CUSTER COUNTY REPUBLICAN

By D. M. AMSBERRY

BROKEN BOW, - - NEBRASKA

LANGFORD of the THREE BARS

By

KATE AND VIRGIL D. BOYLES

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 reluctancy 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."

CHAPTER III.

Louise.

It was raining when she left Wind City, but the rain had soon been distanced. Perhaps the judge was right when he said it never rained north or west of Wind City. But the judge had not wanted her to go. Neither had the Judge's wife.

Full 20 minutes, only day before yesterday, the judge had delayed his day's outing at the mill where the Jim river doubles right around on its tracks, in order to make it perfectly clear to her that it was absolutely outside the bounds of her duty, that it was altogether an affair on the side, that she could not be expected to go, and that the prosecuting attorney up there had merely asked her out of courtesy, in deference to her position. Of course he would be glad enough to get her, but let him get some one nearer home, or do without. It was'nt at all necessary for the court reporter to hold herself in readiness to answer the call of anything outside her prescribed circuit duties. To be sure she would earn a trifle, but it was a hard trip, a hard country, and she had much better postpone her initial journey into the unknown until the regular term of court, when he could be with her. He had then thrown his minnow seine over his shoulders, taken his minnow pail in one hand and his reel case and lunch box in the other, and walked out to the road wagon awaiting him at the gate, and so off to his frolic, leaving her to fight it out for herself.

The judge's wife had not been so diplomatic, not by any means. She had dwelt long and earnestly, and no doubt to a large extent truly, on the uncivilized condition of their neighbors up the line; the roughness of accommodations, the boldness and license of the cowboys, the daring and insolence of cattle thieves, and cunning and dishonesty of the Indians, and the uncouthness and viciousness of the half-breeds. She had ended by declaring eloquently that Louise would die of lonesomeness if, by God's good providence, she escaped a worse fate at the hands of one or all of the many evils she had enumerated. Yes, it was very evident Aunt Helen had not wanted her to go. But Aunt Helen's real reason had been that she held it so dizzily unconventional for her niece to go to that wild and unholy land alone. She did not actually fear for her niece's personal safety, and Louise more than half suspected the truth.

She had heard all the arguments before. They had little or no terrors for her now. They were the arguments used by the people back in her eastern home, those dear, dear people, her people—how far away she was!—when they had schemed and plotted so pathetically to keep her with them, the second one to break away from the slow, safe, and calm traditions of her kin in the place where generation after generation of her people had lived and died, and now lay waiting the great judgment in the peaceful country burying-ground.

She had listened to them dutifully, half believing, swallowed hard and followed her uncle, her father's youngest brother, to the "Land of the Dakotahs."

Now, that same dear uncle was a man of power and position in the new land. Only last November he had been reelected to his third term on the bench of his circuit with a big, heart-stirring majority. In the day of his prosperity he had not forgotten the little, tangle-haired girl who had cried so inconsolably when he went away, and the unaccountable horror in whose eyes he had tried to laugh away on that never-to-be-forgotten day when he had wrenched his heartstrings from their safe abiding-place and gone forth in quest of the pot of gold at the rainbow's end—the first of many generations. Tradition knew no other since his ancestors had felled forests and built homes of hewn logs. Now he had sent for Louise. His court reporter had recently left him for other fields of labor.

There was commotion among her people on receipt of the astounding proposition. She lived over again the dark days of the first flitting. It might well be her uncle had exaggerated the dangers of life in the new land. It was great fun to shock his credulous relatives. He had surely written them some enormous tales during those 15 years and more. He used to chuckle heartily to himself at reading some of the sympathizing replies. But these tales were held in evidence against him now that he dared to want Louise. Every letter was brought out by Louise's dear old grandmother and read to her over again. Louise did not half believe them, but they were gospel truth to her grandmother and almost so to her father and mother as well. She remembered the old spirit of fun rampant in her favorite uncle, and while his vivid pictures took all the color from her sensitive face, deep down in her heart she recognized them for what they were worth. The letters were a strange medley of grasshoppers, blizzards and Indians. But a ten-dollar per diem was a great temptation over a five-dollar per diem, and times were pretty hard on the old farm. More than all, the inexplicable something that had led her uncle to throw tradition to the four winds of heaven was calling her persistently and would not be denied.

The dear hero of her childhood was much changed to be sure; his big joints had taken on more flesh and he had gained in dignity of deportment what he had lost in ease of movement. His once merry eye had grown keen with the years of just judging. The lips that had laughed so much in the old days were set in lines of sternness. Judge Hammond Dale was a man who would live up to

Louise.

the tenets of his high calling without fear or favor, through good and evil report. Yet through all his gravity of demeanor and the pride of his integrity, Louise instinctively felt his kindliness and loved him for it. The loneliness fell away from her and a measure of content had come in its place, until the letter had come from the state's attorney up in Kemah county:

My Dear Miss Dale: The eighteenth of August is the date set for the preliminary hearing of Jesse Black. Will you come and take the testimony? I am very anxious that the testimony be taken by a competent reporter and shall be grateful to you if you decide to come.

