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THE YUKON TRAIL

By WILLIAM McLEOD RAINE.

CHAPTER XXXI

Sheba Digs.
The weather had moderated a good deal, but the trail was a protracted one. The two teams now going down had come up, and the job was packed fairly hard and slow. Holt lay propped on his own sled against the sleeping bags. Sheba nudged behind Gordon. She chattered with them both, but ignored entirely the existence of Macdonald, who followed with his prize-winning Sherrin dogs.

Though she tried not to let her lover know it, Sheba was troubled at heart. Gordon was practically the prisoner of a man who hated him bitterly, and who would go through any means to bring punishment home to him. She knew the power of Macdonald. With the money back of him, he had for two years fought against and almost prevailed over a strong public opinion in the United States. He was as masterful in his hatred as he was in his love. The dominant, fighting figure in the northwest, he trod his stony way through opposition like a colossus.

Nor did she any longer have any illusions about him. He could be ruthless and unscrupulous when it suited his purpose. As the day wore toward noon, her spirits drooped. She was tired physically, and this reacted upon her courage.

The warmer weather was spoiling the trail. It became so soft and mushy that though snowshoes were needed, they could not be worn. The account of the heavy snow which clung to them every time a foot was lifted. They were indeed a foot was wet to her step. Her shoulders had gone from her. She had begun to sag.

For some time Gordon's eye had been seeking for a good place for a day camp. He found it in a bit of open timber above the trail, and without a word he swung his team from the path.

"Where are you going?" demanded Macdonald.
"Going to rest for an hour," was Elliot's curt answer.
Macdonald's jaw clamped. He strode forward through the snow beside the trail. "What do you mean about that?" the younger man faced him angrily. "Can't you see she is done, man? There is not another mile of trail in her until she has rested."

The hard, gray eyes of the Alaskan took in the slender, weary figure leaning against the sled. On a soft and mushy trail like this, where every footstep punched a hole in the loose snow, the dogs could do little with any extra weight. A few miles farther down they would come to a main-traveled road, and the going would be better. But till then she must walk. Macdonald gave way to a gesture of his hand and turned on his heel.

At the camp-fire Sheba dried her mukluks, stockings, caribou mitts, and short skirts. Too tired to eat, she forced herself to swallow a few bites and drank eagerly some tea. Gordon had brought blankets from the sled and he persuaded her to lie down for a few minutes.

"You'll call me soon if I should sleep," she said drowsily, and her eyes were closed almost before the words were off her lips.

When Macdonald came to order the start half an hour later, she was still asleep. "Give her another thirty minutes," he said gruffly.

Youth is resilient. Sheba awoke rested and ready for work.

While Gordon was untangling the dogs she was left alone for a minute with the mine-owner.

"The hungry look in his eyes touched her. Impulsively she held out her hand.

"You're going to be fair, aren't you, Mr. Macdonald? Because you—don't like him—you won't?"

He looked straight into the dark, appealing eyes. "I'm going to be fair to you," he told her harshly. "I'm going to see his murderers hanged if it costs me every dollar I have in the world."

"None of us object to justice," she told him proudly. "Gordon has nothing to fear if only the truth is told."

"Then why come to me?" he demanded.

She hesitated; then with a wistful little smile, spoke what was in her heart. "I'm afraid you won't do justice to yourself. You're good—and brave—and strong. But you've been willful and set. I don't want to lose my friend. I want to know that he is all right. I have believed him—a great man who stands for the things that are fine and clean and just."

"Then it is for my sake and not for his that you want me to drop the case against Elliot?" he asked ironically.

"I don't doubt that. He and his friend Holt are great little ex-plainers. In spite of his bitterness Sheba felt a change in him. She seemed to have a glimpse of his turbid soul engaged in battle. He turned away without shaking hands, but it struck her that he was not implacable.

While they were at luncheon half a dozen packmules laden with supplies for a telephone construction line outfit had passed. Their small, sharp-shod hoofs had punched sink-holes in the trail at every step. Instead of a smooth bottom the dogs found a slushy bog cut to pieces.

