

THE RANCH AT THE WOLVERINE

A tale of the wild outdoor life of pioneer days that called forth all the courage and resourcefulness of men and women inured to danger and hardship

By B. M. BOWER

CHAPTER XIV.

Billy Louise Gets a Surprise.

Frightened, worried, sick at heart because her crowding doubts and suspicions had suddenly developed into black certainty just when she had thought them dead forever, Billy Louise rode up the narrow, rocky gorge. She had come to have a vague comprehension of the temptation Ward must have felt. She had come to accept pityingly the possibility that the cancer of old influences had eaten more deeply than appeared on the surface. She had set herself stanchly beside him as his friend, who would help him win back his self-respect. She felt sure that he must suffer terribly with that keen, analytical mind of his, when he stopped to think at all. He had no warped ethics wherewith to ease his conscience. She knew his ideas of right and wrong were as uncompromising as her own, and if he stole cattle, he did it with his eyes wide open to the wrong he was doing. And yet—

"That's bad enough, but to try and fasten evidence on someone else!" Billy Louise gritted her teeth over the treachery of it. She believed he had done that very thing. How could she help it? She had seen the coral and had seen Ward ride away from it in the dusk of the evening; or she believed she had seen him, which was the same thing. And she knew what lay behind him. Was his version of the past after all the correct one? Might not the paragraph she had turned been nothing more than the truth?

Billy Louise fought for him; fought with her stern, youthful judgment which was so uncompromising. It takes years of close contact with life to give one a sure understanding of human weakness and human endeavor.

At the ford, when Blue would have crossed and taken the trail home, Billy Louise reined him impulsively the other way. Until that instant she had not intended to seek Ward, but once her fingers had touched the reins against Blue's neck, she did not hesitate; she did not even argue with herself. She just glanced up at the sun, saw that it was not yet noon—so much may happen in two or three hours!—and sent Blue up the hill at alope.

She did not know what she would do or what she would say when she saw Ward.

The two mares fed dispiritedly at the lowest corner of the field, their hair rough with exposure to the winter winds and the storms, their ribs showing. With all the hay he had put up, Ward might at least keep his horses in better shape. Billy Louise frowned, as she passed them by.

Further along, Billy Louise heard a welcoming nicker and turned her head. Here came Rattler, thin-flanked and rough-coated, trotting down a shallow gully to meet Blue. The two horses chattered together whenever Ward was at the Wolverine. Billy Louise pulled up and waited till Rattler reached her. He and Blue rubbed noses, and Blue laid back his ears and shook his head with teeth bared, in playful pretense of anger. Rattler kicked up his heels in disdain at the threat and trotted alongside them.

Billy Louise rode with puckered eyebrows. Ward might neglect his stock, but he would never neglect Rattler. Like this. And he must be at home, since here was his horse.

She struck Blue suddenly with her reins and went clattering up the trail where the snow lay in shaded, crusty patches rimmed with dirt. The trail was untracked save by the loose stock. Where was Ward? What had happened to him? She looked again at Rattler. There was no sign of recent saddle marks along his side, no telltale imprint of the cinch under his belly. Where was Ward?

Blind, unreasoning terror filled Billy Louise. She struck Blue again and plunged into the icy creek crossing near the stable. She stopped there just long enough to see how empty and desolate it was, and how the horses and cattle had huddled against its sheltering wall out of the biting winds; and how the door was shut and fastened so that they could not get in. She opened it and looked in, and shut it again. Then she turned and ran, white-faced, to the cabin. Where was Ward? What had happened to Ward? Thief or honest man, treacherous or true—what had happened to him?

Billy Louise saw the doorstep banked over with old, crusted snow. Her heart gave a jump and stopped still. She felt her knees shake under her. Her face seemed to pinch together, the flesh close to the bones. Her

whole being seemed to contract with the deadly fear that gripped her. It was like that chill morning when she had crept out of her cot and gone over to mummy's bed and had lifted mummy's hand that was hanging down.

She came to herself; she was running up the creek, away from the cabin. Running and stumbling over rocks, and getting tripped with her riding skirt. She stopped, as soon as she realized what she was doing; she stopped and stood with her hands pressed hard against each side of her face, forcing herself to calmness again—or at least to sanity. She had to go back. She told herself so, many times.

