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After Every Meal

THE :: CALGARY :: STAMPEDE ::

By RAYMOND L. SCHRÖCK and PAUL GULICK.

CHAPTER IX.—(Cont'd.)

Dan's inclination was to join the growing fringe of people about the corral, but this same growing fringe had made the necessity for more potatoes all the time a constant menace to his interest in this direction. It kept him tied very closely to the potato pail. Possibly his unusual pre-occupation caused him to neglect the gate for a short time. At any event he did not see a dusty buckboard drawn by a pair of up-country horses, which had evidently been driven a long way, trotting in at the front gate. It contained three persons—two women and an officer of the Mounted. The dusty equipage drove around the ranch house without stopping at the front door. As it came back into the range of Malloy's vision again, he started as though he had been roused from a reverie. How on earth did that team get in there without him seeing it? And there seemed to be a very familiar slant to that officer's head, too. Where and when had he seen that back before?

The team continued on down to the corral, the officer alighted and tied the horses. Dan got up to watch him better. Shufflingly he made his way over behind the wood-pile, where he could see better. From this new vantage point he had a better opportunity. Like a flash he recognized his inquisitive enemy, Callahan. Instinctively Dan's hand went up to his head and the boobish looking, down-turned hat was pulled still further over his eyes.

"Phew!" exclaimed Dan, under his breath, "I'm in for it again. Wonder who the dames are?"

But Callahan had deferentially saluted his charges and walked over to the corral. As Dan's eyes followed him from over the chunks of a convenient wood-pile, he saw him touch Regan on the shoulder and engage the ranch owner in earnest conversation. Regan nodded several times and twice he shook his head. Then he shrugged his shoulders.

If Callahan had called to see him, it was important for Dan to find out the identity of the ladies. That might have an important bearing. Impressing a wheel barrow into use, Dan lumbered off toward the barn for another load of potatoes. Half way to his base of supplies, Dan suddenly dropped the wheel-barrow. The taller of the two in the buckboard had turned around. It was Marie La Farge.

CHAPTER X.

At the same instant that Dan had recognized Marie the girl had recognized him. Though she was expecting to see him and though she knew from officer Callahan what to expect, the sight of the smartly apparelled and dashing Irish cowboy transformed into the most boobish looking of the potato peeling gentry was a shock to her. But however great was this shock, the strain on her heart strings was still more powerful.

For a year Marie had lived in a constant turmoil of doubt. Circumstances pointed unmistakably to Malloy's guilt, but her heart would not permit her to believe that he had killed her father. If he had, it must have been by accident. No thread of evidence to controvert the facts adduced at the coroner's trial had come to light to relieve in any way the stain upon the reputation of her lover. All Wainwright Park believed that Malloy had murdered Jean La Farge in a quarrel over Marie. And from the standpoint of the police there was every evidence, circumstantial though it might be, to prove his guilt. But the most convincing evidence of it to the police was the fact that Malloy had run away. Still, Marie's heart told her that her own attitude toward Malloy had something to do with his going and this thought had kept warm within her bosom the love for Malloy which, in spite of everything, would not down.

Then had come officer Callahan. He told her that he had found Malloy, or at least a man whom he suspected of being Malloy. To her own amazement she had absolutely refused to go south for the purpose of identifying him.

"Why don't you bring him up here?" she had asked.

"Well," replied Callahan, "I'm not absolutely sure. I don't want to arrest an innocent man, and this Chuck Jones may be Chuck Jones and not Dan Malloy. Still, while there is suspicion against him, the least you can do is to relieve that suspicion. If he isn't Malloy, you can do him a service and you can do me one, too. We will cross him off our books. If you don't identify him he will always be under suspicion."

These arguments left Marie cold. But her heart proved an argument which Callahan knew not of and probably would not have known how to use had he known it.

And here she was with Nessah, the little half-breed maid.

The sight of Marie gave Dan the first real thrill he had had in a year. But it was a mighty complicated thrill. It held the threat of the greatest danger which he had yet faced. The well drilled gesture of pulling down the hat stopped her. Instead, he took the hat off. There was no use pretending with Marie. She knew, and the best he could hope was to have her know that he knew, too. In ever a gesture, bespoken pleading, that did, homely as it was. Neither spoke Dan picked up his wheel-barrow and shuffled back again to his peeling post. It was like preparing to face the firing squad. But Dan was no coward. He would face the music whatever tune it played.

