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The SKY PILOT

By RALPH CONNOR

Author of
"The Man From Glangarry"
"Glangarry School Days" and "Black Rock"

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CHAPTER XV. BILL'S PARTNER.

THE next day every one was talking of Bill's bluffing the church people, and there was much quiet chuckling over the discomfort of Robbie Muir and his party.

The Pilot was equally distressed and bewildered, for Bill's conduct, so very unusual, had only one explanation—the usual one for any folly in that country.

"I wish he had waited till after the meeting to go to Latour's. He spoiled the last chance I had. There's no use now," he said sadly.

"But he may do something," I suggested.

"Oh, fiddle!" said the Pilot contemptuously. "He was only giving Muir a song and dance, as he would say. The whole thing is off."

But when I told Gwen the story of the night's proceedings she went into raptures over Bill's grave speech and his success in drawing the canny Scotchman.

"Oh, lovely! Dear old Bill and his cherished opinion! Isn't he just lovely? Now he'll do something."

"Who? Bill?"

"No; that stupid Scottie." This was her name for the immovable Robbie.

"Not he, I'm afraid. Of course Bill was just bluffing him. But it was good sport."

"Oh, lovely! I knew he'd do something."

"Who? Scottie?" I asked, for her pronouns were perplexing.

"No!" she cried. "Bill! He promised he would, you know," she added.

"So you were at the bottom of it," I said, amazed.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" she kept crying, shrieking with laughter over Bill's cherishing opinions and desires. "I shall be ill. Dear old Bill! He said he'd try to get a move on to him."

Before I left that day Bill himself came to the Old Timer's ranch, inquiring in a casual way if the boss was in.

"Oh, Bill!" called out Gwen. "Come in here at once. I want you."

After some delay and some shuffling with hat and spurs Bill lounged in and set his lank form upon the extreme end of a bench at the door, trying to look unconcerned as he remarked: "Gittin' cold. Shouldn't wonder if we'd have a little snow."

"Oh, come here," cried Gwen impatiently, holding out her hand. "Come here and shake hands!"

Bill swayed awkwardly across the room toward the bed, and, taking Gwen's hand, he shook it up and down and hurriedly said:

"Fine day, ma'am; hope I see you quite well."

"No, you don't," cried Gwen, laughing immoderately, but keeping hold of Bill's hand, to his great confusion.

"I'm not well a bit, but I'm a great deal better since hearing of your meeting, Bill."

To this Bill made no reply, being entirely engrossed in getting his hand, bony, brown hand out of the grasp of the white, clinging fingers.

"Oh, Bill," went on Gwen, "it was delightful! How did you do it?"

But Bill, who had by this time got back to his seat at the door, pretended



"Come here and shake hands!"

Ignorance of any achievement calling for remark. He "hadn't done nothin' more out of the way than usual."

"Oh, don't talk nonsense!" cried Gwen impatiently. "Tell me how you got Scottie to lay you \$250."

"Oh, that!" said Bill in great surprise. "That ain't nothin' much. Scottie riz slick enough."

"But how did you get him?" persisted Gwen. "Tell me, Bill," she added in her most coaxing voice.

"Well," said Bill, "it was easy as rollin' off a log. I made the remark as how the boys generally put up for what they wanted without no fuss, and that if they was sot on havin' a gospel shack I cherished the opinion—here Gwen went off into a smothered shriek which made Bill pause and look at her in alarm."

"Go on," she gasped.

"I cherished the opinion," drawled on Bill, while Gwen stuck her handkerchief into her mouth, "that mebbe they'd put up for it the \$700, and even as it was, seen' as the Pilot appeared to be sot on to it, if them fellers would

find \$250 I cher"—another shriek from Gwen cut him suddenly short.

"It's the rheumatics, mebbe," said Bill anxiously. "Terrible bad weather for 'em. I get 'em myself."

"No, no," said Gwen, wiping away her tears and subduing her laughter. "Go on, Bill."

"There ain't no more," said Bill. "He bit, and the master here put it down."

"Yes, it's here right enough," I said. "but I don't suppose you mean to follow it up, do you?"

"You don't, eh? Well, I am not responsible for your supposin', but them that is familiar with Bronco Bill generally expects him to back up his undertakin's."