So Billy Louise went back to the cabin, slowly, with shaking legs and a heart that fluttered and stopped, fluttered and jumped and stopped, and made her stagger as she walked. She reached the doorstep and stood there with her palms pressed hard against her cheeks, again. "You've got to do it. You've got to!" she whispered to herself commandingly.

She never doubted that Ward was inside. She thought she would find him dead—dead and horrible, perhaps. No other solution seemed to fit the circumstances. He was in there, dead.

It took courage to open that door, but Billy Louise had courage enough to open it, and to step inside and close the door after her. She did not look at anything in the cabin while she did it, though. She kept her eyelids down so that she only saw the floor directly in front of the door. She had a sense of relief that it looked perfectly natural, though dusty.

"Throw up your hands!" came hoarsely from the bunk. Billy Louise gasped and pulled her gun, and dropped crouching to the floor. Also she looked up.

From her crouching position she looked into Ward's fever-wild eyes. He was sitting up in the bunk, and he was pointing his big forty-five at her relentlessly. "Get up from there!" he ordered sternly. "Don't try any game like that on me, Buck Olney! Get up and go over and sit in that chair. I've got a few things to say to you."

Billy Louise somehow grasped the truth, up to a certain point. Ward was sick; so sick he didn't know her. She thought she would better humor him. She got up and went and sat in the chair as he directed.

Ward, keeping the gun pointing her, sneered at her in a way that made the soul of Billy Louise cringe. She faced him big-eyed, too amazed at the change in him to feel any fear that he would harm her. He had whiskers two inches long. She wouldn't have known him except for his hair—and that was terribly tousled; and his eyes, though they were wild and angry. His voice was hoarse, and while he glared at her, he coughed with a hard, croupy resonance.

"So you came back, did yuh?" he asked grimly at last. "Well, you didn't get a chance to plug me in the back. How long did you lay up there on the bluff this time, waiting to catch me when I wasn't looking? I've been wishing I'd left that rope so it would have hung you, you —" (Billy Louise listened round-eyed to certain man-sized epithets strange to her ears.)

"I suppose you and Foxy and that halfbreed have been fixing up some more evidence, huh? You figure that I can't catch 'em this time and work the brands over, so they'll stand YG's, and I'll get railroaded to the pen. Well, you've overplayed your hand, old-time. I let you fellows down easy, last time. I don't reckon Foxy objected much to those few I turned back to him, and I don't reckon you did any kicking when you found I'd cut the rope so it wouldn't hold your rotten carcass. You can't let well enough alone, though. You thought you'd raise me, did you? You thought you'd come back and try another whack at me behind my back. You know hanged well I wasn't the kind of man that would jump the country. You knew you'd find me right here, attending to my business like I've always done."

"But you've overplayed your hand. This time I'm going to get you—and Foxy and the breed along with you. It was a rotten trick, running YG's over Seabeck's brand. If I hadn't caught you in the act, you'd have planted them cattle where all h—I couldn't have saved me when they were found. If I hadn't caught you at it and run MK monograms over the whole cheese, I'd have been up against it for fair. So now you're going to get what's coming to yuh. I won't take any chances on your not trying it again. I'm going to protect myself right."

