

NORTH OF FIFTY-THREE

By BERTRAND W. SINCLAIR

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UNUSUAL COMBINATION FOUND IN THIS GRIPPING STORY OF THE GREAT NORTHWEST

Plenty of stories have been written of the great Northwest because there are real people there—red-blooded men who fit in with the vigor and the strength of the rugged country where they dwell, but it is unusual to run across a tale which combines a vivid and convincing picture of life in the far North with a genuine and wholesome love story and glimpses of life in what the world calls civilization "back East" or "down South." Such a combination is found, however, in "North of Fifty-Three," the first installment of which appears below. Bertrand Sinclair, the author, knows the wild life of the frontier as well as the conventional life of the modern city, and the contrasts between the two are brought out vividly as this gripping tale unfolds.

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

Which Introduces a Lady and Two Gentlemen.

Dressed in a plain white shirtwaist and an equally plain black cloth skirt, Miss Hazel Weir, on weekdays, was merely a unit in the office of Harrington & Bush, implement manufacturers. Neither in personification nor in garb would a casual glance have differentiated her from the other female units, occupied at various desks. A business office is no place for a woman to parade her personal charms. The measure of her worth there is simply the measure of her efficiency at her machine or ledgers. So that if any member of the firm had been asked what sort of a girl Miss Hazel Weir might be, he would probably have replied—and with utmost truth—that Miss Weir was a capable stenographer.

But when Saturday evening released Miss Hazel Weir from the plain brick office building, she became, until she donned her working clothes at 7 a. m. Monday morning, quite a different sort of a person. In other words, she chucked the plain shirtwaist and the plain skirt into the discard, got into such a dress as a normal girl of twenty-two delights to put on, and devoted half an hour or so to "doing" her hair. Miss Weir then became an entity at which few persons of either sex failed to take a second glance.

Upon a certain Saturday night Miss Weir came home from an informal little party escorted by a young man. They stopped at the front gate.

"I'll be here at ten sharp," said he. "And you get a good beauty sleep tonight, Hazel. That confounded office! I hate to think of you drudging away at it. I wish we were ready to—"

"Oh, bother the office!" she replied lightly. "Anyway, I don't mind. It doesn't tire me. I will be ready at ten this time. Good night, dear."

"Good night, Hazel," he whispered. "Here's a kiss to dream on."

Miss Weir broke away from him laughingly, ran along the path, and up the steps, kissed her finger tips to the lingering figure by the gate, and went in.

"Bed," she soliloquized, "is the place for me right quickly if I'm going to be up and dressed and have that lunch ready by ten o'clock. I wish I weren't such a sleepyhead—or else that I weren't a 'pore wurkin' gurl'."

At which last remark she laughed softly. Because, for a "pore wurkin' gurl," Miss Weir was fairly well content with her lot. She had no one dependent on her—a state of affairs which, if it occasionally leads to loneliness, has its compensations. Her salary as a stenographer amply covered her living expenses, and even permitted her to put by a few dollars monthly. She had grown up in Granville; she had her own circle of friends. So that she was comfortable, even happy. In the present—and Jack Barrow proposed to settle the problem of her future; with youth's optimism, they two considered it already settled. Six months more, and there was to be a wedding, a three-weeks honeymoon, and a final settling down in a little cottage on the West side; everybody in Granville who amounted to anything lived on the West side. Then she would have nothing to do but make the home nest cozy, while Jack kept pace with a real-estate business that was growing beyond his most sanguine expectations.

She kissed her finger tips to him again across the rooftops all grimed with a winter's soot, and within fifteen minutes Miss Weir was found asleep.

She gave the lie, for once, to the saying that a woman is never ready at the appointed time, by being on the steps a full ten minutes before Jack Barrow appeared. They walked to the corner and caught a car, and in the span of half an hour got off at Granville park. The city fathers, hampered in days gone by with lack of municipal funds, had left the two-hundred-acre square of the park pretty much as nature made it; that is to say, there was no ornate parking, no attempt at landscape gardening. Granville park was a bit of the old Ontario woodland, and as such afforded a pleasant place to loaf in the summer months.