At the end of an hour of wallowing Macdonald called a halt.

"This is a cutoff just below here. It will save us nearly two miles, but

we'll have to break trail. Swing to the right just below the big willow," he told Elliot. "I'll join you presently and relieve you on the job. But first Miss O'Neill and I are going for a little side trip."

All three of them looked at him in sharp surprise. Gordon opened his lips and answered to the big Commissioner. "Perhaps they had left mothers or wives or sweethearts to mourn them."

Macdonald relieved Elliot at breaking trail and the young man went back to the zoo-pole. They had discarded mukluks and wore moccasins and snowshoes. It was hard, slow work, for the trail-braker had to fight his way through snow along the best route he could find. The moon was high when at last they reached the house.

(To Be Continued.)

RULING ON FUEL.
Administration Explains What It Expects of the Public.

Fuel rationing and interpretations designed to make clear what is expected of the public in observance of the government's orders shutting down industry every Monday for the next eight weeks were made public last Saturday night by the fuel administration. They cover most of the questions raised as to exemptions. A summary follows:

In forbidding the use of fuel for general industrial and commercial purposes the fuel administration intended that the word fuel cover everything used for producing heat, light and power, including coal, coke, wood, oil, charcoal, natural and artificial gas, gasoline, kerosene, alcohol, etc.

The three general classes of manufacturing plants exempted from operation of the orders are shipbuilding yards, airplane manufacturing plants and industries producing explosives. Other plants have been exempted on specific orders of the war and navy departments, but the exemptions cover only that part of their plants specifically enclosed in turning out products for the government. The exempted plants have been notified that they are not included in the order.

All manufacturing of wooden and cotton goods have been exempted in so far as they are working on army or navy contracts. Finishing plants and dye works coming within this class also have been exempted.

Users of hydro-electric power are not required to shut down their plants, but they may burn only enough fuel to prevent freezing.

Wood working mills not exempted on orders of the war or navy departments may operate only to the extent that their products are placed in their own yards for use in the production of wood waste for fuel, may operate to produce sufficient fuel to prevent freezing. Wood working plants supplying fuel to householders must apply to local fuel administrators for permission to operate to such an extent as is necessary for the welfare of the community. All mines of whatever character are exempt.

Subcontractors supplying materials to exempted industries are permitted to operate only if their entire production goes to exempted plants.

Exemptions include all concerns producing foodstuffs of a perishable nature or foods for immediate consumption. The following have been listed as exempt: Grain elevators, potato and vegetable houses, cold storage, grain storage, grain and feed mills, cereal product manufacturers, bakers, canners, milk dealers, creameries, milk condensers and all other milk products manufacturers, packing and slaughter houses, ice plants and refrigerators, sugar manufacturers, binder twine manufacturers, insecticide and fertilizer manufacturers, manufacturers of farm machinery for spring use, manufacturers of cereal mill machinery, bag manufacturers, manufacturers of food containers (glass tin and wood) and labels for food products.

Price lists giving quotations or other information relative to securities or commodities may be published on Monday.

Magazines and weeklies generally are expected to close if they can put out their publications on time without printing on Monday.

Colleges, churches, schools, public libraries and public museums are exempted from the order, but they must be kind to him when he is ill and try to love him, though he is twice your age and more. Then, when his enemy is in his power, he finds he can't strike him down without striking you too. Take your young man, Sheba O'Neill, and marry him, and for God's sake, get him out of Alaska before I come to grips with him again. I'm not a patient man, and he's tried me. They say I'm a good hater, but I always thought I was. But what's the use of hating a man when your soft arms are round him for an arm?

The eyes of the girl were wells of warm light. Her gladness was not for herself and her lover only, but for the friend that had been so nearly lost and was now found. He believed he had done it for her, but Sheba was sure his reasons lay deeper. He was too much of a man to hide evidence and let his rival be falsely accused of murder. It was not in him to do a cheap thing like that. When it came to the pinch he was too decent to stab in the back. But she was willing to take him on his own ground.