The judge will tell you about our poor accommodations. Let me recommend to your consideration some good friends of mine, the Willistons, father and daughter. They live three miles northwest of Kemah. The judge will remember Williston, George Williston of the Lazy S. They are cultured people, though their way of living is necessarily primitive. I am sure you will like it better there than at our shabby little hotel, which is a rendezvous for a pretty rough class of men, especially at court time.

If you decide to come, Mary Williston will meet you at Velpen. Please let me know your decison. Very sincerely,

RICHARD GORDON.

So here she was, going into the Indian country at last. A big state, South Dakota, and the phases of its civilization manifold. Having come so far, to refuse to go on seemed like turning back with her hand already on the plow, so with a stout heart she had wired Richard Gordon that she would go. But it was pretty hard now, to be sure, and pretty dreary, coming into Velpen knowing that she would see no one she knew in all the wide, wide world. The thought choked her and the impish demon, loneliness, he of the smirk and horns and devil's eyes, loomed leeringly before her again. Blindly, she picked up her umbrella, suit case and rain coat.

"Homesick?" asked the kindly brakeman, with a consolatory grin as he came to assist her with her baggage.

She bit her lip in mortification to think she had carried her feelings so palpably on her sleeve. But she nodded honestly.

"Maybe it won't be so bad," sympathized the brakeman. His rough heart had gone out to the slim, fair-haired creature with the vague trouble in her eyes.

"Thank you," said Louise, gratefully.

There was a moment's bewilderment on the station platform. There was no one anywhere who seemed to be Mary—no one who might be looking for her. It was evening, too, the lonesome evening to those away from home, when thoughts stab and memories sap the courage. Some one pushed her rudely aside. She was in the way of the trucks.

"Chuck it! None o' your sass, my lad! There's my fist. Heft it if you don't put no stock in its looks. Git out o' this, I say!"

The voice was big and convincing. The man wasn't so big, but some way he looked convincing, too. The truckman stepped aside, but with plucky temerity answered back:

"Get out yourself! Think you own the whole cattle country, jest 'cause you herd a few ornery, pink-eyed, slab-sided critters for your salt? Well, the railroad ain't the range, le' me tell you that. Jest you run your own affairs, will you?"

"Thanky. Glad to. And as my affairs is at present a lady, I'll thank you to just trundle this here railroad offspring to the back o' this here lady—the back, I say—back ain't front, is it? Wasn't where I was eddicated. That's better. And ef you ain't satisfied, why, I belong to the Three Bars. Ever hear o' the Three Bars? Ef I'm out, jest leave word with the boss, will you? He'll see I git the word. Yes, sir, you ol' hoss thief, I belong to the Three Bars."

The encounter was not without interesting spectators. Louise's brakeman was grinning broadly at the discomfiture of his fellow employe. Louise herself had forgotten her predicament in the sudden whirlwind of which she was the innocent storm center.

The cowboy with the temper, having completely routed the enemy to the immense satisfaction of the onlookers, though why, no one knew exactly, nor what the merits of the case, turned abruptly to Louise.

"Are you her?" he asked, with a perceptible cooling of his assertive bravado.

"I don't know," said Louise smiling fearlessly at her champion, though inwardly quaking at the intuition that had flashed upon her that this strange, uncouth man had come to take the place of Mary. "The boldness and license of the cowboys," her aunt had argued. There could be no doubt of the boldness. Would the rest of the statement hold good?

"I think maybe I am, though I am Louise Dale, the new court reporter. I expected Miss Mary Williston to meet me."

"Then you are her," said the man with renewed cheerfulness, seizing her suit case and striding off. "Come along. We'll git some supper afore we start. You're dead tired, more'n likely. It'll be moonlight so't won't matter ef we are late a-gittin' home."

"Court reporter! I'll be doggoned!" muttered the brakeman. "The new girl from down east. A pore little white lamb among a pack o' wolves and coyotes, and homesick a'ready. No wonder! I'll be takin' you back tomorrow, I'm thinkin', young lady."

He didn't know the "little white lamb" who had come to help Paul Langford and Dick Gordon in their big fight.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

PROBABLY NOT ON PAY ROLL.

Father's Occupation Would Likely Be News to Lord Clare.

