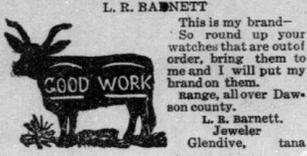


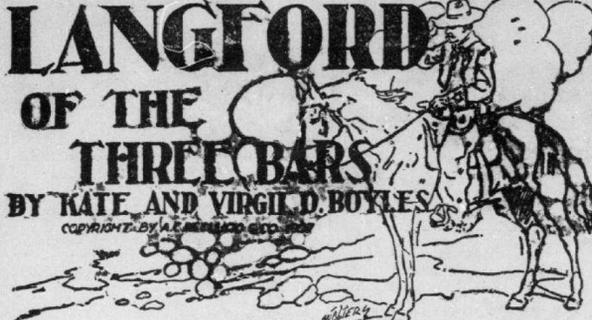
TAKEN UP

On August 8th, one bay horse about eight years old, branded on left shoulder, and weight about 1,000. Also one light colored sorrel, with stripe in face and hind legs white, branded on left shoulder. Age about 12 or 13 and weight about 900 or 1,000. If not called for in 30 days they will be turned loose.

DENNIS MURPHY, Ridgetown, Mont. Inquire of Mr. Rood, land commissioner. 25tf



Don't forget that the Monitor Office always has a full supply of justice court blanks. 'Phone 120.



CHAPTER VIII
The County Attorney.

"I too am going to Wind City," said a pleasant voice at her side. "You will let me help you with your things, will you not?"

The slender girl standing before the ticket window, stuffing change into her coin purse, turned quickly.

"Why, Mr. Gordon," she said, holding out a small hand with frank pleasure. "How very nice! Thank you, will you take my rain-coat? It has been such a bother. I would bring it right in the face of Uncle Hammond's objections. He said it never rained out this way. But I surely have suffered a plenty for my waywardness. Don't you think so?"

"It behooves a tenderfoot like you to sit and diligently learn of such experienced and toughened old-timers as we are, rather than flaunt your untried ideas in our faces," responded Gordon, with a smile that transformed the keen gray eyes of this man of much labor, much lofty ambition, and much sorrow, so that they seemed for the moment strangely young, laughing, untroubled; as clear of taint of evil knowledge as the source of a stream leaping joyously into the sunlight from some mountain solitude. It was a revelation to Louise.

"I will try to be a good and diligent seeker after knowledge of this strange land of yours," she answered, with a little laugh, half of embarrassment, half of enjoyment of this play of nonsense, and leading the way to her suit-case and Mary outside. "When I make mistakes, will you tell me about them? Down east, you know, our feet travel in the ancient, prescribed circles of our forefathers, and they are apt to go somewhat uncertainly if thrust into new paths."

And this laughing, clever girl had cried with homesickness! Well, no wonder. The worst of it was, she could never hope to be acclimated. She was not—their kind. Sooner or later she must go back to God's country.

To her surprise, Gordon, though he laughed softly for a moment, answered rather gravely.

"If my somewhat niggardly fate should grant me that good fortune, that I may do something for you, I ask that you be not afraid to trust to my help. It would not be half-hearted—I assure you."

She looked up at him gratefully. His shoulders, slightly stooped, betokening the grind at college and the burden-bearing in later years, instead of suggesting any inherent weakness in the man, rather inspired her with an intuitive faith in their quiet, unswerving, utter trustworthiness.

"Thank you," she said, simply. "I am so glad they did not hurt you much that day in the court-room. We worried—Mary and I."

"Thank you. There was not the least danger. They were merely venting their spite on me. They would not have dared more."

"There's my brakeman," said Louise, when she and Gordon had found a seat near the rear. Mary had gone and a brakeman had swung onto the last car as it glided past the platform, and came down the aisle with a grin of recognition for his "little white lamb."

"How nice it all seems, just as if I had been gone months instead of days and was coming home again. It would be funny if I should be homesick for the range when I get to Wind City, wouldn't it?"

"Let us pray assiduously that it may be so," answered Gordon, with one of his rare smiles. He busied himself a moment in stowing away her belongings to the best advantage. "It gets in one's blood—how or when, one never knows."

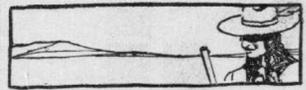
They rode in silence for a while. "Tell me about your big fight," said Louise, presently. The roadbed was fairly good, and they were spinning along on a down grade. He must needs bend closer to hear her.

