



Reading for Women and all the Family



The Yukon Trail

By William MacLeod Raine

(Continued.)

A small grassy platform lay above the upper end of the trough, but the last dozen feet of the approach was a very difficult bit. Gordon fought his way up with his back against one wall and his knees pressed to the other. The feet short of the platform the rock walls became absolutely smooth. The climber could reach within a foot of the top.

"Are you stopped?" asked Sheba. "Looks that way."

A small pine projected from the edge of the shelf out over the precipice. It might be strong enough to bear his weight. It might not. Gordon unbuckled his belt and threw one end over the trunk of the dwarf tree. Gingerly he tested it with his weight, then went up hand over hand and worked himself over the edge of the little plateau.

"All right?" the girl called up. "All right. But you can't make it. I'm coming down again."

"I'd like to try it. I'll stop if it's too hard," she promised.

The strength of her slender wrists surprised him. She struggled up the vertice crevasse inch by inch. His heart was full of fear, for a misstep would be fatal. He lay down with his face over the ledge and lowered to her the buckled loop of his belt. Twice she stopped exhausted, her back and her hands pressed against the walls of the trough angle for support.

"Better give it up," he advised. "I'll not then." She smiled stubbornly as she shook her head. He lay down with his face over the ledge and lowered to her the buckled loop of his belt.

Gordon edged forward an inch or two farther. "Put your hand through the loop and catch hold of the leather above," he told her.

She did so and at the same instant her foot slipped. The girl swung out into space suspended by one wrist. The muscles of Elliot hardened into steel as they responded to the strain. His body began to slide very slowly down the incline.

In a moment the acute danger was past. Sheba had found a hold with her feet and relieved somewhat the dead pull upon Elliot.

She had not voiced a cry, but the face that looked up into his was very white.

"Take your time," he said in a quiet, matter-of-fact way.

With his help she came close enough for him to reach her hand. After that it was only a moment before she knelt on the plateau beside him.

"Touch and go, wasn't it?" Sheba

Bringing Up Father

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By McManus



tried to smile, but the colorless lips told the young man she was still faint from the shock.

He knew he was going to reproach himself bitterly for having led her into such a risk, but he could not just now afford to waste his energies on regrets. "You might have sprained your wrist," he said lightly as he rose to examine the cliff still to be negotiated.

Her dark eyes looked at him with quick surprise. "So I might," she answered dryly.

But his indifferent tone had the effect upon her of a plunke into cold water. It braced and stiffened her will. If he wanted to ignore the terrible danger through which she had passed certainly she was not going to remind him of it.

Gordon was mountaineer enough to know that the climb up is safer than the one back. The only possible way for them to go down the trough was for him to lower her by the belt until she found footing enough to go alone. He did not quite admit it to himself, but in his heart he doubted whether she could make it safely.

The alternative was the cliff face.

Across the Traverse

Elliot took off his shoes and turned toward the traverse. "Think I'll see if I can cross to that stairway. You had better wait

here Miss O'Neill, until we find out if it can be done."

Sheba looked across the cliff and down to the boulder bed two hundred feet below. "You can never do it in the world. Isn't there another way up?"

"No. The wall above us slopes out. I've got to cross to the stairway. If I make it I'm going to get a rope."

"Do you mean you're going back to town for one?"

"Yes."

Her eyes fastened to his in a long, unspoken question. She read the answer. He was afraid to have her try the trough again. To get back to town by way of their roundabout ascent would waste time. If he was going to rescue her before night he must take the shortest cut, and that was across the face of the sheer cliff. For the first time she understood how serious was their plight.

The glance of the girl swept again the face of the wall he must cross. It could not be done without a rope. Her fear-filled eyes came back to his. "It's my fault. I made you come," she said in a low voice.

"Nonsense," he answered cheerfully. "There's no harm done. If I can't reach the stairway I can come back and go down by the trough."

Sheba assented doubtfully. It had come on to drizzle again. The rain was fine and cold, almost a mist, and already it was forming a film of ice on the rocks.

"I can't take time to go back by the trough. The point is that I don't want you camped up here after night. There has been no sun on this side of the spur and in the chill of the evening it must get cold even in summer."

He was making his preparations as he talked. His coat he took off and threw down. His shoes he tied by the laces to his belt.

"I'll try not to be very long," he promised.

"It's God's will then, so it is," she sighed, relapsing into the vernacular.

Her voice was low and not very steady, for the heart of the girl was heavy. She knew she must not protest his decision. That was not the way to play the game. But somehow the salt had gone from their littlehearted adventure.