He didn't have to wait long. Intent as he apparently was on peeling potatoes, his ears were attuned to the footstep he momentarily expected.

Nonchalantly he threw a bucket of potato peels into the basket and stooped to pick out another spud. In spite of his iron nerves he dropped the potato back in the basket as he heard footsteps behind him. They approached slowly. Dan could not stand the suspense any longer. He looked up in apparent surprise.

As he saw the girl, he stood up and removed his hat, holding it deferentially in both hands as he looked her full in the face. Not a movement or a word escaped him to indicate that he had ever seen her before. The stupidity of expression and the dullness of intellect which he had carefully cultivated did not waver for an instant. Marie's gaze was as level as his, but it was full of pain, full of anxiety and her hands were constantly twining and intertwining, indicative of the struggle going on within her.

Callahan watched the duel of eyes with professional attention. Here was either intense human drama, or a huge bluff. Which was it?

As she looked, Marie's eyes filled with tears. Slowly she looked away from Dan toward Callahan and sadly shook her head.

"It isn't he," she said huskily.

Callahan frowned. Had he been on a wild goose chase all this time?

"Are you sure?" he said, coming closer to her and grasping her by the arm.

"Positive," said Marie, turning away.

Dan put on his hat. He pulled it down tighter on his head than he ever had done before.

Turning from Marie, Callahan held out his hand to Dan.

"That let's you out, sonny," he said, though Dan thought he detected keen disappointment in the voice. "I won't pester you any more. Good-bye and good luck."

For once Dan's Irish tongue had no rejoinder. He said nothing. But his hand-shake carried conviction.

"I'll get the team, Miss La Farge, and pick you up here. I want to see Regan a moment." Touching his hat, the officer strode away.

Not until he was out of sight of the two men did Marie turn again to the disguised Malloy. Walking slowly toward him, she held out her hand. Dan took it, his surprise evident even in his carefully trained countenance.

"Tel me again," she said earnestly, "it wasn't you?"

Before her eyes there vanished the Chuck Jones she had come down to identify, and Dan Malloy, though illly clad, stood before her. All thought of Callahan, of discovery, of everything except the girl before him had left Dan's mind.

"Marrie! You know it. You have never doubted me."

Suddenly she reached her arms up and kissed him.

But before he could recover from his astonishment, she was gone.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BET.

It was the night before the opening of the Stampede. Everyone in Alberta knew that the next three days were holidays. Skeleton crews were all that were left on the ranches all through the province. Those few had been told off by lot, the unlucky ones having to remain to care for the stock and keep the home fires burning, as it were, when they were as cheerless as could be imagined. It was tough to do chores, when all the world was celebrating an event that took place fifty years ago and one that cast glory on the splendid history of Canada.

Dan Malloy was one of the lucky ones. He had drawn lots with the others, though Blackie, the foreman, had suggested that Chuck ought to stay home and do all of the chores, thus permitting the entire force to be present at the events, and particularly at the Roman races on which ten thousand dollars of the boss's money had been bet and every bit of the wages of every man jack of them for the next six months. Humble and retiring as Dan had always been, and he had the best of reasons for being so, he was extraordinarily assertive now.

"Like to see you keep me from drawing lots, you big pumpkin," said Dan, as he stepped up to the rail and threw in the slip with his own name on it. "I just hope your name is the last one that comes out of the hat."

The ranch riders expected to see fireworks follow this remarkable evidence of self-assertion on Chuck's part. But the latter knew his name. Blackie had a yellow streak as wide as a wagon tongue down his back. All the answer he made was the same kind of an ineffectual kick which Chuck Jones had been dodging now for almost a year. Not one of these kicks would ever be forgotten and every one would demand retribution.

The Malloy luck still held. The name of Chuck Jones was one of the first to be drawn out of the hat.

That night the entire outfit moved into town on whatever vehicles or live stock was handy, the cowboys on their ponies, Chuck Jones appropriately riding the chuck wagon which was going into the chuck wagon race.

Regan and his daughter, of course, put up at the Paliser Hotel, the lobby of which was the official headquarters of the stock raising and racing gentry of the province. Most of the boys, however, found lodging either with friends or in the stables with the horses. To Chuck this was no hardship. Many a night he had spent riding a horse and would gladly have passed all his nights in a stable.

But if the gentry of the district polished the Paliser bar, the rank and file congregated at Kelly's. Here the old-timers always met on the eve of the Stampede to renew old friendships and to place new wagers. Kelly's was

anything but ornate. It was rough and ready like its proprietor and like the patrons it attracted, but taken by and large, Kelly held a much larger volume of stakes than the proprietors of the Paliser.