When Jack Barrow and Hazel had finished their lunch under the trees, in company with a little group of their acquaintances, Hazel gathered scraps

of bread and cake into a paper bag. Barrow whispered to her: "Let's go down and feed the swans. I'd just as soon be away from the crowd."

She nodded assent, and they departed hastily lest some of the others should volunteer their company. It took but a short time to reach the pond. They found a log close to the water's edge, and, taking a seat there, tossed morsels to the birds and chattered to each other.

"Look," she said suddenly; "there's one of my esteemed employers, if you please. You'll notice that he's walking and looking at things just like us ordinary, everyday mortals."

Barrow glanced past her, and saw a rather tall, middle-aged man, his hair tinged with gray, a fine-looking man, dressed with exceeding nicety, even to a flower in his coat lapel, walking slowly along the path that bordered the pond. His gaze wandered to them, and the cool, wellbred stare gradually gave way to a slightly puzzled expression. He moved a step or two and seated himself on a bench. Miss Weir became aware that he was looking at her most of the time as she sat casting the bits of bread to the swans and ducks. It made her self-conscious. She did not know why she should be of any particular interest.

"Let's walk around a little," she suggested. The last of the crumbs were gone.

"All right," Barrow assented. "Let's go up the ravine."

They left the log. Their course up the ravine took them directly past the gentleman on the bench. And when they came abreast of him, he rose and lifted his hat at the very slight inclination of Miss Weir's head.

"How do you do, Miss Weir?" said he. "Quite a pleasant afternoon."

To the best of Hazel's knowledge, Mr. Andrew Bush was little given to friendly recognition of his employees, particularly in public. But he seemed inclined to be talkative; and, as she caught a slightly inquiring glance at her escort, she made the necessary introduction. So for a minute or two the three of them stood there exchanging polite banalities. Then Mr. Bush bowed and passed on.

"He's one of the biggest guns in Granville, they say," Jack observed. "I wouldn't mind having some of his business to handle. He started with nothing, too, according to all accounts. Now, that's what I call success."

"Oh, yes, in a business way he's a success," Hazel responded. "But he's awfully curt most of the time around the office. I wonder what made him thaw out so today?"

And that question recurred to her mind again in the evening, when Jack had gone home, and she was sitting in her own room. She wheeled her chair around and took a steady look at herself in the mirror. A woman may never admit extreme plainness of feature, and she may depreciate her own fairness, if she be oppressed of fairness, but she seldom has any illusion about one or the other. She knows, Hazel Weir knew that, she was far above the average in point of looks.

She was smiling at herself just as she had been smiling at Jack Barrow while they sat on the log and fed the swans. But even though Miss Weir was—twenty-two and far from unsophisticated, it did not strike her that the transition of herself from a demure, businesslike office person in sober black and white to a radiant creature with the potent influences of love and spring brightening her eyes and lending a veiled caress to her every supple movement, satisfactorily accounted for the sudden friendliness of Mr. Andrew Bush.

Miss Weir was unprepared for what subsequently transpired as a result of that casual encounter with the managing partner of the firm. By the time she went to work on Monday morning she had almost forgotten the meeting in Granville park.

wondering mildly why she should be called upon to shoulder a part of Nelly Morrison's work, and a trifle dubious at the prospect of facing the rapid-fire dictation Mr. Bush was said to inflict upon his stenographer now and then.

When she was seated, Bush took up a sheaf of letters, and dictated replies. Though rapid, his enunciation was perfectly clear, and Hazel found herself getting his words with greater ease than she expected.

"That's all, Miss Weir," he said, when he reached the last letter. "Bring those in for verification and signature as soon as you can get them done."

In the course of time she completed the letters and took them back. Bush glanced over each, and appended his signature.

"That's all, Miss Weir," he said politely. "Thank you."

And Hazel went back to her machine, wondering why she had been requested to do those letters when Nelly Morrison had nothing better to do than sit picking at her-type faces with a toothpick.

She learned the significance of it the next morning, however, when the office boy told her that she was wanted by Mr. Bush. This time when she entered Nelly Morrison's place was vacant. Bush was going through his mail. He waved her to a chair.

"Just a minute," he said.

Presently he wheeled from the desk and regarded her with disconcerting frankness—as if he were appraising her, point by point, so to speak.

