, and away their summer untroubled and how they are coming home with their calves behind them, our income."

"It seems easy. Where does the work come in?"

Mrs. Rolt turned laughing in her saddle to Jim.

"Isn't any work, is there, Jim?"

Jim, who was riding in his shirt-sleeves, with his coat in a roll at the back of his saddle, looked meditatively at his own bare corded arms.

"Might be some in the meadows in 'skeeter time," he suggested. "Rounding up the strays keeps a man in the saddle quite a while, and there's some don't hanker after too much branding and such-like, but it's all in a lifetime. If it is worth it, it's better than any pay I ever heard tell of. Guess if I was the boss of the Risky, I wouldn't change places with anyone."

"That's pretty of you, Jim."

He looked at her smiling, no ways abashed.

"I guess the boss agrees with me, and he knows England as well as he knows B.C., and has sampled the best there is to be had 'prey night all over."

"Yes, but he had his fill of England first, Jim, and he is older."

Her eyes followed the laughing couple which preceded them, as her thoughts followed Combe's, and the pain in his honest grey eyes was reflected in hers. She was sorry for her old friend, and knew that it was useless to explain. The old world had called its own, and both knew that Kitty had listened to its call.

Meanwhile the others had ridden ahead, and were now holding up their hands to keep the stragglers back.

They left their horses, and stole quietly on to some tall trees which fringed a small lake, a blue turquoise set in the red gold of the reeds, and islanded amongst the grey green of the sage brush.

For the last fifty yards the boy and girl, they were little more, crept on their hands and knees, and when they raised their heads above the reeds there was a sudden splashing and scurry as a bunch of mallards sprang quacking from the water. In quick succession four reports followed one another, and two of the ducks tumbled headlong into the lake. For a moment the rest of the birds looked as if they were going straight away, but some foolish prompting of curiosity brought them back, swinging in a high circle overhead.

"Stand still, Miss Clifford," they heard the Englishman say, "now let me see the flock, and again there were four flashes, but even to the onlookers it was almost impossible to distinguish more than two reports.

"Again two birds came down, not all aslant, on struggling wings, but with their heads under them, dead in mid air, killed instantly, as if by lightning.

"That's a fine performance, Miss Clifford. Very few girls at home could beat that," they heard Anstruther say. "You were too quick for me."

"What didn't you shoot?"

"No," he lied gallantly. "See, my gun is loaded still, and he threw open the breach, showing the two cartridges which he had slipped in with the rapidity of an old hand almost as fast as a flick of the wrist.

"Then I killed those two myself."

"Unless they died for love of you."

"And who killed the others?"

"I suppose that you did."

"Oh, nonsense; I'm not going to believe that."

"Well, we'll take one each then, if I can get them. Give me your hand, please, for a moment," and under the transparent pretext of wanting support, he slipped his hand into hers, and managed to retrieve his game.

"Perhaps he held the little warm hand a trifle longer than the circumstances warranted, but the girl's rosy face registered no serious protest.

"She's a very fluent liar," muttered Mrs. Rolt half to herself as they rode up.

"Bags his game very neatly," answered Jim.

"And she's a little fool," said the lady viciously, but Anstruther neither heard the criticism nor the praise any more than did Kitty.

In their veins the young blood was heating so that their ears were deafened to everything except the measure of one old song, which once truly learned becomes the music of a lifetime.

For them the scent of the sage brush, the hurry and roar of rising wings, and the blue of lonely upland lakes, would be as the keys of paradise as long as they both should live, bringing back dreams with which duck-shooting should have little enough to do.

Unfortunately that song is a duet, and gives pleasure to two only, so that though the pools seemed innumerable, and the glory of the day unstinted, and an end came to Jim's loquacity. He was all eyes, but his tongue had failed him.

Suddenly as Jim and the boss's wife followed soberly behind the younger couple, an owl called from the timber which they were now skirting.

The two in front had pulled up, and were waiting for Mrs. Rolt to join them. When they came alongside Anstruther asked:

"Did you hear that owl, Combe? Isn't it early in the day for him to be calling? There do you hear him? He must be quite close to us."

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"That ain't no owl."

"What is it, then?"

"A Chilcoteen telling his pals that there are white men coming. You'll see the smoke of their camp as soon as this timber opens up again. I guess I'll ride on ahead, and so saying he put his horse into a gallop.

"Why is he in such a hurry?"

"I expect he wants to get a glimpse of their camp before they have had time to cache anything," replied Mrs. Rolt. "Jim is looking for things not mentioned in the game list."

But when the three reached the Indian camp they found Jim Combe sitting loosely in his saddle, the bridle thrown carelessly on his horse's neck talking with the utmost good temper to a grey-haired old mummy, as if he were enjoying a gossip in his native tongue.