"I'll always be thanking you for your goodness to me," she told him simply. "He brushed that aside at once. 'There's one thing more, less. I'll likely not be seeing you again alone, so I'll say it now. Don't waste any tears on Colby Macdonald. Don't fancy any story-book foolishness about spilling his life. That may be true of halving boys, maybe, but a man goes his ain' gait even when he gets a bit fairer.'"

"Yes," she agreed. And in a flash she saw what would happen, that in the reaction from his depression he would turn to Genevieve Mallory and marry her.

"You're too young for me, anyhow—too soft, and innocent. Once you told me that you couldn't keep step with it. It's true. You can't. It was a smooth bottom the dogs found a slushy bog cut to pieces."

He took a deep breath, seemed to shake himself out of it, and smiled cheerfully upon her.

"We'll put our treasure-trove on the sled and go back to your friends," he

BAKER TELLS OF PROGRESS

War Preparations Have Made Wonderful Headway.

MIGHTY ARM IN SHORT TIME

Secretary of War Says There are Nearly Half a Million Soldiers in France With Half a Million More Ready to Go—The One Big Problem is That of Transport Facilities, and as Soon as the Boats are Ready the Men Can Go Over.

Washington, January 28.—America will have an army of half a million men in France early this year, with a million more trained and equipped to follow as quickly as ships can be provided to carry them and an outlook for still more unpromising. Secretary Baker gave this information to the nation and to the world today in a statement before the senate military committee, baring much that until now has been carefully guarded with the army's military secrets, in answering charges that the government has broken down preparing for war.

From early morning until late afternoon the secretary addressed the committee and a crowd, including members of both houses of congress, gathered in a big hearing room of the senate office building. He spoke extemporaneously, beginning with details of the mammoth task of building an army of a million and a half, answering such complaints of inefficiency as were cited by Senator Chamberlain in his recent speech and declaring that such instances were isolated and not general. Some questions were asked, and Mr. Baker, from time to time, had assistants go to the telephone for reports on specific questions.

Toward the close of the day, Secretary Baker delivered a dramatic general statement of the American war plan, telling of the day and night conferences with men from the scene of battle in which the plans now being carried out were discussed and the expectations in building the army and its industrial support at home, training in the field, and the construction of railroads in France and preparing to strike the enemy with every resource at the country's command.

When Mr. Baker closed, it was apparent that he had created a profound impression. He said that he would refer to me in order that the processes of the department may sift the truth.

From Senator Chamberlain's speech, Mr. Baker said it had seemed to him that although it did not appear, the country got an impression from the failures and delays that made them "disproportionate to what was going on in the field."

The secretary said that when he appeared previously Mr. Baker said that he was going to be frank, but despite the feeling that I was fencing in defense of some of my subordinates. He denied any such intention and said that the committee desired to investigate the failures and delays that made them "disproportionate to what was going on in the field."

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SOLDIERING AT SEVIER

How the Men Are Preparing For Service in France.

ILLITERATES BEING TAUGHT TO READ

Story of a Young Man who Has to Do His Counting by Proxy—Plenty to Eat and Plenty to Wear—Practice With Gas Masks—Many Soldiers Now Have Their Wives at Camp.

Camp Sevier, Greenville, S. C., January 27.—Before they go "over there" if they do go; and hundreds of them firmly believe that the whole show is to be off before they are ready, every selective draftsman and every National Guardsman who doesn't already know how to write has learned to read.

Men of the 119th Infantry have recently been given instruction concerning the use of the gas masks with which every man has been provided. It is a unique and not very pleasant experience the first time one of these masks is put on. The mask resembles to some extent a diver's helmet. It is of rubber and the apparatus when in position, completely covers the head. A small reservoir filled with oxygen supplies air to the wearer through a rubber tube which is placed in the mouth. The nostrils are closed by a pinching device similar to those on eye glasses. With the apparatus on, breathing through the mouth is absolutely necessary and he who is unable to breathe through his mouth must learn. It takes some little art and skill to place the mask on the head quickly and every man, before he goes into the trenches is supposed to be able to do the trick in five or six seconds. Most of us will have to increase our speed in putting it on. Little more practice and we will be able to do it, though.