"My—ah—dictation to you yesterday was in the nature of a try-out, Miss Weir," he finally volunteered. "Miss Morrison has asked to be transferred to our Midland branch. Mr. Allan recommended you. The work will not be hard, but I must have someone dependable and discreet, and careful to avoid errors. I think you will manage it very nicely if you—ah—have no objection to giving up the more general

work of the office for this. The salary will be considerably more."

"If you consider that my work will be satisfactory," Miss Weir began.

"I don't think there's any doubt on that score. You have a good record in the office," he interrupted smilingly. "Now let us get to work and clean up this correspondence."

"Thus her new duties began. There was an air of quiet in the private office, a greater luxury of appointment, which suited Miss Hazel Weir to a nicety. The work was no more difficult than she had been accustomed to doing—a trifle less in volume, and more exacting in attention to detail, and necessarily more confidential, for Mr. Andrew Bush had his finger tips on the pulsing heart of a big business.

The size of the check which Hazel received in her weekly envelope was increased far beyond her expectations. Nelly Morrison had drawn twenty dollars a week. Miss Hazel Weir drew twenty-five—a substantial increase over what she had received in the shipping department. With that extra money there were plenty of little things she could get for the home she and Jack Barrow had planned.

Things moved along in routine channels for two months or more before Hazel became actively aware that a subtle change was growing manifest in the ordinary manner of Mr. Andrew Bush. She shrugged her shoulders at the idea at first. But she was a woman; moreover, a woman of intelligence, her perceptive faculties naturally keen.

The first symptom was frowns, dainty boutiquettes of which began to appear on his desk. Coincidentally with this, Mr. Bush evinced an inclination to drift into talk on subjects novice related to business. Hazel accepted the tribute to her sex reluctantly, giving him no encouragement to overstep the normal bounds of cordiality. She was absolutely sure of herself and of her love for Jack Barrow. Furthermore, Mr. Andrew Bush, though well-preserved, was drawing close to fifty and she was twenty-two. That in itself reassured her.

Thus the third month of her tenure drifted by, and beyond the telltale glances aforesaid, Mr. Bush remained

tentatively friendly and nothing more. Hazel spent her Sundays as she had spent them for a year past—with Jack Barrow; sometimes rambling about in the country or in the park, sometimes indulging in the luxury of a hired buggy for a drive.

But Mr. Bush took her breath away at a time—and in a manner, totally unexpected. He finished dictating a batch of letters one afternoon, and sat tapping on his desk with a pencil. Hazel waited a second or two, expecting him to continue, her eyes on her notes, and at the unbroken silence she looked up, to find him staring fixedly at her. There was no mistaking the expression on his face. Hazel flushed and shrank back involuntarily. She had hoped to avoid that. It could not be anything but unpleasant.

She had small chance to indulge in reflection, for at her first self-conscious move, he reached swiftly and caught her hand.

"Hazel," he said bluntly, "will you marry me?"

Miss Weir gasped. Coming without warning, it dumfounded her. And while her first natural impulse was to answer a blunt "No," she was flustered, and so took refuge behind a show of dignity.

"Mr. Bush!" she protested, and tried to release her hand.

But Mr. Bush had no intention of allowing her to do that. "I'm in deadly earnest," he said. "I've loved you ever since that Sunday I saw you in the park feeding the swans. I want you to be my wife. Will you?"

"I'm awfully sorry," Hazel stammered. She was just the least bit frightened. "Why, you're—" The thing that was uppermost in her mind, and what she came near saying, was: "You're old enough to be my father."

And beside him there instantly flashed a vision of Jack Barrow. Of course it was absurd—even though she appreciated the honor. But she did not finish the sentence that way. "I don't—oh, it's simply impossible. I couldn't think of such a thing."

"Why not?" he asked. "I love you. You know that—you can see it, can't you?" He leaned a little nearer, and forced her to meet his gaze. "I can make you happy; I can make you love me. I can give you all that a woman could ask."

"Yes, but—" He interrupted her quickly. "Perhaps I've surprised and confused you by my impulsiveness," he continued. "But I've had no chance to meet you socially. Perhaps right now you don't feel as I do, but I can teach you to feel that way. I can give you everything—money, social position, everything that's worth having—and love. I'm not an empty-headed boy. I can make you love me."

