

LANGFORD OF THE THREE BARS

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SYNOPSIS.

George Williston, a poor ranchman, high minded and cultured, searches for cattle missing from his ranch—the "Lazy S." On a wooded spot in the river's bed that would have been an island had the Missouri been at high water, he discovers a band of horse thieves engaged in working over brands on cattle. He creeps near enough to note the changing of the "Three Bars" brand on one steer to the "J. R." brand. Paul Langford, the rich owner of the "Three Bars" ranch, is sent for by Williston and is informed of the operations of the gang of cattle thieves—a band of outlaws headed by Jesse Black, who long have defied the law and authorities of Kemah county, South Dakota, with impunity, but who, heretofore, had not dared to molest any of the property of the great "Three Bars" ranch. Williston shows his reluctance in opposing a band so powerful in politics and so dreaded by all the community. Langford pledges Williston his friendship if he will assist in bringing "Jesse Black" and his gang to justice. Langford is struck with the beauty of Mary, commonly known as "Williston's little girl." Louise Dale, an expert court stenographer, who had followed her uncle, Judge Hammond Dale, from the east to the Dakotas, and who is living with him at Williston, is requested by the county attorney, Richard Gordon, to come to Kemah and take testimony in the preliminary hearing of Jesse Black. She accepts the invitation and makes her first trip into the wild Indian country. Arriving at Velpen across the river from Kemah, she is met by Jim Munson, a hot headed cowboy of the "Three Bars" ranch. In waiting for the train Munson looks at some cattle in the stock pen. In the herd being shipped to Sioux City by Bill Brown he detects old "Mag" a well known "onery" steer belonging to his employer of the "Three Bars" ranch.

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

"What'll you have?" he asked, hospitably, the familiar air of the Bon Ami bringing him back to his accustomed self-confident swagger.

"Might I have some tea and toast, please?" said Louise, sinking into a chair at the nearest table, with two startling yet amusing thoughts rampant in her brain. One was, that she wished Aunt Helen could have seen her swinging along in the wake of this typical "boid and licentious" man, and calmly and comfortably sitting down to a cozy little supper for two at a public eating house; the other startling thought was to the effect that the invitation was redolent with suggestiveness, and she wondered if she was not expected to say, "A whiskey for me, please."

"Guess you kin," answered Jim, wonder in his voice at the exceeding barrenness of the order. "Mrs. Higgins, hello there, Mrs. Higgins! I say, there, bring on some tea and toast for the lady!"

"Where is the Three Bars?" asked Louise, her thoughts straying to the terrors of a 15-mile drive through a strange and uncanny country with a stranger and yet more uncanny man. She had accepted him without question. He was part and parcel with the strangeness of her new position. But the suddenness of the transition from idle conjecture to startling reality had raised her proud head and she looked this new development squarely in the face without outward hint of inward perturbation.

"Say, where was you raised?" asked Jim, with tolerant scorn, between huge mouthfuls of boiled pork and cabbage, interspersed with baked potatoes, hot rolls and soggy dumplings, shoveled in with knife, fork or spoon. He occasionally anticipated dessert by making a sudden sortie into the quarter of an immense custard pie, hastening the end by means of noisy draughts of steaming coffee. Truly, the Three Bars connection had the fat of the land at the Bon Ami.

"Why, it's the Three Bars that's bringin' you here. Didn't you know that? There's nary a man in the hull country with backbone enough to keep off all-fours 'ceptin' Paul Langford. Um. You just try once to walk over the boss, will you? Lord! What a grease spot you'd make!"

"Mr. Gordon isn't being walked over, is he?" asked Louise, finished with her tea and toast and impatient to be off.

"Oh, Gordon? Pretty decent sort o' chap. Right ideas. Don't know much about handlin' hoss thieves and sich. Ain't smooth enough. Acted kind o' like a chicken with its head cut off till the boss got into the round-up."

"Oh!" said Louise, whose conception of the young counsel for the state did not tally with this delineation.