"You throw that gun on the bed." (Billy Louise did so, her eyes still upon Ward's flushed face.) "Now, get down being seemed to contract with the deadly fear that gripped her. It was like that chill morning when she had crept out of her cot and gone over to mummy's bed and had lifted mummy's hand that was hanging down. She came to herself; she was running up the creek, away from the cabin. Running and stumbling over rocks, and getting tripped with her riding skirt. She stopped, as soon as she realized what she was doing; she stopped and stood with her hands pressed hard against each side of her face, forcing herself to calmness again—or at least to sanity. She had to go back. She told herself so, many times. So Billy Louise went back to the cabin, slowly, with shaking legs and a heart that fluttered and stopped, fluttered and jumped and stopped, and made her stagger as she walked. She reached the doorstep and stood there with her palms pressed hard against her cheeks, again. "You've got to do it. You've got to!" she whispered to herself commandingly. She never doubted that Ward was inside. She thought she would find him dead—dead and horrible, perhaps. No other solution seemed to fit the circumstances. He was in there, dead. It took courage to open that door, but Billy Louise had courage enough to open it, and to step inside and close the door after her. She did not look at anything in the cabin while she did it, though. She kept her eyelids down so that she only saw the floor directly in front of the door. She had a sense of relief that it looked perfectly natural, though dusty. "Throw up your hands!" came hoarsely from the bunk. Billy Louise gasped and pulled her gun, and dropped crouching to the floor. Also she looked up. From her crouching position she looked into Ward's fever-wild eyes. He was sitting up in the bunk, and he was pointing his big forty-five at her relentlessly. "Get up from there!" he ordered sternly. "Don't try any game like that on me, Buck Olney! Get up and go over and sit in that chair. I've got a few things to say to you." Billy Louise somehow grasped the truth, up to a certain point. Ward was sick; so sick he didn't know her. She thought she would better humor him. She got up and went and sat in the chair as he directed. Ward, keeping the gun pointing her, sneered at her in a way that made the soul of Billy Louise cringe. She faced him big-eyed, too amazed at the change in him to feel any fear that he would harm her. He had whiskers two inches long. She wouldn't have known him except for his hair—and that was terribly tousled; and his eyes, though they were wild and angry. His voice was hoarse, and while he glared at her, he coughed with a hard, croupy resonance. "So you came back, did yuh?" he asked grimly at last. "Well, you didn't get a chance to plug me in the back. How long did you lay up there on the bluff this time, waiting to catch me when I wasn't looking? I've been wishing I'd left that rope so it would have hung you, you —" (Billy Louise listened round-eyed to certain man-sized epithets strange to her ears.) "I suppose you and Foxy and that halfbreed have been fixing up some more evidence, huh? You figure that I can't catch 'em this time and work the brands over, so they'll stand YG's, and I'll get railroaded to the pen. Well, you've overplayed your hand, old-time. I let you fellows down easy, last time. I don't reckon Foxy objected much to those few I turned back to him, and I don't reckon you did any kicking when you found I'd cut the rope so it wouldn't hold your rotten carcass. You can't let well enough alone, though. You thought you'd raise me, did you? You thought you'd come back and try another whack at me behind my back. You know hanged well I wasn't the kind of man that would jump the country. You knew you'd find me right here, attending to my business like I've always done." "But you've overplayed your hand. This time I'm going to get you—and Foxy and the breed along with you. It was a rotten trick, running YG's over Seabeck's brand. If I hadn't caught you in the act, you'd have planted them cattle where all h—I couldn't have saved me when they were found. If I hadn't caught you at it and run MK monograms over the whole cheese, I'd have been up against it for fair. So now you're going to get what's coming to yuh. I won't take any chances on your not trying it again. I'm going to protect myself right." "You throw that gun on the bed." (Billy Louise did so, her eyes still upon Ward's flushed face.) "Now, get

down that tablet from the shelf. Here's a pencil." He drew one from under his pillow and tossed it toward her. "Now you write the truth about all this rustling. It's a bigger thing than shows right in this neighborhood. I know that. And I know, too, that Foxy has been pulling down some on the side. He never paid for all the stock that's running around vented and rebranded MK. I've got that sized up. Pretty smooth trick, too; a heap better than working brands. He ought to have been satisfied with that—but a crook never is satisfied. I know he wasn't the tenderfoot he tried to make out, and when I saw some of his stock and that gate fixed to ring a bell when it was opened, I knew he was a crook. But he made a big mistake when he threw in with you, you—

"I want you to write down the truth about that Harcup deal; who was in with you. I know, all right, but I want it down on paper. And I want to know how long Foxy's been in with you, and who's working the game on the outside. Get busy; write it all down. I'll give you all the time you need; don't leave out anything. Dates and all. I want the whole graft. Don't try to get away. I've got this gun loaded to the guards, and you know I'm aching for an excuse—" He stopped and coughed again, hoarsely, rackingly. Then he lay quiet, except for his rasping breath and watched.

Billy Louise, with the tablet on her trembling knees, pretended to write. From under her lashes she watched Ward curiously. She saw his attention wander, saw his eyes wander aimlessly about the room. She sat very still and waited, making scrawly marks that had no meaning at all. She saw Ward's fingers loosen on the revolver, saw his head turn wearily on the pillow. He was starting out through the window at the brilliant blue of the sky with the dazzling white clouds drifting like bits of cotton to the northward. He had forgotten her.