All of the cowboys of the Bar-O were in early attendance at such ceremonies as Kelly's afforded. So were Morton's riders, and what little any of them had left to bet, was being vociferously wagered on the outcome of the Roman race the next afternoon. It was a cinch that whatever ranch lost would have little interest in the subsequent events. Dan Malloy was probably the only man in the room who hadn't placed a bet. No one had offered him a wager.

About nine o'clock Andrew Regan walked into Kelly's. As he made his way through the crowded room to the densey populated bar, a hand grasped his coat sleeve.

"Well, Regan," said a familiar voice, "do you still think your Romans can beat mine to-morrow?"

It was Morton, who spoke, and as usual, his voice and manner had an uncanny effect of disturbing Regan. Morton was so sure of himself, so supercilious, so boastful. Regan was a much finer-grained man. The other's brashness always grated upon him. As if this condescending question were not enough, Morton reached out and took one of Regan's battery of stogies from his pocket.

"Thanks," he said, as the crowd laughed at Regan's impatient gesture. "Certainly I think so," said Regan, "and if my horses go as fast as my cigars do, your Romans won't have a chance."

The crowd, sensing a betting fray far beyond their own ability to emulate, gathered thickly around Regan and Morton. Dan, who had seen his boss come in, moved up to the table behind him. Morton, with a sneer on his face as he spat out the bitten-off end of Regan's stogy, continued in a loud voice.

"Well, Regan, old boy, if you still think so, I've got another five thousand that says my team beats yours."

A hush came over the crowd. Everyone looked at Regan, Blackie drawing his breath so silently that several of Morton's riders laughed in his face. As though Regan might have paid any attention to what he did, Dan started violently shaking his head from side to side. He hated to see his boss plunge any further on a man who rode Romans as unscientifically as Corbet did.

Angered as he was, however, Andrew Regan had but all he cared to.

"I'd sure like to accommodate you, Al," he said reluctantly, "but I'm in as deep now as I can afford."

For answer Morton rose from his chair, took the stogy he had "borrowed" from his mouth and hurled it on the floor, then with elaborate sarcasm: "I never thought you were a piker."

Word and gesture were as insulting as Morton could make them and they had the desired effect on Regan. Boiling with rage, he leaped to Morton's table and pounding on it until the glasses jumped and clobbered together, he shouted:

"That's the first and last time you'll ever say that, Morton! Here's a proposition for you. I bet you horn for horn and hoof for hoof, the Bar-O stock against yours."

So confident was Morton of his own team's superiority that he held out his hand to Regan with a shout of delight. Before the echo of it had died away, the humble potato peeler forced his way to Regan's side.

"Say, boss," he said, all earnestness, "ain't you goin' awful strong?"

But Regan was riding the heights. He had the bit in his teeth.

"Don't you worry, sonny," he said, patting Chuck on the shoulder. "Ed Corbet ridin' them speck demons of mine is a combination that can't be beat."

(To be continued.)

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To Promote League Welfare Work.

A series of lectures in cities of Canada and the United States is planned for the year by Dame Rachel Crowdy, director of the department of the League of Nations, which is fighting opium traffic.