"Yep, Miss, this here's the boss's doin's. Yep, Lord! What'll that gang look like when we are through with 'em. Spendin' the rest o' their days down there in Soux Falls, meditati on the advisability o' walkin' elem o' the loss o' the Three Bars in the future and cussin' their stupendous stupidity in foolin' even once with the Three Bars. Yep, sir—yes, me'ans

I mean—Jesse Black and his gang have acted just like pesky, little plum-fool moskeeters, and we're goin' to slap 'em. The cheek of 'em, lightin' on the Three Bars! Lord!"

"Mr. Williston informed, did he not?"

"Williston? Oh, yes, he informed, but he'd never 'a' done it if it hadn't 'a' been for the boss. The ol' jellyfish wouldn't 'a' had the nerve to inform without backin', as sure as a stone wall. The boss is a doin' this, I tell you, Miss. But Williston's a goin' on the stand to-morrer all right, and so am I."

The two cowboys at the corner table had long since finished their supper. They now lighted bad-smelling cigars and left the room. To Louise's great relief Munson rose, too. He was back very soon with a neat little runabout and a high-spirited team of bays.

"Boss's private," explained Jim with pride. "Nothin' too good for a lady, so the boss sent this and me to take

the gal a pourin' physic down him between times. Yep, Ma'am. He was pizened. You see, everybody that ate any meat last night was took sick with gripin' cramps, yep; but Williston he was worse'n all, he bein' a hearty eater. He was a stayin' in town over night on this preliminary business, and Dick Gordon he was took, too, but not so bad, bein' what you might call a light eater. The boss and me we drove home after all, though we'd expected to stay for supper. The pesky coyotes got fooled that time. Yep, ma'am, no doubt about it in the world. Friends o' Jesse's that we ain't able to lay hands on yit pizenated that there meat. Yep, no doubt about it. Dick was in an awful sweat about you. Was bound he was a comin' after you hisself, sick as he was, when we found Mary was off the count. So then the boss was a comin' and they fit and squabbled for an hour who could be best spared, when I, comin' in, settled it in a jiffy by offerin' my services, which was gladly accepted. When there's pizenin' goin' on, why, the boss's place is hum. And nothin' would do but the boss's own particular outfit. He never does things by halves, the boss don't. So I hikes home after it and then hikes here."

"I am very grateful to him, I am sure," murmured Louise, smiling.

And Jim, daring to look upon her smiling face, clear eyes and soft hair under the jaunty French sailor hat, found himself wondering why there was no woman at the Three Bars. With the swift, half-intuitive thought, the serpent entered Eden.

CHAPTER VI.

"Nothing but a Hoss Thief, Anyway." The island teemed with early sun-



"Where is the Three Bars?"

keeper o' it. And o' you, too, Miss," he added, as an afterthought.

He held the lines in his brown, muscular hands, lovingly, while he stowed away Louise's belongings and himself snugly in the seat, and then the blood burned hot and stinging through his bronzed, tough skin, for suddenly in his big, honest, untrained sensibilities was born the consciousness that the boss would have stowed away the lady first. It was an embarrassing moment. Louise saved the day by climbing in unconcernedly after him and tucking the linea robe over her skirt.

"It will be a dusty drive, won't it?" she asked, simply.

"Miss, you're a—dandy," said Jim as simply.

As they dove upon the pontoon bridge, Louise looked back at the little town on the bluffs and felt a momentary choking in her throat. It was a strange place, yet it had tendrils reaching homeward. The trail beyond was obscurely marked and not easy to discern. She turned to her companion and asked quickly: "Why didn't Mary come?"

"Great galls! Did I forget to tell you? Williston's got the stomach-ache to beat the band and Mary's got to physic him up 'gis to-morrer. We've got to git him on that stand if it takes the hull Three Bars to hot him up and

flowers and hints of goldenrod yet to come. The fine, white, sandy soil deadened the sound of the horses' hoofs. They seemed to be spinning through space. Under the cottonwoods it grew dusky and still.

At the toll house a dingy buckboard in a state of weird dilapidation, with a team of shaggy buckskin ponies, stood waiting. Jim drew up. Two men were lounging in front of the shanty, chatting to the toll-man.

"Hello, Jim!" called one of them, a tall, slouching fellow with sandy coloring.

"Now, how the devil did you git so familiar with my name?" growled Jim.

"The Three Bars is gettin' busy these days," spoke up the second man, with an insolent grin.