CHAPTER XV.

The Hookin'-Cough Man.

BILLY LOUISE waited another minute or two, weighing the possibilities. She saw Ward's fingers drop away from the gun, but they remained close enough for a dangerously quick gripping of it again, if the whim seized him. Still—surely to goodness, Ward would never get crazy enough to hurt her! Perhaps her feminine assurance of her hold on him, more than her courage, kept her nerves fairly steady. She bit the pencil absently, watching him.

Ward turned his head restlessly on the pillow and coughed again. Billy Louise got up quietly, went close to the bed, and laid her hand on his forehead. His head was hot, and the veins were swollen and throbbing on his temples.

"Brave Buckaroo got a headache?" she queried softly, stroking his temples soothingly. "Got the hookin'-cough, too. Got every mensey thing I can think of. Even got a grouch against the Flower of the Ranch-oh!" Her voice was crouching soft and sweet, as if she were murmuring over a sleepy baby.

Ward closed his eyes, opened them, and looked up into her face. One hand came up uncertainly and caught her fingers closely. "Wilhelmina!" he said, in his hoarse voice. His eyes cleared to sanity under her touch.

Billy Louise drew a small sigh of relief and reached unobtrusively with her free hand for the gun. She slid it down away from his fingers, and when he still paid no attention, she picked it up quite openly and laid it against the footboard. Ward did not say anything. He seemed altogether occupied with the amazing reality of her presence.

"You've got a terrible cold; and from the looks of things, you'd had it for about six months," said Billy Louise. Her eyes went comprehensively about that end of the cabin, with the depleted cracker box, the half-emptied boxes of peaches and tomatoes, and the buckets that were all but empty of water. She was shocked at the pitiful evidence of long helplessness. She did not quite understand. Surely Ward's cold had not kept him in bed so long.

"Well, this is no time for mirth or laughter," she said briskly, to hide how close she was to hysteria, "since it looks very much like the morning after." First, we've got to tackle that fever of yours." She picked up a water pail and started for the door. As she passed the foot of the bunk, she confiscated the two revolvers and took them outside with her. She had

no desire to be mistaken again for Buck Olney.

When she came back Ward's eyes were wild again, and he started up in bed and glared at her. Billy Louise laughed at him and told him to lie down like a nice buckaroo, and Ward, recalled to himself by her voice, obeyed. She got the washbasin and a towel and prepared to bathe his head. He wanted a drink. And when she held a cup to his lips and saw how greedily he drank, a little sob broke unexpectedly from her lips. She gritted her teeth after it and forced a laugh.

"You're sure a hard drinker," she bantered and wet her handkerchief to lay on his brow.

"That's the first decent drink I've had for a month," he told her, dropping back to the pillow, refreshed to the point of clear thinking. "Old Lady Fortune's still playing football with me, William. I've been laid up with a broken leg for about six weeks. And when I got gay and thought I could handle myself again, I put myself out of business for a while, and caught this cold before I came to and crawled back into bed. I'm—sure glad you showed up, old girl. I was—getting up against it for fair." He coughed.

"Looks like it," Billy Louise held herself rigidly back from any emotional expression. She could not afford to "go to pieces" now. She tried to think just what a trained nurse would do, in such a case. Her hospital experience would be of some use here, she told herself. She remembered reading somewhere that no experience is valueless, if one only applies the knowledge gained.

"First," she said cheerfully, "the patient must be kept quiet and cheerful. So don't go jumping up and down on your broken leg, Ward Warren; the nurse forbids it. And smile, if it kills you."

Ward grinned appreciatively. Sick as he was, he realized the goodness of Billy Louise; what he failed to realize was the goodness of himself. "I'm a pretty worthless specimen right now," he said apologetically. "But I'm yours to command, Bill-the-Conk. You're the doctor."

"Nope, I'm the cook, right now. I've got a hunch. How would you like a cup of tea, patient?"

"I'd rather have coffee—Doctor William."

"Tea, you mean. I'll have it ready in ten minutes." Then she weakened before his imploring eyes. "You really oughtn't to drink coffee, with that fever, Ward. But, maybe if I don't make it very strong and put in lots of cream—We'll take a chance, buckaroo."