"You couldn't," Hazel answered flatly. There was a note of dominance in that last statement that jarred on her. Mr. Bush was too sure of his powers. "And I have no desire to experiment with my feelings as you suggest—not for all the wealth and social position in the world. I would have to love a man to think of marrying him—and I do. But you aren't the man. I appreciate the compliment of your offer, and I'm sorry to hurt you, but I can't marry you."

His face clouded. "You are engaged?"

"Yes."

He got up, and stood over her. "To some self-centered 'cub—some puny egotist in his twenties, who'll make you a slave to his needs and whims, and discard you for another woman when you've worn out your youth and beauty," he cried. "But you won't marry him. I won't let you!"

Miss Weir rose. "I think I shall go home," she said steadily.

"You shall do nothing of the sort! There is no sense in your running away from me and giving rise to gossip—which will hurt yourself only."

"I am not running away, but I can't stay here and listen to such things from you. It's impossible, under the circumstances, for me to continue working here, so I may as well go now."

Bush stepped past her and snapped the latch on the office door. "I shan't permit it," he said passionately. "Girl, you don't seem to realize what this means to me. I want you—and I'm going to have you!"

"Give me a chance to show you that I can make you happy," he pleaded. "Don't leave. Stay here where I can at least see you and speak to you. I won't annoy you. And you can't tell. After you get over this surprise you might find yourself liking me better."

"That's just the trouble," Hazel pointed out. "If I were here you would be bringing this subject up in spite of yourself. And that can only cause pain. I can't stay."

"I think you had better reconsider that," he said; and a peculiar—though light—crept into his eyes, "unless you desire to lay yourself open to being

"Take Your Hands Off Me, Please." Hazel was the most-talked-of young woman in this town, where you were born, where all your friends live.

"That sounds like a threat, Mr. Bush. What do you mean?"

"I mean just what I say. I will admit that mine is, perhaps, a selfish passion. If you insist on making me suffer, I shall do as much for you. There are two characteristics of mine which may not have come to your attention: I never stop struggling for what I want. And I never forgive or forget an injury or an insult. If you drive me to it, you will find yourself drawing the finger of gossip. Also, you will find yourself unable to secure a position in Granville. Also, you may find yourself losing the—er—regard of this—ah—fortunate individual upon whom you have bestowed your affections; but you'll never lose mine," he burst out wildly. "When you get done butting your head against the wall that will mysteriously rise in your way, I'll be waiting for you. That's how I love. I've never failed in anything I ever undertook, and I don't care how I fight, fair or foul, so that I win."

"This isn't the fifteenth century," Hazel let her indignation flare, "and I'm not at all afraid of any of the things you mention. Even if I weren't engaged, I'd never think of marrying a man old enough to be my father—a man whose years haven't given him a sense of either dignity or decency. Wealth and social position don't modify gray hairs and advancing age. Your threats are an insult. This isn't the stone age. Even if it were," she concluded cuttingly, "you'd stand a poor chance of winning a woman against a man like—well—"

she shrugged her shoulders, but she was thinking of Jack Barrow's broad shoulders, and the easy way he went up a flight of stairs, three steps at a time. "Well, any young man."

With that thrust, Miss Hazel Weir turned to the rack where hung her hat and coat.

Bush caught her by the shoulders before she took a second step.

"Gray hairs and advancing age?" he said. "So I strike you as approaching senility, do I? I'll show you whether I'm the worn-out specimen you seem to think I am. Do you think I'll give you up just because I've made you angry? Why, I love you the more for it; it only makes me the more determined to win you."

"You can't. I dislike you more every second. Take your hands off me, please. Be a gentleman—if you can."

For answer he caught her up close to him, and there was no sign of decadent force in the grip of his arms. He kissed her; and Hazel, in blind rage, freed one arm, and struck at him man fashion, her hand doubled into a small fist. By the grace of chance, the blow landed on his nose. There was force enough behind it to draw blood. He stood back and fumbled for his handkerchief. Something that sounded like an oath escaped him.