"You bet it is," bragged Jim. "When the officers o' the law git to sleepin' with hoss thieves and rustlers, and take two weeks to arrest a bunch of 'em, when they know presactly where they keep themselves, and have to have special deputies appointed over 'em five or six times and then let rust o' the bunch slip through their fingers, it's time for some one to git busy. And when Jesse Black and his gang are so desprit they place the chief witness—"

stopped him. He turned, inquiringly. "I wouldn't say any more," whispered Louise. "Let's get on."

The hint was sufficient, and with the words, "Right you are, Miss Reporter, we'll be gittin' on," Jim paid his toll and spoke to his team.

"Just wait a bit, will you?" spoke up the sandy man.

"What for?"

"We're not just ready."

"Well, we are," shortly.

"We arn't, and we don't care to be passed, you know."

He spoke indifferently. In deference to Louise, Jim waited. The men smoked on carelessly. The toll-manidgeted.

"You go to hell! The Three Bars ain't waitin' on no damned hoss thieves," said Jim, suddenly.

With a burning oath Jim, keeping to the side of the steep incline till the river mire cut him off, deliberately turned his stanch little team squarely and crowded them forward against the shaggy buckskins. It was team against team. Louise, clinging tightly to the seat, lips pressed together to keep back any sound, felt a wild, inexplicable thrill of confidence in the strength of the man beside her.

The bays were pitifully, cruelly lashed by the enraged owner of the buckskins, but true as steel to the familiar voice that had guided them so often and so kindly, they gave not nor faltered. There was a snapping of broken wood, a wrench, a giving way, and the runabout sprang over debris of broken wheel and wagon-box to the narrow confines of the pontoon.

"The Three Bars is gettin' busy!" gibed Jim over his shoulder.

"It's a sorry day for you and yours," cried the other, in black and ugly wrath.

"We ain't afraid. You're nothin' but a hoss thief, anyway!" responded Jim, gleefully, as a parting shot.

"Now what do you suppose was their game?" he asked of the girl at his side.

"I don't know," answered Louise, thoughtfully. "But I thought it not wise to say too much to them. You are a witness, I believe you said."

"Then you think they are part o' the gang?"

"I consider them at least sympathizers, don't you? They seemed down on the Three Bars."

In the Indian country at last. Mile after mile of level, barren stretches after the hill region had been left behind. Was there no end to the thirst-inspiring, monotonous, lonely reach of cacti? Prairie dogs, perched in front of their holes, chattered and scolded at them. The sun went down and a refreshing coolness crept over the hard, baked earth. Still, there was nothing but distance anywhere in all the land, and a feeling of desolation swept over the girl.

The moon came up. Then there were miles of white moonlight and lonely plain. But for some time now there has been a light in front of them. It is as if it must be a will-o'-the-wisp. They never seem to get to it. But at last they are there. The door is wide open. A pleasant odor of bacon and coffee is wafted out to the tired travelers.

"Come right in," says the cheery voice of Mary. "How tired you must be, Miss Dale. Tie up, Jim, and come in and eat something before you go. Well, you can eat again—two suppers won't hurt you. I have kept things warm for you. Your train must have been late. Yes, dad is better, thank you. He'll be all right in the morning"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Advance in Microscopy.

The wonders revealed by the ordinary microscope are increased a hundredfold by a recent invention, which enables the use of a high-power lens as large as six inches in diameter—thus bringing the whole of objects instead of details only under observation. By this means a common house-fly is magnified not in parts, but all at once, till it appears to be as large as an ostrich or a condor, and, being inclosed in an open space, where it is kept directly within the field of the glass and yet has ample room, considering its size, to move about and engage in its usual occupations, the opportunity for studying it are immensely enjoyed by scientists. Vast worlds of microscopic life, hitherto only dreamed of, are suddenly open to the gaze of mankind, and discoveries of immense value can doubtless be made.

Byron's First Shoes.

Speaking of Byron, I once owned the first pair of shoes that he wore, writes "The Lounger" in Putnam's. They were given to my father by a woman who had been the poet's nurse. She had cut them down to fit the feet of a doll belonging to one of her children. It must have been a pretty good sized doll, for the shoes—little soft things made of braid—were none too small for a child. I gave them to the Players because I knew that they would be well taken care of (not because Byron was a playwright), and to the best of my knowledge and belief they now repose under a glass case at 19 Wrenbury park.