"Says that the tribe is hungry, that the wolves have grown numerous, and the deer all gone back away off," said he as the others came up, mimicking the old woman's manner. "Seems like it, doesn't it?" and he pointed to a great square stack of fresh hides.

"There's another stack just like that, under those fifty deer. How have they been hunting?"

"They have been hunting?"

"And how many men stop here?"

"My son, his father, and two more."

"Who is your son? What you call him?"

"Kineshaw," whined the old hag in a curious sing-song.

"Oh! Cutlus Jack, eh?"

"Nawitka, white man's name. Cutlus Jack."

"Then his father is KheLOWNA. You KheLOWNA's wife, Emma?"

"Nawitka, my Emma."

"You don't mean to say that awful old woman is the chief's wife," whispered Mrs. Rolt.

"Yes. She's the princess. Nice princess, isn't she? Well, we're going to camp here, Emma."

Anstruther smiled at Kitty. Combe's seemed a somewhat informal manner of addressing a princess.

"Not much wood," grumbled the crone.

"Oh, the wood's all right. It's a warm night and we shan't want much."

"Water very bad, makes me sick."

"That is why you have camped by it. All right, old Loveliness. I'm on to your curves. Doesn't seem to hanker much after our society, does she, Mrs. Rolt?" he said haughtily, as he took the horses, and let them away.

Returning in a little while, his axe chopped out the route at which Anstruther had been vainly tugging, cut down a dozen trees and stripped them whilst he whistled, so that the beds were heaped high with sweet smelling hemlock; the fly was tightened and set firmly between its guy, and the fire made to leap and glow like a merry heart in the gloom.

It is not a bad thing for other people to have one man amongst them who knows how to help himself.

And now as the afternoon waned, an Indian appeared dragging the first deer into camp.

In the course of the next hour he and four others returned at one time, bringing with them seven deer in all, enough meat to last them with ordinary care for a month or six weeks.

"I wonder if it is too dark to take a photograph," asked Anstruther, who had grown tired of doing nothing.

"Just think what a ripping picture all those solemn-looking beggars would make, squatting by the fire, with the princess grubbing in the ashes."

"It's much too dark, and, besides, I don't think that they would like it," replied Mrs. Rolt.

"Like it. It can't hurt them. They ought to feel flattered that any one cares to preserve their awful faces," and so saying, he strolled nonchalantly over to the neighboring camp.

"I wish he would not do it," muttered Mrs. Rolt, undecidedly.

"Oh, what nonsense, Mary," replied the girl, "you really are too absurd about those Indians. I've photographed them before and they did not mind a bit, but he will come back if you call him."

Unfortunately, Mrs. Rolt wavered and neglected her opportunity.

With perfect assurance Anstruther stropped up to the four sullen figures who glowered at him as he came, he did not move a muscle.

"Nice evening," he said, "isn't it. I don't happen to speak your lingo but hope I see you well. Ever had your pictures taken?"

Still the four remained motionless. "Not in a conversational mood, eh? Well, perhaps that is better. Mustn't talk whilst the operation is being performed." Put your head a little on one side, sir. No-savvy, eh? Well, think of 'er, old chappie, and he pointed to Emma with a grin, and kneeling down adjusted his camera, aiming it right into the faces of the silent group.

"As he did so Emma disappeared into the tent.

"Whoop! Gone to ground," he shouted with a laugh, and the four, rising with a growl, turned their backs upon him.

(To be continued.)

OFFICIALLY "KILLED."

Instances of People Who Have Read Their Own Death Notices.

War always brings out curious situations in more ways than one—ways which most folk would declare utterly impossible were they included in any romance by a novelist, says London Answers.

Quite recently there arrived at his mother's house in Richmond, Surrey, a private soldier, who simply sent his relations, delicious with joy by that strange homecoming, for only a day or two previously he had been announced by the War Office authorities as "killed in action."

But what made this case even more astounding was that this very same soldier was posted as "killed" during the Boer War.

Quartermaster-Sergeant Kerr, of the Royal Field Artillery, who was mentioned for special gallantry in one of Sir John French's despatches, can boast of a very strange experience in a similar fashion during the South African War. He was officially reported "killed," whereas he was never seriously wounded.

When the "dead" man came back from South Africa all alive, his own memorial tablet was there staring him in the face, much to his and his friend's amusement.

The "killed" man, indeed, can claim the unique distinction of possessing a ticket for the case with our late Ambassador to China, Sir Claude Macdonald, who, smilingly one night, at a public meeting in England, told how both he and Dr. Morrison had had the strange experience of reading their own obituary notices in "The Times," in connection with the siege of the Legations at Peking, and the alleged massacre there during the Boxer rebellion some years back.