"Most women would jump at the chance," Hazel interrupted. "Well, I'm hot most women. I simply don't care for you as you would want me to—and I'm very sure I never would. And, seeing that you do feel that way, it's better that we shouldn't be thrown together as we are here. That's why I'm going."

"That is to say, you'll resign because I've told you I care for you and proposed marriage?" he remarked. "Exactly. It's the only thing to do under the circumstances."

"That the threats made by Bush were not idle was shown when on his sudden death his will was found to contain a provision which brought disaster to Hazel. The next installment tells how this was brought about."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

We all have a soft spot in our heads at birth—and some of us never lose it.

CARDUI A

SPLENDID TONIC

For Women, Says Hixson Lady, Who Took This Medicine On Her Doctor's Advice.

Hixson, Tenn.—Mrs. J. B. Gadd, of this place, makes the following statement regarding her experience with Cardui: "I was... I suffered with a pain in my left side; could not sleep at night for this pain, always in the left side. My feet and legs were terribly swollen. I was almost in bed. My doctor told me to use Cardui. I took one bottle, which helped me, and after my baby came I was stronger and better—but the pain was still there. I at first let it go, but I began to get weak and in a run-down condition, so I decided to try some more Cardui, which I did. The last Cardui I took made me much better, and, in fact, cured me. It has been a number of years, still I have no return of this trouble. I feel it was Cardui that cured me, and I recommend it as a splendid female tonic."

If you feel weak, tired, worn-out, or suffer from any of the ailments peculiar to women, try Cardui, the woman's tonic. It must be a good medicine for women, for many thousands have voluntarily told, just as Mrs. Gadd did, of the good it has done them. Ask some lady friend who has tried Cardui. She will tell you how it helped her. Then get a bottle from your nearest druggist.—Adv.

Got it at Last. The man in the drug store was perplexed. Try as he would, he could not remember what his wife had told him to get. Presently he brightened up. "Say, name over a few young people's societies."

"Christian Endeavor," began the druggist. "No." "Young People's Union?" "No." "Epworth League?" "That's it! That's it! Give me five cents worth of Epworth salts."—Boston Transcript.

OLD PRESCRIPTION FOR WEAK KIDNEYS

Have you ever stopped to reason why it is that so many products that are extensively advertised, all at once drop out of sight and are soon forgotten? The reason is plain—the article did not fulfill the promises of the manufacturer. This applies more particularly to a medicine. A medicinal preparation that has real curative value almost sells itself, as like an endless chain system the remedy is recommended by those who have been benefited, to those who are in need of it.

A prominent druggist says, "Take for example Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, a preparation I have sold for many years and never hesitate to recommend, for in almost every case it shows excellent results, as many of my customers testify. No other kidney remedy that I know of has so large a sale."

According to sworn statements and verified testimony of thousands who have used the preparation, the success of Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root is due to the fact that, so many people claim, it fulfills almost every wish in overcoming kidney, liver and bladder ailments, corrects urinary troubles and neutralizes the uric acid which causes rheumatism.

Among the other depressing features of the food situation is the amount of parsimony you can still get for a nickel.—Ohio State Journal.

BOSCHEE'S GERMAN SYRUP

will quiet your cough, soothe the inflammation of a sore throat and lungs, stop irritation in the bronchial tubes, insure a good night's rest, free from coughing and with easy expectoration in the morning. Made and sold in America for fifty-two years. A wonderful prescription, assisting Nature in building up your general health and throwing off the disease. Especially useful in lung trouble, asthma, croup, bronchitis, etc. For sale in all civilized countries.—Adv.

Heat Under the Collar. "Pa, what causes heat and cold?" "The janitor, my son."—Boston Transcript.

Important to Mothers. Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, that famous old remedy for infants and children, and see that it Bears the Signature of *Dr. J. C. Fletcher* In Use for Over 30 Years. Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria

The fool and his money are the salvation of the screw promoter.

Files Cured in 6 to 14 Days. Druggists refund money if FAYO OINTMENT fails to cure Itching, Blind, Bleeding or Prolonged Files. First application gives relief. See.

A true man would as soon be knocked down as pitted.

When Your Eyes Need Care Try Murine Eye Remedy. No Smarting—Just Eye Comfort! 15 cents a bottle. Sold by all Druggists.