Satan Terrified.

There is as great genius displayed in advertising as in the higher branches of literature. No problem daunts the modern advertising man. In the window of a little bookstore in Eighth avenue, New York, was recently heaped a great pile of Bibles, marked very low—never before were Bibles offered at such a bargain; and above them all, in big letters, was the inscription: "Satan trembles when he sees Bibles sold as low as these."—Woman's Home Companion.

PURE FOOD.

No Food Commissioner of Any State Has Ever Attacked the Absolute Purity of Grape-Nuts.

Every analysis undertaken shows this food to be made strictly of Wheat and Barley, treated by our processes to partially transform the starch parts into a form of Sugar, and therefore much easier to digest.

Our claim that it is a "Food for Brain and Nerve Centres" is based upon the fact that certain parts of Wheat and Barley (which we use) contain Nature's brain and nerve-building ingredients, viz.: Phosphate of Potash, and the way we prepare the food makes it easy to digest and assimilate. Dr. Geo. W. Carey in his book on "The Biochemic System of Medicine" says:

"When the medical profession fully understands the nature and range of the phosphate of potassium, insane asylums will no longer be needed.

"The gray matter of the brain is controlled entirely by the inorganic cell-salt, potassium phosphate.

"This salt unites with albumen, and by the addition of oxygen creates nerve-fluid, or the gray matter of the brain.

"Of course, there is a trace of other salts and other organic matter in nerve-fluid, but potassium phosphate is the chief factor, and has the power within itself to attract, by its own law of affinity, all things needed to manufacture the elixir of life. Therefore, when nervous symptoms arise, due to the fact that the nerve-fluid has been exhausted from any cause, the phosphate of potassium is the only true remedy, because nothing else can possibly supply the deficiency.

"The ills arising from too rapidly consuming the gray matter of the brain cannot be overestimated.

"Phosphate of Potash, is to my mind, the most wonderful curative agent ever discovered by man, and the blessings it has already conferred on the race are many. But what shall the harvest be when physicians everywhere fully understand the part this wonderful salt plays in the processes of life? It will do as much as can be done through physiology to make a heaven on earth.

"Let the overworked business man take it and go home good-tempered. Let the weary wife, nerves unstrung from attending to sick children or entertaining company, take it and note how quickly the equilibrium will be restored and calm and reason assert her throne. No 'proving' are required here. We find this potassium salt largely predominates in nerve-fluid, and that a deficiency produces well-defined symptoms. The beginning and end of the matter is to supply the lacking principle, and in molecular form, exactly as nature furnishes it in vegetables, fruits and grain. To supply deficiencies—this is the only law of cure."

Please observe that Phosphate of Potash is not properly of the drug-shop variety but is best prepared by "Old Mother Nature" and stored in the grains ready for use by mankind. Those who have been helped to better health by the use of Grape-Nuts are legion.

"There's a Reason."

BRAIN POWER

Increased by Proper Feeding.

A lady writer who not only has done good literary work, but reared a family, found in Grape-Nuts the ideal food for brain work and to develop healthy children. She writes:

"I am an enthusiastic proclaimer of Grape-Nuts as a regular diet. I formerly had no appetite in the morning and for 8 years while nursing my four children, had insufficient nourishment for them.

"Unable to eat breakfast I felt faint later, and would go to the pantry and eat cold chops, sausage, cookies, doughnuts or anything I happened to find. Being a writer, at times my head felt heavy and my brain asleep.

"When I read of Grape-Nuts I began eating it every morning, also gave it to the children, including my 10 months old baby, who soon grew as fat as a little pig, good natured and contented.

"I wrote evenings and feeling the need of sustained brain power, began eating a small saucer of Grape-Nuts with milk, instead of my usual indigestible hot pudding, pie, or cake for dessert at night.

"I grew plump, nerves strong, and when I wrote my brain was active and clear; indeed, the dull head pain never returned."

POSTUM CEREAL CO., Ltd.
Dulles Creek, Mich.