"But how in the world can you get \$500 from the cowboys for a church?"

"I hain't done the arithmetic yet, but it's safe enough. You see, it ain't the church altogether; it's the reputation of the boys."

"I'll help, Bill," said Gwen. Bill nodded his head slowly and said, "Proud to have you," trying hard to look enthusiastic.

"You don't think I can," said Gwen. Bill protested against such an imputation. "But I can. I'll get daddy and the Duke too."

"Good line!" said Bill, slapping his knee.

"And I'll give all my money, too; but it isn't very much," she added sadly.

"Much!" said Bill. "If the rest of the fellows play up to that lead there won't be any trouble about that five hundred."

Gwen was silent for some time, then said with an air of resolve:

"I'll give my pinto."

"Nonsense!" I exclaimed, while Bill declared "there warn't no call."

"Yes, I'll give the pinto," said Gwen decidedly. "I'll not need him any more." Her lips quivered, and Bill coughed and spat into the next room.

"And, besides, I want to give something I like. And Bill will sell him for me."

And so it was arranged that the pinto should be sold and that Bill should have the selling of it.

CHAPTER XVI. BILL'S FINANCING.

BILL'S method of conducting the sale of the pinto was eminently successful as a financial operation, but there are those in Swan Creek country who have never been able to fathom the mystery attaching to the affair. It was at the fall round up, the beef round up, as it is called, which this year ended at the Ashley ranch. There were representatives from all the ranches and some cattle men from across the line.

The hospitality of the Ashley ranch was up to its own lofty standard, and after supper the men were in a state of high exhilaration. The Hon. Fred and his wife, Lady Charlotte, gave themselves to the duties of their position as hosts for the day with a heartiness and grace beyond praise.

After supper the men gathered round the big fire which was piled up before the long, low shed, which stood open in front. It was a scene of such wild and picturesque interest as can only be witnessed in the western ranching country.

Bill, as king of the bronco busters, moved about with the slow, careless indifference of a man sure of his position and sure of his ability to maintain it.

He spoke seldom and slowly, was not as ready witted as his partner, El Kendal, but in act he was swift and sure, and "in trouble" he could be counted on. He was, as they said, "a white man—white to the back," which was understood to sum up the true cattle man's virtues.

"Hello, Bill!" said a friend. "Where's El? Hain't seen him around?"

"Well, don't jest know. He was going to bring up my pinto."

"Your pinto? What pinto's that? You hain't got no pinto."

"Mebbe not," said Bill slowly, "but I had the idee before you spoke that I had."

"That so? What'd ye git him? Good for cattle?"

The crowd began to gather. Bill grew mysterious, and even more than usually reserved.

"Good fer cattle! Well, I ain't much on gamblin', but I've got a leetle in my pants that says that these pinto kin outwork any blanked bronco in this outfit, givin' him a fair show after the cattle."

The men became interested.

"What was he raised?"

"Dunno."

"What'd ye git him? Across the line?"

"No," said Bill stoutly, "right in this here country. The Duke there knows him."

This at once raised the pinto several points. To be known, and, as Bill's tone indicated, favorably known, by the Duke was a testimonial to which any horse might aspire.

"What'd ye git him, Bill? Don't be so blanked uncommunicative!" said an impatient voice.

Bill hesitated; then, with an apparent burst of confidence, he assumed his frank manner and voice and told his tale.

"Well," he said, taking a fresh chew of tobacco, "he said, taking a fresh chew of tobacco, and offerin' his plug to his neighbor, who passed it on after helping himself,

"ye see, it was like this. Ye know that little Meredith gel?"

Chorus of answers: "Yes! The red headed one. I know! She's a daisy! Reg'lar bilz. ard! Lightnin' conductor!"

Bill paused, stiffened himself a little, dropped his frank air and drewled out in cool, hard tones: "I might remark that that young lady is, I might persom to say, a friend of mine, which I'm prepared to back up in my best style, and if any blanked bronco of a street sweeper has any remark to make, here's his time now!"

