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A Tenderfoot's Wooing

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

CHAPTER XVII.—(Cont'd.)

At once her revolver rang out, shot after shot, until every chamber was empty. It mattered little whether she hit or missed. The main thing was to recall the men, and almost before she had ceased firing a horse's hoofs thundered through the corrals, and a voice hailed her.

"That you shooting, Polly? Take care. Don't shoot any more," and then for a moment there was bedlam in the darkness outside, horses galloping amongst the buildings, and men running, and twice the sharp metallic ring of a rifle.

After that the main body of galloping hoofs seemed to recede towards the hills, but the Boss and old Al rode up to the house.

"Open the door and give me a lantern, my girl. They have all gone, I think, except two, and they won't do any more harm."

There was a hardness in the Boss's voice, which Mary Rolt had never heard before in all the years she had known him, but then she had never seen him before in the light of his blazing stacks.

"Did you see anyone when you fired," he asked, as soon as she had let him in.

"I think so, but I am not certain. Oh, Dick, I have not killed anyone, have I?" she cried, breaking down suddenly, and clinging to him.

"Steady, there, steady, little woman. Keep your nerve, a bit longer. You are doing splendidly. No, you have not hit any one, more's the pity. Where did you think you saw them?"

"Over there by the store-house."

"That don't make no odds. We've plenty left."

"I suppose so, if we are lucky enough to live to want it."

"Oh, we shall. We'll pull through all right, but I wish the women folk were out of this, at Sody Creek or Victoria."

"You think it is war, then?"

"You bet it's war. What did they want them rifles for. They only burned the stacks to get a show at the store."

There was no answer to this, but the two listening heard the beat of the returning hoofs, and before long about half of the men of the ranch reined up their lathering horses in front of the mess house.

"Did you get any of 'em?" asked Al. "Devil a hoof."

"You got sick of the hunt mighty quick."

"Yes," drawled one of the boys. "I ain't almighty stuck on night huntin'. Once you're over the hog's back it's darker nor the ways of a provincial politician. It's so blanked dark it fairly drowns you after that glare, and he looked towards the blazing stacks. "The Injuns kinder sunk out of sight in it."

"We shall have to send some one to warn the Faircloughs."

"That's done, Boss. I sent Dan. He's up half way to Grouse Creek by now if the Injuns haven't got him."

"Thank you, Al. I think two of you had better come in and sleep in the house to-night, just to reassure the ladies. The rest of you had better sleep with your horses, and there will have to be a couple on the look out all night. They might try to rush us."

"Not whilst them illuminations is turned on," said Al. "I guess you can sleep solid to-night. When it's dark it will be different. But I'll see to the look-outs, Boss, when we've put them two out of sight," and he pointed to where something lay in the shadow off the stables.

"It was a pity as it was Kineeshaw," he added. "There'll be no let up now until they wipe us out or some one lets daylight into old Khelowna. He thought a heap of Kineeshaw."

CHAPTER XVIII.

That night the watchers watched in vain. The three and twenty stacks of good hay which should have been turned on beef at thirty or forty dollars a head, fared up and then died down into clear red heaps of fire, and in the white day light were nothing but grey spots on the home meadow. They had been licked up as clean as the mist was by the sun, and left little more trace than the Indians who had lighted them.

These had vanished utterly. Two spots of fresh turned earth, outside the corrals, might suggest the recent presence of the Chilcotens to those who knew what lay below, but these and the charred railings where the stacks had stood were all the traces they had left.

From the hog's back to the black timber of the enclosing hills there was no sign of a camp fire, no hint of a man's presence, and one by one the scouts sent out from the ranch came back with the same story. The Indians had been about a score in number, and were not now to be seen, neither had they left and trail to say

which way they had gone. The most experienced among the trackers guessed that they had scattered, and it was possible to say where they would re-unite. But Jim would be back, said the men, and then they could make up their minds what to do.

"But Jim did not come. Though they watched for him from hour to hour; though even an ordinary rider in ordinary haste might have been back before the second night fell. The dark came again, and with it no Jim Combe.

Neither did morning bring him, and it was not until late afternoon on the fourth day that two men walked slowly before their led horses into the corrals.

Kitty, whose impatience was devouring her, saw them come. Jim was smoking, of course, and staring about him as he slouched along without a sign of haste, without a shout to tell that he had come. Surely never any man walked as slowly as Jim Combe, never any man looked less like the express messenger returned.