"How much sugar, patient?" Billy Louise turned toward him with the tomato can sugar bowl in her hands.

"None. I want to taste the coffee, this time."

"Oh, all right! It's the worst thing you could think of, but that's the way with a patient. Patients always want what they mustn't have."

"Sure—get it, too." Ward spoke between long, satisfying gulps. "How's your other patient, Wilhelmina? How's mummy?"

"Oh, Ward! She's dead—mummy's dead!" Billy Louise broke down unexpectedly and completely. She went down on her knees beside the bed and cried as she had not cried since she looked the last time at mummy's still face, held in that terrifying calm. She cried until Ward's excited mutterings warned her that she must pull herself together.

"You be s-still," she commanded brokenly, fighting for her former safe cheerfulness. "I'm all right. Pity yourself, if you've got to pity somebody. I—can stand—my trouble. I haven't got any broken leg and—hookin' cough." She managed a laugh then and took Ward's hand from her hair and laid it down on the blankets. "Now we won't talk about things any more. You've got to have something done for that cold on your lungs." She rose and stood looking down at him with puckered eyebrows.

"Mummy would say you ought to have a good sweat," she decided. "Got any ginger?"

"I dunno. I guess not," Ward muttered confusedly.

"Well, I'll go out and find some sage, then, and give you sage tea. That's another cure-all."

She did not spend all her time picking sage twigs. A bush grew at the corner of the cabin within easy reach. She went first down to the stable and led Blue inside and unsaddled him.

Ward was lying quiet when she went in, except that he was waving her handkerchief to and fro by the corner's careful consideration of the product, to the end that prices approximating the ante-bellum charges may be restored.

"Isn't your cook quite like one of the family?"

"Mercy, no! She has things to eat the way she likes 'em."

Don't be too fastidious. The carpenter would lose lots of time by stopping to have all his nails manicured.

Finally he left us.

ners to cool it. Billy Louise took it from him, wet it again with cold water, and scolded him for getting his arms from under the covers. That, she said, was no nice way for a hookin'-cough man to do.

Ward meekly submitted to being covered to his eyes. Then he wriggled his chin free and demanded that she kiss him. Ward was fairly drunk with happiness because she was there, in the cabin.

"Ward Warren, you're a perfectly awful hookin'-cough man! There. Now that's going to be the only one—Oh, Ward, it isn't!" She knelt and curved an arm around his face and kissed him again and yet again. "I do love you, Ward. I've been a weak-kneed, horrid thing, and I'm ashamed to the middle of my bones. You're my own brave buckaroo always—always! You've done what no other man would do, and you don't whine about it; and I've been weak and—horrid; and I'll have to love you about a million years before I can quit feeling ashamed."

She kissed him again with a passion of remorse for her doubts of him.

"Are you through being pals, Wilhelmina?" Ward broke rules and freed an arm, so that he could hold her closer.

"No, I'm just beginning. Just beginning right. I'm your pal for keeps. But—"

"I love you for keeps, lady mine." Ward stifled another cough. "When are you going to—marry me?"

"Oh, when you get over the hookin'-cough, I suppose." Once more Billy Louise, for the good of her patient, forced herself into safe flippancy—that was not flippant at all, but merely a tender pretense.

"Now it's up to you to show me whether you are in any hurry at all to get well," she said. "Keep your hands under the covers while I make some tea. That fever of yours has got to be stopped immediately—to once."

She went over and busied herself about the stove, never once looking toward the bed, though she must have felt Ward's eyes worshipping her.

She hunted through the cupboards and found a bottle of turpentine; sirupy and yellowed with age, but pungent with strength. She found some lard in a small bucket and melted half a cupful. Then she tore up a woolen undershirt she found hanging on a nail and bore relentlessly down upon him.

"You gotta be greased all over your lard, you announced with a matter-of-factness that cost her something; for Billy Louise's innate modesty was only just topped by her good sense.

Ward submitted without protest while she bared his chest and applied the warm mixture with a smoothly vigorous palm. "That'll fix the hookin' cough," she said, as she spread the warm layers of woolen cloth smoothly from shoulder to shoulder. "How does it feel?"