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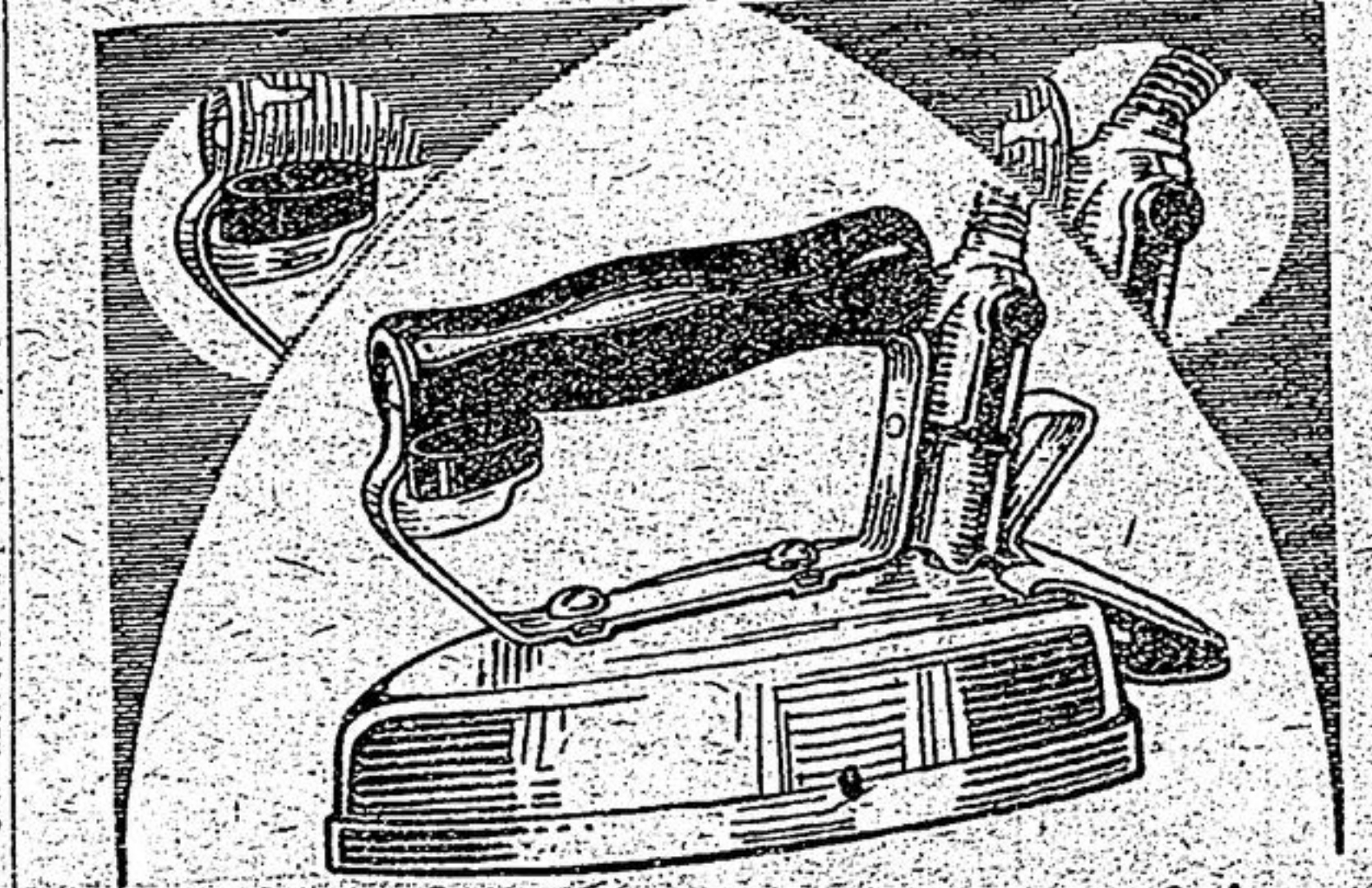
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True Love is Earned.

Admiration we may win, beauty prizes we may win, but those people who understand what real love is know that it is one of the things which cannot be won. True, we may appear to have won it, but in a little while we shall find out our mistake.

True love is more than a passion, more than an attraction, or sense of possession. It is something fine and noble, of the spirit and the mind as well as of the heart and senses.

Usually when we want to give great happiness we study the person for whom we have the affection. We do not study merely our own desires. We take trouble to discover just what he or she needs in order to complete our own life. And we send out such honest radiation of tenderness that we make that person vibrate in tune with our own thoughts.

The young girl with beautiful face and manners who can draw men to her has little power to keep them always caring for her unless she has that fine, unselfish nature which is ever drawing love towards her—even in those moments of anger and irritation which enter the lives of all of us, no matter how devoted we may be to these we love.

Sometimes men who are deeply attached to certain girls vainly imagine that by spending money on them they are winning their love. Love is rarely won by the flinging down of coins. The girls who marry such men seldom bring into marriage that sweet thrill of life-long happiness which is ever to the fore when love is real.

Money that is won is seldom valued as highly as that which is earned. And the same applies to love.

Rob Roy's "House" to be Modernized.

Rob Roy's Blengyle House, on the borders of Perthshire and Stirlingshire, associated with the Highland outlaw, is to be modernized. It is to have electric call bells for the servants and incandescent lights for the benefit of its occupants and visitors.

The idea of doing away with candles and ancient oil lamps is that of the Glasgow municipality. Some of the townspeople regard the innovation a sacrilege. Rob Roy Macgregor still has a romantic hold on the imagination of those persons familiar with the writings of Sir Walter Scott.

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