"He's rosin't seem in a hurry," said Kitty, and there was a world of disappointment, and bitterness in her tone. She expected every one to show his excitement as she did hers.

"Did you ever expect Jim to look as if he hurried?" asked Mrs. Rolt, who was leaning over the girl's shoulder at the window. "Did you want Jim to boil up a gallop at the finish like the driver of an Irish jaunting car? Look at the horses?"

They indeed told a tale of haste in the past haste of which they were no longer capable, and possibly any man with a view to effect might have dragged his limbs as the horses dragged theirs.

Jim only walked slowly and limped a little, stopping to speak to one of the boys and to help him off-saddle the roan. Then he walked quietly to the house with the doctor, not stopping to hear much of what old Al had to tell him.

But he managed to take in a great deal in those quiet glances which Kitty resented so much.

"Any one hurt?" were his first words to Al, before the old man had time to open his mouth.

"Two of them hurt badly," pointing to the fresh earth. "None of our folk scratched."

"Didn't try to rush the ranch then?"

"Broke the store-house and got the guns while we were at the stacks."

"Might have known that they would try that. What did you all want to go to the stacks for? Didn't calculate to blow them out, did you?"

Al hung his head. "It is dispiriting when you have a great story to tell, to have it understood and sentence pronounced before you have had time to open your lips."

"How many Injuns were there?"

"About fifteen, I guess."

"More than that," said the man who had not been there, but he did not stop to argue or hear any more details. He remembered the two bands which he had seen on his way to Soda Creek, and he knew all that it was vital to know, so he followed Prothero quietly to the house.

The doctor's report was a good one and soon made. When sober he was a capable man, and Anstruther's injuries, however painful, were sufficiently simple.

"A bundle of nerves, fine bred and high strung," was Prothero's comment. "A steer who had had the same smash up would have gone on feeding. Three ribs broken, badly shaken up, and bruised a bit, of course; but the ribs have knit already. You did the right thing, Mrs. Rolt. These are your bandages?"

"No, they are Jim's."

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Rolt. There are more Indians out than the boys think, and it's a vast deal more serious than I like. I saw two hands coming this way on my ride to Soda Creek. I met Khelowna and I'm afraid he has raised the whole country side."

The Farm

The Culture of the Sugar Beet.

It is rather difficult to say what is best soil for the production of the Sugar Beet, since it seems to make itself at home almost everywhere when the soil is sufficiently rich and sub-soil warm and dry. The least suitable soil being the very heavy clay and even that can be made very good beet land by a generous application of lime.

The safe rule is this—that any land which is suitable for the production of corn is suitable for the production of beets. The better corn land is, the better beet land it is likely to prove, and whatever is the best way to prepare it for beets.

We believe that the very best way to prepare a field for beets, is to begin the previous season after a crop of wheat, oats, barley or clover has been harvested, and plough about three inches deep. This is much better than disc harrowing or other surface cultivating, as it is necessary to turn the stubble in order to get the best results. Any manure which is to be used should then be applied and the land worked several times to mix the manure thoroughly through the soil, and get as much weed seed germinated as possible. This should then be fall ploughed deeply, or if spring ploughing is resorted to, it should be done early enough to allow the surface to be frozen a little to insure a good seed bed.

The ideal seed bed for beets in the spring is just what would be considered an ideal bed for wheat in the fall (i. e.) a solid bottom with a fine top. This is best obtained by using only a roller and light harrow, the last three or four times over your field, which will tend to pack the bottom and pulverize the top.

Planting and Thinning.

In planting there are two important points to be remembered. The first is to use plenty of seed, and the other to plant very shallow. In a series of experiments covering 5 years, conducted at the Experimental Farm at Guelph, it was found that beets planted half an inch deep averaged more than 20 tons per acre. Those planted one inch deep yielded about 19 tons. Those planted one and a half inches deep yielded only 18 tons, and that each half inch added to the depth of planting deducted very materially from the crop, until the beets planted four inches deep yielded only about four tons per acre.