"Great," he assured her succinctly, and wisely omitted any love making.

"Will your game leg let you turn over? Because there's some dope left, and it ought to go between your shoulders."

"The game leg ought to stand more than that," he told her, turning slowly. "If I hadn't got this cold tacked onto me, I'd have been trying to walk on it by now."

"Better give it time—since you've been game enough to lie here all this while and take care of it. I don't believe I'd have had nerve enough for that, Ward." She poured turpentine and lard into her palm, reached inside his collar and rubbed it on his shoulders. "Good thing you had plenty of grub handy. But it must have been awful!"

"It was pretty awesome," he admitted laconically, and that was as far as his complainings went.

Billy Louise then poured the water off the sage leaves she had been brewing in a tin basin, carefully fished out a stem or two, and made Ward drink every bitter drop. Then she covered him to the eyes and hardened her heart against his discomfort, while she kept the handkerchief cool on his head and between times swept the floor with a carefully dampened broom and wiped the dust off things and restored the room to its most cheerful atmosphere of livableness.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

An African Belle.

In Africa a crop of the blackest, curliest, closest hair imaginable makes a girl the belle of the bazaar, especially if she be plump, with piggy eyes, thick lips, a nose like an India-rubber shoe, and a skin that shines like a cooling stove.

Popularity of the Sunflower.

The sunflower is probably destined to play an important part in the economic affairs of the United States as a substitute for linseed, states the Christian Science Monitor. A member of the National Paint, Oil and Varnish association recently read a report which declared that the cultivation of the sunflower for this purpose can be made to yield a gross return to the farmer of from \$30 to \$300 an acre. Everything in these days seems to be working out to the profit of Kansas. Cannot something be done with the Jimson weed, so as to please Missouri?

Problem in Rats.

HENRY FOURTH OF GERMANY

King's Troubles in Helping to Rule the World Included Much Suffering and Humiliation.

Of all the wrangling monarchs who had a part in running the world during the infancy of government none was more picturesque than Henry IV of Germany. And he suffered perhaps the greatest humiliation that ever was visited upon a king, writes a historian. Gregory VII became pope in the seventh decade of the eleventh century. The election did not please Henry in the least. Under the pilfered title of Roman king he claimed a share in papal affairs and did not propose to be treated lightly. But Gregory persuaded him to confirm his elevation. Then dissension broke out between the two, and Henry's partisans unsent the pope, who retired to Canossa, in the Apennines.

Gregory retaliated on Henry by wielding that most powerful weapon of the church—excommunication. This casting out of the faith was the most feared of all fates in ancient days, and even Henry's close advisers fell away from him. The king faced the storm bravely enough, but things went against him and he decided to propitiate Gregory. So, in the midst of winter he crossed the Alps, a truly prodigious undertaking in those times, and presented himself before the castle where Gregory was staying, asking audience. At first Gregory refused, but then consented on condition that Henry dismiss all his attendants and enter alone. The German complied and quitted his suite to go inside the walls.

Further on he came to a second gate, where he was told that the pope had ordered him divested of all his regal ornaments and clothing before proceeding. Henry reluctantly consented, and received in exchange a coarse woolen tunic. Wearing this, he passed through the gate, thinking his troubles over. But there remained a last gate and a final trial. For three days and nights he was kept standing outside the gate in severe weather, fasting from morning until night. At the end of that time Gregory finally had the king ushered before him and agreed to lift the ban if Henry would consent to a truce between them, made distinctly on the pope's terms. To this Henry agreed and was restored to the church.

He left soon after, nursing his hatred for Gregory and determined to square accounts. This led to the pope nominating another prince for Henry's throne and to endless warfare. The king was excommunicated a second time and continued under the ban most of his troublous life. There have been few instances of a monarch undergoing any such humiliation as that experienced, standing outside the pope's door for three days in freezing weather.

Now a K. P.

A young aviator one of the aviation fields, wrote his mother a letter recently, and among other things he said that he had "got to be a K. P." On receipt of the letter the good mother, with love in her heart for her boy, hastened to a jewelry store and informed the jeweler that she wished to buy a K. P. ring for her son, saying that she had received a letter from him stating that he had become a K. P. A ring was selected, paid for and prepared for mailing. In due time the "K. P. aviator" received the package containing the ring and a letter from his mother, in which she commended him on the step he had taken and that she was sending him this ring to show her appreciation.