She was good to look at, fair and sweet, and it had been weary years since women had come close to Gordon's life. In the old college days, before this hard, disappointing, unequal fight against the dominant forces of greed, against tolerance of might overcoming right, had begun to sap his vitality, he had gone too deeply into his studies to have much time left for the gayeties and gallantries of the social side in university life. He had not been popular with women. They did not know him. Yet, though dubbed a "dig" by his fellow collegians, the men liked him. They liked him for his rugged honesty, admired him for his ruggedness, desired his friendship for the inspiration of his high ideals.

"What shall I talk about, Miss Dale? It is all very prosaic and uninteresting. I'm afraid; shockingly primitive, glaringly new."

"I breakfasted with a stanch friend of yours this morning," answered Louise, somewhat irrelevantly. She had a feeling—a woman's feeling—that this earnest, hard-working, reserved man would never blurt out things about himself with the bland self-centredness of most men. She must

use all her woman's wit to draw him out. She did not know yet that he



"I Shall Send Jessie Black Over—"

was starved for sympathy—for understanding. She could not know yet that two affinities had drifted through space—near together. A feather zephyr, blowing where it listed, might widen the space between to an infinity of distance so that they might never know how nearly they had once met; or it might, as its whim dictated, blow them together so that for weal or for woe they would know each the other.

"Mrs. Higgins, at the Bon Ami," she continued, smiling. "I was so hungry when we got to Yelpen, though I had eaten a tremendous breakfast at the Lazy S. But 5 o'clock is an unholy hour at which to eat one's breakfast, isn't it, and I just couldn't help getting hungry all over again. So I persuaded Mary to stop for another cup of coffee. It is ridiculous the way I eat in your country."

"It is a good country," he said, soberly.

"It must be—if you can say so." "Because I have failed, shall I cry out that law cannot be enforced in Kemah county? Sometimes—may it be soon—there will come a man big enough to make the law triumphant. He will not be I."

He was still smarting from his many set-backs. He had worked hard and had accomplished nothing. At the last term of court, though many cases were tried, he had not secured one conviction.

"We shall see," said Louise, softly. Her look, straight into his eyes, was a glint of sunshine in dark places. Then she laughed.

"Mrs. Higgins said to me: 'Jimmie Mac hain't got the sense he was born with. His little, dried-up brain 'd rattle 'round in a mustard seed and he's gettin' s'het o' that little so fast it makes my head swim.' She was telling about times when he hadn't acted just fair to you. I am glad—from all I hear—that his was taken out of his hands."

"I can count my friends, the real ones, on one hand, I'm afraid," said Gordon, with a good-humored smile; "and Mrs. Higgins surely is the thumb."

"I am glad you smiled," said Louise. "That would have sounded so bitter if you had not."

"I couldn't help smiling. You—you have such a way, Miss Dale."

It was blunt but it rang true. "It is true, though, about my friends. If I could convict—Jesse Black, for instance—a million friends would call me blessed. But I can't do it alone. They will not do it; they will not help me do it; they despise me because I can't do it, and swear at me because I try to do it—and there you have the whole situation in a nutshell, Miss Dale."

The sun struck across her face. He reached over and lowered the blind. "Thank you. But it is 'vantage in' now, is it not? You will get justice before Uncle Hammond."

Unconsciously his shoulders straightened.

"Yes, Miss Dale, it is 'vantage in'. One of two things will come to pass. I shall send Jesse Black over or—," he paused. His eyes, unseeing, were fixed on the gliding landscape as it appeared in rectangular spots through the window in front of them.

"Yes. Or—" prompted Louise, softly.

"Never mind. It is of no consequence," he said, abruptly. "No fear of Judge Dale. Juries are my Waterloo."

"Is it, then, such a nest of cowards?" cried Louise, intense scorn in her clear voice.

"Yes," deliberately. "Men are afraid of retaliation—those who are not actually blood-guilty, as you might say. And who can say who is and who is not? But he will be sent over this time. Paul Langford is on his trail. Give me two men like Langford and that anachronism—an honest man west of the river—Williston, and you can have the rest, sheriff and all."

"Mr. Williston—he has been unfortunate, has he not? He is such a

gentleman, and a scholar, surely."