We believe that early in the season while the soil moisture is close to the surface that half inch is the best depth. Later in the season when the soil moisture is not quite so near the surface and the soil is warm a little further down, it is often advisable to plant one inch deep, but never under any circumstances should beets be planted more than 1 1/2 inches deep. In using a beet drill there is not likely to be much trouble, but with a grain drill deep planting must constantly be guarded against. The beets should be cultivated as soon as the rows can be followed; about a week later they should be cultivated again, and the thinning should be done immediately after the second cultivation. At this time the plants should stand about 1 1/4 inches high. If the thinning is delayed at this time, the growth goes into a great many beets, which should go into one, and the crop is likely to suffer accordingly. In addition to this, it is much more difficult and expensive to thin the crop when it gets larger. After thinning, the beets should be cultivated about once each week until they fill the rows. If the rows are planted about 20 inches apart, this should be from 4 to 5 weeks after thinning.

Cultivating.

If the crop does not come up as quickly as expected it can often be

Improved by rolling with an ordinary land roller. In cases where the crust is forming, the roller will help to pulverize it and if the land is too loose it will pack the soil more closely around the seed and assist the germination. A great many growers roll their field three or four times after the crop starts to come up as it will never damage the beets even when two or three inches high, and almost invariably improves the condition of the soil. It is particularly necessary to cultivate after each shower, so as to break the surface and thus conserve the moisture. This question of conserving soil moisture is a most important one for every farmer to understand. To grow the ordinary crop of roots or grain requires from 18 to 22 inches of water. During the growing season the rainfall is usually about 10 to 12 inches. It is necessary, therefore, to have stored in the sub-soil a large amount of water during the winter and early spring for the use of the crop in the dry months of the summer. Any soil which is hard on top, particularly if it is inclined to crack will lose moisture very rapidly while in that condition. The careful farmer must keep a well cultivated mulch of three or four inches on the surface to prevent evaporation. This applies both before the crop is planted as well as during the growing months.

The second hoeing should be done about three weeks after the thinning or when the plants are about 10 to 12 inches across. The second hoeing is recommended in all cases where there are any weeds, and is practiced by a great many good growers regardless of weeks, for the extra cultivation it gives to the land. The rows are ordinarily planted about 20 inches apart, and the plants left 10 to 12 inches apart in the rows. In very rich, loamy soil, where the beets are inclined to grow out of the ground, they should be left closer, so as to compel the roots to go down into the soil for a heavier crop of better quality, but will also eliminate a great deal of the waste in topping.

Harvesting.

It is very important to harvest the crop when it is ripe. Too many farmers believe that while the other crops should be harvested when they are ripe, that the beets can be harvested at any time. This idea is entirely wrong. From our observations we believe it to be just as important to harvest beets when they are ripe as it is to harvest a crop of wheat, oats, corn or any other of the farm crops. If not harvested they are likely to take a second growth by which they not only lose heavily in weight, but also deteriorate considerably in sugar.

In this country it usually takes about 140 days to mature the crop. The general appearance of the field should tell the experienced grower when the crop is ripe. The tops will flatten down so as to run the rain away from the roots, and about one-third of the lower leaves will turn of a golden brown shade. If there should be any doubt it can be determined by pulling a few beets, when if they are clear of fibres, it is a sure indication that the roots are not taking anything more from the soil, and should be harvested at once. If the roots are not being delivered promptly after harvesting, they should be protected from the sun and frost by covering the piles with leaves, but every effort should be made to get them to the factory at the earliest possible moment after taking from the ground as they will then work up to much better advantage and with

A Hint to June Brides

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greater profit to the manufacturer and to the industry.

If the reader has followed us closely he will observe that we have endeavored to impress five points, the importance of which can scarcely be over estimated. 1—Thorough preparation of the soil. 2—Shallow planting. 3—Early thinning. 4—Frequent cultivation. 5—Harvesting the crop when it is ripe.—Canadian Farm.

THE HOUSE FLY DANGER.

Best Method to Exterminate Them Is to Prevent Their Breeding.

House flies are now recognized as most dangerous carriers of the germs of such diseases as typhoid fever, infantile diarrhoea, tuberculosis, etc. From filth and decaying materials, they carry infection to the home and to the food which we eat.

The best method to exterminate flies is to prevent their breeding. House flies breed in decaying or decomposing vegetable and animal matter and in excrement. Stable refuse is especially attractive to them. In cities this should be stored in dark fly-proof receptacles and should be regularly removed within six days in summer. Farm manure should also be removed within the same time and either spread on the fields or stored at a distance of not less than a quarter mile from a house or dwelling. Manure piles may be treated with borax, using three-fifths of a pound to every ten cubic feet of manure. Scatter the dry borax principally around the sides and edges of the pile and wash in with water.