The young man at once saw that his mother was laboring under a mistake, as he was not a member of the Knights of Pythias, as she supposed, but instead he was kitchen police at the aviation grounds. He at once wrote his mother, explaining the meaning of his letter, and kept the matter a secret for some time, but it was too good, and he told the story to a party of people who were visiting at the field.

Old-Time Remedy.

"Pipe the fat greaser, Elaine," said one of the sales girls to another behind the women's hosiery counter in a New York department store, as a portly man approached. "I'll wager a piece of gum that he's going to buy a box of hose for his lady love." But she was mistaken. The rotund one said, "I want a pair of stockings, miss." ("Stings!" said the other girl, under her breath. "Stings!" asked the girl whom the customer had addressed. "No, heavy lisle or cotton," mumbled the fat person with an effort at an apologetic smile. "What size?" "It doesn't make any difference. Just give me whatever is handy," he replied. The girl rested a white hand upon a slender hip and surveyed him with a look of such infinite pity that he felt called upon to explain. "You see, he's spluttered, as his full face blossomed into a full flush, 'I'm a great believer in old-fashioned remedies. I've had a beastly sore throat for a week, and I can't cure it because my socks won't reach around my neck.' And before he had left the counter the 'fat greaser' had won the sympathy of both girls.

While Alberta has given over to the war thousands of her virile manhood, thus taking from the farmer a large percentage of its producers, it still stands up big and buoyant. The farm help thus temporarily removed means a demand for farm help and increased farm effort to till its highly productive acres. Hon. Chas. Stewart, Premier of Alberta, in a message to the people on the 1st of January, speaks with such buoyancy and hope of the future and so highly of the work of the past year, that his statement is reproduced. He says:

"The prosperity of the farming communities is reflected in the towns and cities by increased wholesale business and bank clearances. Wholesalers report increases from 20 per cent to 25 per cent and their collections the best in the history of the Province. It still stands up big and buoyant. The farm help thus temporarily removed means a demand for farm help and increased farm effort to till its highly productive acres. Hon. Chas. Stewart, Premier of Alberta, in a message to the people on the 1st of January, speaks with such buoyancy and hope of the future and so highly of the work of the past year, that his statement is reproduced. He says:

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It's easy to swear off and generally it is good for a body, too.

When Your Eyes Need Care Try Murine Eye Remedy

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

The Heads of Canada's Western Provinces, and Their Message.

The United States having been in the great world's war for about nine months, the touch of war's spirit has permeated the great commonwealth, and in every hamlet and district is felt and shown the interest that was to be expected from a people whose love of liberty and justice rises supreme to all else. Day by day their appreciation of what it means to give up now for the future happiness of themselves and the generations that follow grows greater and greater. There will be losses of loved ones, but there will be no badge of mourning to indicate the great sorrow that will be felt. It is realized that the sacrifice is the toll that is demanded for making the whole world better, and, sensing this, there is preparation and willingness to sacrifice until the goal—the defeat and downfall of despotism—is assured.

When the people look back, and see that Canada has done, and learnt that Canada today is bigger and better than ever, they will take heart, and with increasingly growing vigor carry on with a greater courage. Canada has been in the war for three and a half years. She has sent 400,000 out of a population of eight million, she has subscribed to Victory Bonds over and over again and there is no sound of a whimper. At each demand that is made upon her resources, she meets it, and gets ready for the next. Recently her people were asked to subscribe \$300,000,000. She handed over \$400,000,000.

Having already contributed 400,000 soldiers, Canada was recently asked to approve of sending another 100,000. With a sweeping majority, consent was given.

How the war affects Canada is best shown by the willingness of the people to contribute. They, too, realize the great and noble part they are taking in this great conflict. They are a unit on making the world better. Canada's wealth was never shown to better advantage than in the present struggle! It possesses great wealth in the soil, in its mines, its other natural resources, and wonderful riches in the tenacity and courage of its men and its women. The soil and the climate, and the hardihood and determination of the farming class to win, by cultivating and cultivating, growing wheat and raising cattle to build up the resources so necessary to carry on the war, are factors that will count.