Instructors in the use of gas masks impress the soldiers with the importance of wearing the mask properly as well as the care of it. The thickest pen in the rubber and the mask is of no further value. It is quite possible that a stiff beard may puncture the mask and render it useless. For this reason all men in the trenches over there are required to keep themselves clean shaven at all times and infantrymen of the line in training here have been forbidden to wear mustaches or beards. Gas is said to be playing a great part in the war now and the Thirtieth goes over, and the men will have been thoroughly instructed as to how to protect themselves against the deadly fumes.

Well I guess he told her he was going to write to her every day or two even if he was only four miles away from her and I guess she told him the same thing—I know she had, judging from the number of letters he gets from her. He came to me a day or two after he met her and told me his troubles. Said he had become stuck on the prettiest, fairest, cutest, sweetest little girl in town and had promised to write to her every day or two and he couldn't write but she didn't know it and she had never seen her before. He said he would write to her for him and he would wash a shirt or a pair of trousers or do something else for me every time I wrote to her.

The bargain was closed and I wrote her according to his dictation except that I tried to change the dictation for better when I thought I could. That first letter was dispatched to her in a couple of days a fat, pink, monogrammed envelope, bearing an odor of jassamine or violets or Palmolive soap or something I don't know much about those things. It came addressed to her like his; and would I write to her for him and he would wash a shirt or a pair of trousers or do something else for me every time I wrote to her.

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AGAINST TILLMAN AND BLEASE

McLaurin Gives Out Open Letter on Political Situation.

Editor Yorkville Courier:
I take this method of reaching the various people who by petition and letters have requested me to become a candidate for governor. I promised them an answer during the present month. At this time I feel that I can perform a better service by announcing clearly my political views, than by becoming a candidate for governor. It is probable after I do that many who would have supported me will not do so and that conditions will make it best that I should not run for office. It is evident that factional lines are to be drawn in the senatorial race, and while I believe that I could be elected by avoiding this issue, I do not want office on these terms. I have given the matter careful thought and I want every body to know that I have made up my mind. In order to get the warehouse bill made a law I had to reckon with the veto power of the governor, and without the assistance of the faction then in power I could not have moved a step. I have always recognized this obligation and do not intend to forget it. I would like to be in a position while I yet have the mental and physical strength to further the election of either Ex-Governor Blease or Senator Tillman as a stupendous blunder. So far as the state is concerned it will establish more firmly than ever the present factional lines, and whoever is elected governor will necessarily have to line up on one side or the other. This I absolutely refuse to do. Outside of the local issue the consequences are more far reaching. The attitude of Governor Blease before the war has been bitterly hostile to the present Federal administration. Everybody who knows him understands the strong bias towards the questions relating to the war, and that he will go any length, once he has the power, to obstruct the policies of Woodrow Wilson. He is bold and has great ability in certain lines, his advent into the senate would greatly strengthen LaFollette and a "little group of willful senators" who are doing all in their power to hamper the conduct of a war upon whose result depends the future not only of America, but mankind everywhere. I could not make campaign speeches and dodge this issue. I cannot by silence make myself a party to a national calamity of this character. Senator Tillman is incapacitated by physical weakness for the strenuous work now required. I am glad to see able to say that I am sincerely sorry for this, and in spite of the unjust treatment that I received at his hands, were he physically fit to perform the duties, I would raise above personal resentment and say that he should be left where he is. This talk about "dying in harness" is all rot. A broken down horse "dying in harness" is cruelty to animals; it is more merciful to loose the traces, knock off the shoes and turn him out in the pasture to ruminate on things that have been, and are to be. It takes a strong horse to tote his side of the singles, and these perilous days. It is unfair to the balance of the team when the load is heavy and the pace so fast, to be handicapped by Bog Spavin and Heaves in an old horse which wont work at all unless he is in the lead. The work is too heavy now for a spike team that wont even try to pull, bites his mat and kicks at everything in sight. I am not going to help horse either team. What