Kitchen refuse is a favorite breeding place for flies, and great care should be taken to keep garbage cans tightly covered. The contents should be buried or burnt at once, if possible. No refuse should be left exposed. If it cannot be disposed of at once it should be sprinkled with borax, as described above, or with chloride of lime.

Windows and doors should be screened to keep flies out of the house. Milk and other foods should be covered with muslin or other netting. It is especially important to keep flies out of sick rooms and to prevent the spread of disease by this means.

New Zealand has an annual death rate of less than 1 per cent.

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POULTRY

Facts About Hens and Eggs.

While heavy laying is as a rule desirable, phenomenal egg records are not a guarantee of strong, rugged offspring. There must be a limit.

The hen that lays 160 eggs in a year is doing mighty good laying, and she is not so apt to break down early in life as is the one which is trying to "break the record."

Fullets and yearling hens that have done such remarkable work in their first season, are not so apt to do heavy work in the second year.

Extreme cold and extreme hot weather affect hens alike.

The regular layers give the best sized eggs, while the spasmodic layer generally produces an assortment of sizes.

The size of the egg becomes smaller as the hen increases the number of her product. So also does the color gradually change from a dark brown to a light color towards the close of the litter.

There is not very strong fertility in the eggs laid by a hen that will produce from 80 to 50 eggs in succession.

As a rule, hens that lay steadily during cold weather are indifferent hot weather layers.

The majority of eggs are laid between the hours of 9 o'clock in the morning and 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

Remember that full fed chickens are paying chicks. It pays big dividends to hurry their growth.

The Use of Sulphur on Chickens.

We cannot give too emphatic a warning against sulphur, which is a very commonly recommended remedy for the control of the lice on chickens, because its use usually leads to disastrous results. A great many have used sulphur and laid a seemingly harmless combination, on chickens that have been infested from the lousy mother. Not knowing in just what proportion to make this mixture, the novice has added enough sulphur to make it yellow, feeling sure it would be effective. It is the effectiveness of this preparation that leads to such bad results, for the sulphur soon begins to burn the tender skin of the chicken, making sores that seldom heal, and it is often the case that from one quarter to one-half the young chickens thus treated die in from two to ten days after the application is made.

It is much better to use the lard, sweet oil or blue ointment, but never subject young chickens to the danger of burns from the use of such an active agent as sulphur. Burns and subsequent sores should be guarded against as much as possible, for more harm will arise from these than from the work of the lice.—Storrs Experiment Station.

Cure of Gapes.

Gapes is a disease caused by thread-like worms in the windpipe. It is much akin to husk in calves, and is picked up off the grass in the same way. Death results from exhaustion, consequent upon coughing, excessive mucus, and loss of blood through irritation of the membranes. Not all gapping means gapes. The symptoms besides gapping are sneezing, stretching the neck in a sleepy, moping way, discharge of mucus, wings carried low, and eyes closed. Lime and camphor dust are used by being blown into a box in which the chicks are placed. A tablespoonful of tincture of asafoetida to a quart of drinking water has been tried with good effect. Thirty drops of spirit of camphor poured on to loaf sugar, which is then dissolved in a pint of water, has given satisfactory results.

A BULLET-PROOF COAT.

Innocently Tested by a Gentleman As To His Merits.

A personal friend of mine, writes a correspondent of "The Manchester Guardian," had an amazing experience with bullet-proof armor. When he was in Paris at the beginning of the war, a fluent French inventor persuaded him to give him an opportunity to demonstrate in England a thin chain-armor shirt, which he said would resist any bullet or bayonet. A sample shirt had been hung up and fired at with satisfactory results, but it was with some skepticism that my friend attended the official demonstration.

However, to oblige the inventor, he put on one of the shirts to show its comfort and flexibility. It was then that the inventor achieved a dramatic effect, for he whipped out an automatic pistol and blazed away straight at my friend's chest. Fortunately the armor proved successful. Before he had received enough breath even to protest, a War Office official grasped him warmly by the hand.

"Sir," he said, "you are a brave man!"

My friend disappeared with becoming modesty.

Something Lovely.

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