"The late Frederick McNally had occasion," said a Chicago lawyer, "to consult me about an infringed copyright. Mr. McNally said he thought there would be no trouble about correcting this infringement. The thing, he believed, had been innocently done. The man who had done it was an amateur in publishing—unsophisticated—like a girl his father used to tell about in Ireland. This girl was the daughter of a poor man, and every week or so she used to come to the village rectory with a pheasant or a hare to sell. The price she asked was low, and for a time the pastor bought of her. Then somehow, his suspicions were aroused. The next time the girl called, he said to her sternly: 'It is good, fresh game you bring, my dear, and your price is always reasonable; but do you come by all these pheasants and hares honestly?' 'Oh, shure, yes, yer reverence,' said the young girl. 'My father is poacher to Lord Clare.'"

As Might Be Expected.

A man who, with his family, had spent several weeks at a fashionable summer resort, discovered one morning that he had lost his pocketbook. Thinking it possible that it might have been found by some employe of the hotel at which he was staying, he reported his loss to the landlord.

"That's too bad, Mr. Johnson," said that functionary. "I'll make inquiries about it. What kind of pocketbook was it?"

"Russian leather," answered the lodger.

"What color?"

"Dark red."

"Any distinguishing marks about it?"

"It had a clasp."

"What was the shape of it?"

"Flat, of course," said Mr. Johnson. "Haven't I been here more than a month?"—Youth's Companion.

Trying for Faker Prize.

He didn't set himself up to be a nature faker, but he confessed he knew a story which, if not exactly accurate, was at all events somewhat brilliant. "This happened in the cottage of a peasant who had his quiver full of children. When the baby was put to sleep at night every one in the family was enjoined to be quiet. They were, including the dog. One night, however, the dog fancied the room wasn't as quiet as it should be. There was an old-fashioned clock in the corner of the room, which ticked somewhat loudly with its ponderous pendulum. The dog, thinking that this ticking might disturb the baby, went on tiptoe, and, putting his paw against the pendulum, stopped it. And that's a fac——" But even the oysters on the counter gaped with astonishment.—New York Press.

The Hard Loser.

Goodart—Brewder was telling me today about his hard luck last spring. He certainly did lose a great opportunity.

Wise—Yes, and think of what he's lost since.

Goodart—Why, what's that?

Wise — Valuable time talking about it.

All growth and achievement depend very largely upon knowing ourselves and how to apply that knowledge.—French.

Let no man presume to give advice to others who has not first given good counsel to himself.—Seneca.

Remember it's a poor resolution that will not hold water.

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A SAVING GRACE.

Her savings are the saving of many a business girl.

Improvidence in trifles has never swelled a bank account.

A bank account is a nerve tonic hard to beat for the girl who must face the future.

The worker fares better when she learns the difference between economy and stinginess.

Arithmetic for the fortune founder: Give the ratio of the squandered dime to the saved dollar.

PERSONAL.

Emepor Joseph of Austria twice a week holds an audience, when he is accessible to the richest and poorest of his subjects.

Oran Perry, adjutant general of Indiana, is preparing a complete history of the movements of that state's troops during the Mexican war.

Miss Theresa S. Haley of Boston has been assigned by the government to investigate women and child labor in the United States and dependencies.

H. G. Wells, the English literateur, in his youth often wrote 8,000 words in a day, while Conan Doyle, it is said, once wrote a story of 12,000 words at a sitting.

The marquis of Ailsa is an enthusiastic floriculturist and a Curzon castle, Ayrshire, has managed to grow flowers which can be seen nowhere else in Scotland.

Lord Curzon is extremely methodical. It is said of him when in India that in a single moment he could place his hand on any paper in his possession that he wanted relating to the country of which he was viceroy.

Pigeons in Italian Army.

In the Italian army al cavalry regiments are supplied with carrier pigeons, which are used for the transmissions of information during all their military maneuvers in camp. Young cavalry officers go through a course of instruction on the training of pigeons for military purposes at the Pigneral college.

Influence of Nature.

I will walk aboard; old griefs shall be forgotten today; for the air is cool and still, an dthe hills are high and stretch away to heaven; and the forest glades are quiet as a churchyard; and with the dew, I can wash the fever from my forehead and then I shall be unhappy no longer.—De Quincey.

In Boston.

"Yes, thank you, Mrs. Backby, my toothache is quite gone. After suffering the emoluments of the unrghiteous, as depicted in Dante's Inferno, I went to Prof. Wiggin's dental parlors and had the offenind molar elicited."—Harper's Weekly.

The archbishop of Canterbury and a number of clergy were adjourning for luncheon after an ecclesiastical function, when a canon remarked unctuously: "Now to put a bride on our appetites." "Say, rather," retorted his grace, "to put a bit between our teeth."

The library of John Burns, M. P., fills three small rooms. As a boy he sacrificed himself to collect books.