Elliot took her little hand in a warm, strong grip. "You're not going to be afraid. We'll work out all right, you know."

"Yes."

"It's not just the thing to leave a lady in the rain when you take her for a walk, but it can't be helped. We'll laugh about it tomorrow."

"Would they," she wondered answering his smile faintly. Her courage was sapped.

He turned to the climb. "You've forgotten your coat," she reminded.

"I'm traveling light this trip. You'd better slip it on before you get chilled."

Sheba knew he had left it on purpose for her.

(To be Continued)

All's Well That Ends Well

By JANE McLEAN.

In his head had always been deeply implanted the belief in honesty. When he was a small lad he had vaguely remembered a conversation that he had had with a boy older than himself. It was apropos of faults. "Do you know what your worst fault is, kid?" the other fellow had drawled.

Billy had shaken his head: "It's that you're too easygoing. You're going to let people impose on you; you aren't enough of a bluff to succeed."

And in later days Billy Edwards had remembered the words with bitterness, they had been so unwittingly true.

He hadn't succeeded. Even now he was out of a job and things were serious. Margaret and the baby were not used to doing without necessities, although Margaret tried her best to be a sport and to reassure Billy as night after night he returned hopeless. His attitude was against him in each interview that he had. He might have been able to deliver the goods far better than a man with more push, but he was anxious to placate, he was almost meek, he tried too hard to be nice, and invariably the men who interviewed him lost all interest. They decided that a man with so little personality would lack the necessary business energy, and he always lost out.

This morning he had started out with a desperate resolve in his soul. He would answer the one advertisement, and he would treat the entire affair as though it didn't matter a great deal whether he got the position or not. If the effort failed, then it didn't matter much how he got it, but he must get money. He brushed up his shabby clothes, and with no belief in his heart, had set out to interview the last man he would ever interview. He had settled that matter in his own mind. But for Margaret's sake he would undertake the matter differently, he would try to show real worth, he would adopt the great American game of bluff, not that it would be bluff in his case, for he was clever enough in his line, but he would bluff just the same if bluff were needed to land the position.

"I came about the position," he said, looking the boy directly in the eye. And the office boy, as shrewd as others of his kind, passed over the shabby clothes because the fellow acted as though he knew what he was about; evidently he couldn't be scared.

Billy, greatly amused, smiled inwardly to see how well his little game was working. He walked with a quick step into the office and took the chair the boy pointed out. He waited without speaking while the

man at the desk finished writing something and turned toward him. For a moment his old attitude was upon him, but he remembered suddenly another remark that he had always heard the boys make: "Never be afraid of taking up a business-man's time. Invariably he isn't writing because he has to when you are shown into his office, but because he wants to impress you with his enormous business. And so Billy forgot that he was desperate, and said in his straightforward manner:

"I want the position you advertised."

"Do you think you can qualify?"

"I know I can."

Billy knew that the man was eyeing his shabby clothes, but he smiled instead of flushing painfully.

"Three months."

"Couldn't land one, eh?"

Billy hesitated. "Yes, I think I could have," he responded truthfully.

John Groyce looked amazed.

"You see, I didn't go at it right. I showed too plainly that it meant a great deal to me, and I never landed the job. I was told I needed bluff."

"And you decided to try it?"

"Yes; but I can deliver the goods."

John Groyce looked thoughtful. Then he remarked: "Then you really didn't bluff after all?"

"No," Billy admitted, honestly, "but it was there all the time in case I needed it."

He spoke as though the position had been handed, and his confidence was either entirely naive or the most clever bluffing in the world. John Groyce looked at him keenly, wondering if the boy realized it himself, or if he really was a good American game, but look out for snags."

Billy laughed the first real laugh

that he had had in weeks. Of course he would look out for snags—wasn't he going to "deliver the good?"

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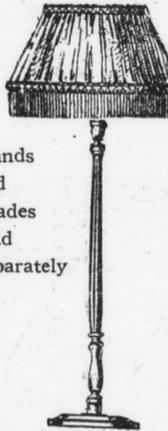
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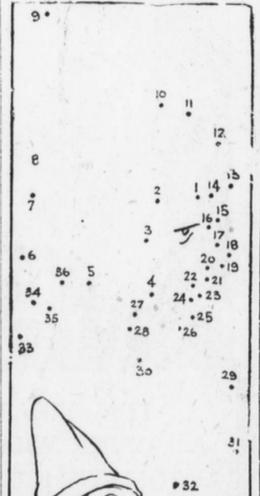
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