"But," said Sir Claude, "I can go a bit farther than my friend the doctor. For I received, in due course, a ticket of admission to my own funeral service, held in St. Paul's Cathedral."

How extremely difficult it may be for a living man to prove that he was not "dead," in certain cases, may well be seen from the experience of John Partridge, the famous astrologer of bygone days.

Partridge was making a big income from the sale of his almanac, with its thrilling prophecies, every year. The great Dean Swift was annoyed at this and at the gullibility of the public, so he determined to stop it.

One year, therefore, he himself issued a rival almanac, prophesying therein that Partridge would die on March 22nd of the coming year. When this day arrived, there appeared in several papers due notice of the astrologer's death, with a few lines about his career. Dean Swift even wrote and published far and wide an "Elegy on the Death of Mr. John Partridge!"

This fairly "put the lid on." In vain did the "deceased" write to this paper and that, and publish pamphlets, declaring that he had never "died" at all. Nobody believed him!

Poor Partridge at last gave up the struggle to convince people he wasn't "dead."

EVEN FISH CAN BE DROWNED

If They Consume All the Oxygen in Closed Vessel.

The fish is cold-blooded—that is, its temperature is very high slightly above that of the water in which it lives, and is therefore needs but little oxygen to keep the blood warm enough to sustain its life. This oxygen supplied to the blood by the gills in respiration is not obtained by decomposing the water, but by separating the air from it.

It is, therefore, necessary that the water in which fish live should be supplied with air, and this is one of the direct benefits of the agitation of oceans and lake winds. Fishes confined in aquariums often die for this very reason, because the water is not aerated. They consume all the oxygen in the closed vessel in which they are placed, and no more being supplied they die, and may be said to be drowned, because they perish from the same cause that occasions death by drowning in lung-breathing animals—that is, want of air.

Judge (to actor, who has been found guilty of murder)—"Is there anything you would like to say before I pronounce sentence of death?" Actor—"Yes, I would like to say that this will be positively my last appearance."

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The Farm

Beef Raising in Canada.

In dealing with the finished steer it is rightly remarked that to succeed, the requirements of the purchaser must be complied with. The standard of the beef market has changed greatly in recent years. The bullock that commands the highest price is a compact, well finished animal, weighing not more than 1,500 lbs. on foot and if he weighs only 1,200 lbs. he will fetch the top figure, provided he has the form, quality and finish. Even the thousand pound "baby beef" is looked for by the best buyers on this side of the Atlantic, but such cattle are not shipped abroad. The change is greatly to the advantage of the producer as other things being equal, the younger animal goes to market, the less is the cost of food and the greater the profit to the producer. To secure delicate flavor and tenderness, a certain proportion of fat is necessary and this should be incorporated with the flesh or lean meat, rather than appear only as a covering to the muscles. The great secret in producing a carcass of beef is to treat an animal in such a way that the fat grows with its life. It is unfortunately the too common practice of Canadian beef raisers to produce all the fat that an animal carries in the course of a few months. Much of the fat put on in this way is deposited on the outside of the carcass; it is largely wasted, as it is useful for little else than tallow. The carcass that dresses out showing specks and streaks of fat throughout the lean tissue commands the highest price. The only way to be sure of prime quality is to maintain the animal in good condition by a system of liberal feeding from birth to maturity. Then the finishing period is comparatively short, and the carcass produces the highly desirable marbled beef.

Information on this subject is contained in a new edition of Bulletin No. 13 of the Live Stock Branch, Ottawa, "Beef Raising in Canada." It is available on application to the Publications Branch of the Department of Agriculture. There are upwards of one hundred pages and nearly as many half-tone illustrations.

Conserve Fertilizer Elements.

A recent United States Agricultural Bulletin says:—

"In the unusual conditions existing in the fertilizer trade, it is important that all fertilizing materials on the farm, especially those containing potash, should be conserved. The fertilizer ingredients already existing in the soil should be utilized and developed to the fullest extent. A great deal can be accomplished in this direction by deep ploughing, constant cultivation, and thorough tillage. There should be a proper system of rotation. Especially where one crop has been grown for several years a different one should be planted this year. Green manures and cover crops should be used as much as possible in their proper rotation.

"Of the organic substances, manure, both solid and liquid, is the most important and should be utilized wherever possible. All material of an organic nature, such as leaves and bedding of various sorts, should be composted and the compost applied to the soil. Special attention should be given also to the conservation of wood ashes. Depending on the character of the wood, they contain potash in quantities varying ordinarily from 3 to 10 per cent. All tree trimmings, brush cuttings, etc., should be burned and the ashes derived therefrom utilized.

"The application of lime to many soils is of undoubted benefit. Though the availability of the fertilizer elements in the soil may not be greatly increased by its use, the resulting improvements in physical and bacteriological conditions may increase considerably the productivity of the soil."