"Surely. He is one of the finest fellows I know. A man of the most sensitive honor. If such a thing can be, I should say he is too honest, for his own good. A man can be, you know. There is nothing in the world that cannot be overcome."

She looked at him earnestly. His eyes did not shift. She was satisfied. "Your work belies your words," she said quietly.

Dust and cinders drifted in between the slats of the closed blind. Putting her handkerchief to her lips, Louise looked at the dark streaks on it with reproach.

"Your South Dakota dirt is so—black," she said, whimsically.

"Better black than yellow," he retorted. "It looks cleaner, now, doesn't it?"

"Maybe you think my home a fit dwelling place for John Chinaman," pouted Louise.

"Yes—if that will persuade you that South Dakota is infinitely better. Are you open to conviction?"

"Never! I should die if I had to stay here."

"You will be going back—soon?"

"Some day, sure! Soon? Maybe. Oh, I wish I could. That part of me which is like Uncle Hammond says, 'Stay.' But that other part of me which is like the rest of us, says, 'What's the use? Go back to your kind. You're happier there. Why should you want to be different? What does it all amount to? I am afraid I shall be weak enough and foolish enough to go back and—stay.'"

There was a stir in the forward part of the car. A man, hitherto sitting quietly by the side of an alert wiry little fellow who sat next the aisle, had attempted to bolt the car by springing over the empty seat in front of him and making a dash for the door. It was daring, but in vain. His companion, as agile as he, had seized him and forced him again into his place before the rest of the passengers fully understood that the attempt had really been made.

"Is he crazy? Are they taking him to Yankeetown?" asked Louise, the pretty color all gone from her face. "Did he think to jump off the train?"

"That's John Yellow Wolf, a young half-breed. He's wanted up in the Hills for cattle-rustling—United States court case. That's Johnson with him, deputy United States marshal."

"Poor fellow," said Louise, pityingly. "Don't waste your sympathy on such as he. They are degenerates—many of these half-breeds. They will swear to anything. They inherit all the evils of the two races. Good never mixes. Yellow Wolf would swear himself into everlasting torment for a pint of whiskey. You see my cause of complaint? But never think, Miss Dale, that these poor chaps of half-breeds, who are hardly responsible, are the only ones who are willing to swear to damnable lies." There was a tang of bitterness in his voice. "Perjury, Miss Dale, perjury through fear of bribery or self-interest, God knows what, it is there I must break, I suppose, until the day of judgment, unless—I run away."

Louise, through all the working of his smart and sting, felt the quiet reserve strength of this man beside her, and with a quick rush of longing to do her part, her woman's part of comforting and healing, she put her hand, small, unglowed, on his rough coat sleeve.

"Is that what you meant a while ago? But you don't mean it, do you? It is bitter and you do not mean it. Tell me that you do not mean it, Mr. Gordon, please," she said, impulsively.

Smothering a wild impulse to keep the hand where it had lain such a brief, palpitating while, Gordon remained silent. God only knows what human longing he crushed down, what intense discouragement, what sick desire to lay down his thankless task and flee to the uttermost parts of the world to be away from the crying need he yet could not still. Then he answered simply, "I did not mean it, Miss Dale."

And then there did not seem to be anything to say between them for a long while. The half-breed had settled down with stolid indifference. People had resumed their newspapers and magazines and day dreams after the fleeting excitement. It was very warm. Louise tried to create a little breeze by flicking her somewhat begrimed handkerchief in front of her face. Gordon took a newspaper from his pocket, folded it and fanned her gently. He was not used to the little graces of life, perhaps, but he did this well. An honest man and a kindly never goes far wrong in any direction. "You must not think, Miss Dale," he said, seriously, "that it is all bad up here. I am only selfish. I have been harping on my own little corner of wickedness all the while. It is a good land. It will be better before long."

"When?" asked Louise.

"When we convict Jesse Black and when our Indian neighbors get over their mania for divorce," he answered, laughing softly.

Louise laughed merrily, and so the journey ended as it had begun, with a laugh and a jest.

In the judge's runabout, Louise held out her hand.

"I'm almost homesick," she cried, smiling.

TO BE CONTINUED

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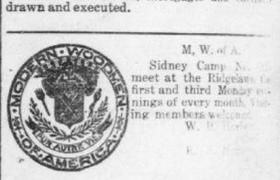
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