In the pause that followed murmurs were heard extolling the many excellences of the young lady in question, and Bill, appeased, yielded to the requests for the continuance of his story, and as he described Gwen and her pinto and her work on the ranch the men, many of whom had had glimpses of her, gave emphatic approval in their own way. But as he told of her rescue of Joe and of the sudden calamity that had befallen her a great stillness fell upon the simple, tender hearted fellows, and they listened with their eyes shining in the firelight with growing

All regret the absence of other names that should have been enrolled, had some one collected them early in the nineteenth century.

Major L. M. Wallace, so pleasantly remembered by all who knew him, was fond of reminiscence. He knew his father, Captain James Wallace, fought to defeat Huck, and in after years married the widow of Robert Bratton, and L. M. Wallace was her only Wallace child.

William Burris was born in Pennsylvania, married Mary Ashe. He decided to come south for a milder climate. He crossed the Susquehanna where wagons were hauling saw-logs across on the ice. In 1780 his home was two miles west of McConnellsville, near a little rocky branch, just north of where "Uncle Ned" Burris spent his peaceful life. That dear old man loved to tell his grandchildren the story of the Revolution, ever proud that his "father fought the British," and he would stamp his foot to emphasize his scorn for a Tory every time that word was mentioned.

When William Burris was fighting, Mary, his wife, kept the home, with her six little children. The boys were Robert, William, Jr., and John. The girls were, Mary, who married Samuel Givens; Betsy, who married John Miller, and Libbie, who married Reuben McConnell, Sr. On the 26th of August, 1780, a little blue eyed boy was born, and they named him Edward. Esther, his sister, the eighth child, married her cousin, Burris Ashe. The descendants of these families may be proud to know this genealogy. In the western states are many persons who, scanning the roll of patriots who figured in Huck's defeat, as recently published, found their own names, but were unable to trace their relationship.

No uniforms were worn then. Their clothing was spun and woven by their wives. No rations were issued. If in the night a new recruit arrived at camp, the sack of potatoes he brought, was roasted and eaten by them all. When one went on a busy trip to his home his wife busied herself cooking to send to camp. There were no stoves then. Huge loaves were baked in an oven, as large as a half bushel measure. Picture in your mind (and smile if you wish) the grotesque figure, mounted on his weary plow horse, part-colored clothing, slouch hat, across in front his rifle; behind, in sacks, all the food and clothing the patient beast could carry to his comrades.

Whilst we regret so little of the history of 1780 was handed down to us, let "The Sons" and "Daughters of the Confederacy" be stimulated and encouraged in their labor of love to immortalize the heroes of the Lost Cause.

West Point, Miss., Nov. 11, 1903.

REDSKIN MAGIC EQUAL TO INDIA.

American Indians Rival the Fakirs of the Orient in Wizardry.

Redskin magic has been a subject of special investigation recently by the bureau of ethnology, which finds that among the American Indians there are wizards who can perform feats quite as wonderful as any of those attributed to the fakirs of the Orient, writes the New York Herald's Washington correspondent.

In fact there are certain tribes, such as the Chippewa, which have developed the art of sorcery to a high point. Catholic missionaries and other witnesses testify to having seen century plants two or three feet high produced within a few minutes on bare western prairies where previously nothing grew, simply, as it seemed, by a few incantations and a small amount of hocus-pocus.

This feat, which bears a likeness to the famous mango tree trick of India, seems beyond explanation, the century plants grown in the spontaneous manner described being of considerable size and apparently a dozen years old. But it is perhaps surpassed by a marvel recounted to one of the government investigators by a Jesuit priest, who said that while he was among the Arapahoes and Crepennes he saw two wizards fetch grass up out of the ground where there had been not a sprig of vegetation. It was done within a few minutes, and there was a patch of it green and growing. With his own eyes he saw it sprout and grow.

The wizards among the Indians are priests. Indeed the primitive priest all over the world has always been a magician and juggler. Juggling tricks are the most important part of his stock in trade, impressing the untutored beholders with a belief in the supernatural powers of the performer.

Among the Chippewas there is a class of wizards known as "dreamers," who are supposed to be able to handle with impunity red hot stones or to bathe their hands without discomfort in boiling water. A magician of this type is a "dealer in fire" and at night he may sometimes be seen tying rapidly along in the shape of a ball of fire or a pair of fiery sparks, like the eyes of some monstrous beast. The late Dr. W. J. Hoffman, of the bureau of ethnology, knew one of these jugglers who could take ripe cherries from his mouth at any season of the year. He

Miscellaneous Reading.