Farm Labor Conditions.

Of the 400 farmers visited last summer in connection with the survey

MARVELS AT THE BRITISH ARMY

FRENCH WRITER FINDS MUCH TO PRAISE

Tells of His Impressions—Skill of the Canadians in Scouting.

In the summer of the past year M. Maurice Barres made a tour of inspection of the British army, and has set down—primarily for a Paris daily paper—his impressions. The result, published under the title of "Une Visite a l'Armee Anglaise," is an extremely interesting human document, describing visits to various sections of our army, and ends with summing up the writer's impressions of "L'Effort Anglais."

This chapter opens up with the words: "I hope I may have succeeded in communicating to you, my readers, the emotion, the pleasure, which I experienced as I saw for myself the wealth, the beautiful orderliness, and the seriousness of the British forces in the Nord. It is a masterly work, a miracle of will and method, and the saying of Lord Kitchener, 'The world will be astonished,' has been justified."

In a Town in France.

He began his tour in a little French town, of which he says that, "were it not for our thoughts of sorrow, would be a scene of comic opera."

The first sign of the British army he saw was two killed Scots talking to a servant in an inn—which does, in fact, suggest the opening of an operetta. As he walks, he wonders at the quiet demeanor of the British soldier, and he notes that "the shrill and monotonous melody of the drum and fife seem to enchant them more than is reasonable." He is deeply impressed by the expression of "bonnie voluntar" on all the faces, and a British sentinel outside the headquarters of Sir John French strikes him as a perfect embodiment of "le sentiment du devoir." These were his first impressions, and each hour confirmed them; good will and sense of duty are the essential characteristics of the British soldier.

M. Barres spoke to Sir John French, who said to him: "By the victory of the Marne, General Joffre has placed himself in the ranks of the greatest soldiers the world has seen." This he mentions incidentally, abruptly, in the middle of a talk on other things—just as it is reported here.

Our Aryan Brother.

What fired his imagination most was the extraordinary variety of nationalities fighting under the Union Jack. The first Indian he saw was from the Punjab, and walked like a "prince postman," but looked like a rural of romance. The silence and immobility of the Eastern fascinates him, and he tells how when one of them explained the mysteries of the Kukri the only sign of life in the whole company was in their eyes, and one of them said, "Pauvres Boches," with a significant gesture. He concludes with "Greetings to our Aryan brothers robed like the Kings of the Magi." He wonders why they fight. He is told it is because "The Great Raj" has summoned them, and because they know that the Boche is an unclean thing.

The Canadian was less strange to him, but interested him more because of the ties of blood. He speaks of their unexampled skill in scouting, and tells how once they sent a message to the German trenches:

"It is no use sending another patrol. It is the Canadians who are in this trench."

The London Soldier.

M. Barres praises the cheerfulness, the seriousness, and the efficiency of the London-born soldier. Particularly does he praise the care the officers take of their men; and the regard of the men for their officers. He admires the spirit which makes every British officer act as if he were on trial before a tribunal of his men. Over and over again he speaks of the completeness of our equipment and of the excellence of our food. He recounts with respectful amazement of a General who took a personal interest in the fact that a company had had jam of the same kind to often. The General's explanation was that, after all the Government had contracted to see the soldiers well fed.

Wise Widow.

"Blank married a rich widow, but they don't get along very well."

"What's the trouble, her disposition?"

"Yes, her disposition to handle all her money herself."

Squelched Him.

"I gave up smoking for you," said he.

"What did you give up for me?"

"Seven of the finest fellows in the world," said she. And then silence reigned.

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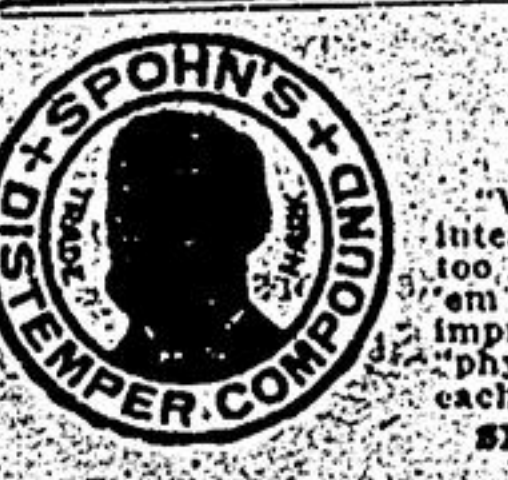
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Very Much Worn.

Sandy—"I want to buy a necktie." Shopman (showing some fashionable specimens)—"Here is a tie that is very much worn." Sandy—"I'd like to buy a necktie that's very much worn." Shopman—"I've plenty of them at home."