THE CONQUERORS OF HUCK.

Failure to Preserve Their Names Occasion For Regret.

The Honor Roll of 1780; beyond computation is its value to me!

What a source of pure, perpetual joy it will ever be to those whose nobler impulses suggested its preservation, and to their descendants who are now embalming in their hearts, sacred memories!

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had a magic bag, which would move on the ground as if it were alive, but Dr. Hoffman more than suspected that the sack contained a live rat or other small animal.

One investigator on a certain occasion saw a Menomini wizard produce live snakes, as it appeared, from an empty bag. The bag was of red flannel, about twenty inches wide by thirty inches in depth, and the "mystery man" held it between his fingers by the two upper corners, so as to spread it out. Then he rolled it between his hands like a ball, to show that there was nothing inside. Again he took it by the upper corners and, holding it up, danced slowly. Presently two snake heads emerged from the top of the sack, gradually becoming more and more exposed until their bodies protruded half a foot or so. From time to time the snakes withdrew themselves into the bag, coming out again and again retreating. When they had finally disappeared the performer rolled the sack up tightly and put it into his bosom. It seemed wonderful, but the trick was a simple one, the two snakes heads (stuffed) being attached to a tape, the ends of which were fastened to the upper corners of the bag. When the wizard pulled the tape taut it caused the heads to lift themselves above the edges of the bag.

Less easily explained is a bit of off-hand sorcery perpetrated once at the expense of Lewis Cass. He had gone to represent the government in a conference with the Indians at Mackinaw and, in the course of a ceremonial dance which he witnessed, he noticed an old Ojibwa woman who took an active part in the exercises. He asked why this was, inasmuch as she seemed uninteresting, had nothing to say and did nothing except shake her snakeskin "medicine bag." Overhearing his remark the old woman (who was known among her people as a powerful witch) became much offended and, without warning, threw at Mr. Cass—so he himself told the story—her snakeskin bag, which transformed itself into a live serpent and ran at the statesman. He promptly took to his heels, whereupon the witch picked up the snake, which again assumed the appearance of a very dry skin bag.

The Indian wizards pretend that they can perform their tricks only through the intervention of the tribal divinites; and this is where the juggling and religion come together. Information as to future events is commonly obtained by special consultation with the divinites in the so called "magic lodge," which is a cylindrical structure of birch bark, with a framework of small poles, just big enough to contain a man standing erect. As soon as the wizard has entered the lodge begins swaying violently and there is a great rattling of bells and deer's hoofs which are fastened to the tops of the poles. Three voices are then heard in consultation—a loud one (for the Great Spirit), a faint one (for the small spirit) and the voice of the "mystery man."

A famous wizard at White Earth, Minn., made a bet with one of the government investigators that the latter could not tie him with ropes so that he would not be able to get loose at once. With the help of the local Indian agent the man was tied up in elaborate fashion and put inside of a conical wigwam in an open space. Nobody was allowed to go near him. Presently there was a great thumping noise and the wigwam began to sway back and forth. Two or three minutes later the magician called out, telling his captors to go to a house several hundred yards away and get the ropes. One of them went to the house and found the ropes, with all the complicated knots untied. Then the wigwam was opened and the wizard was found quietly smoking his pipe.

Insurance as a Cause of Suicide.

Can it be true that considerable part of the remarkable increase of suicide is due to life insurance? This novel and surprising theory is advanced by the eminent insurance statistician, Frederick L. Hoffman, in the current Spectator. He reasons from the carefully analyzed suicide returns of fifty American cities, with populations aggregating 14,500,000. New York and all the larger cities are included in the list. In these fifty cities 2,500 persons took their own lives last year.

Prof. Hoffman concludes from these figures that the rate of suicide for the whole country, which advanced from 12 to 17 per 100,000 of population between 1890 and 1900, is still advancing. From a special study of New York's returns for 100 years past he deduces the fact that before the civil war the city's suicide rate was about 10 per 100,000, and is now more than twice as high (21). All over the country, he says, the rate is highest where the proportion of French, German and Slavonic population is largest and lowest where native American and Irish population preponderates.

The professor's most astonishing deduction is that there is a "progressive increase in the suicide rate of males, aged 35 and over, representative of the period of life which includes the larger proportion of male risks insured with American life insurance companies." Dr. Mulreid, medical officer of a leading English insurance company, says the English death returns show that "no less than 7,087 per cent of the total (English) deaths by suicide occurred in the very first year" of insurance, and more than 3 per cent besides in the second year.

"Not a few" men, in Prof. Hoffman's opinion, "at certain periods think less of their own lives than they do of the comfort of their families." If this view is correct, the surprising increase in self-destruction has a sentimental and half-chivalrous side hitherto unsuspected. The idea that 10 per cent or more of suicides deliberately devote themselves to death so that their wives and children may not suffer want might have found a place in Mr. Howells' "Altruria." But there are more probable causes for the vogue of self-slaughter.

York's Octogenarians.

JAMES SCOGGINS.

The original of the photograph we have the pleasure of presenting today, is a fine old character—well known to the public of twenty years ago, and still kindly remembered by most of the older citizens of the county today. It is Mr. James Scoggins of Hickory Grove.

Mr. Scoggins was born in Broad River township on what is known as the Whitesides place on August 21, 1821, and with the exception of about three years spent in the adjoining township of Bullock's Creek, has resided within two miles of his birth-place all of his life.

Mr. Scoggins's father was a farmer, and when he grew up he continued that occupation himself. He was a man of high intelligence, plenty of energy and capacity and prospered well in all his business affairs.

He went to the war in December, 1863, and served until the surrender in the First South Carolina artillery. After the war he returned to his home, resumed his occupation, and bore the full part of a man and a citizen in bringing order out of the surrounding chaos. As the result of the manner in which he conducted himself during reconstruction and the revolution of 1876, in 1879 he was nominated and elected a member of the board of county commissioners. The service he gave was highly creditable to himself and to his county.

Mr. Scoggins was twice married; the first time to Martha Adeline White of King's Creek, on December 27, 1849. The union was a happy one, and the children are as follows: Mary I. (Mrs. E. A. Crawford of Yorkville); Mary E. (Mrs. W. S. Wilkerson of Hickory Grove); Martha C. (Mrs. R. M. Whitesides, deceased); J. J. Scoggins of Lockhart, S. C.; W. E. Scoggins of Wyatt, Tex.; Sallie I. (Mrs. R. T. Castles of Smyrna); Ida E. B. Frank and Robert L. Scoggins of Hickory Grove. The grandchildren number thirty-one.

Mr. Scoggins's first wife died on May 11, 1878, and on May 10, 1881, he married Miss Sarah Salina Smith of Richburg, S. C., who is still by his side.

Mr. Scoggins is a member of the Associate Reformed church, and is a consistent Christian. He has been in very bad health for some time past, and only a few weeks ago took his bed in the expectation that he was about to receive the final summons. He is better now, however, and a few days ago was able, unaided to walk out to the portico of his home.

NO WAY TO BEAT GAMBLERS.

Even Wizards Are the Easiest of Marks for the Blacklegs.

"And do you know," concluded the narrator, "that magician fellow just completely cleaned out the gambler and everybody in the smoking room thanked him." The little fellow who had been to Europe leaned back in his chair and beckoned for the waiter. The unobtrusive man over in the corner of the safe simply growled.

"Those gifted Johnnies with the clever hands make me tired," he growled. "Whenever I hear those lurid tales of how some magician stacks the cards on the professional player I want to retire to the solitude of my chamber and weep copiously. I have heard the tale a hundred times and never entertained a magician who ever beat a card player at poker outside of his press agent's imagination. It makes a level town to tell the week before you get to town to perform, but I've taken a lot of first-class magicians into camp, and they never suspected that I was a sharp.

"If I couldn't play with the pasteboards better than the best card king that ever happened along I'd be lying in a lonely grave full of lead. Why, the easiest money I ever made has been of those 'now you see it, now you don't, Willie boys. They see so sure that they can't be cheated that they will stand for anything except hitting them over the head with a club. I can do all that front and back palming with one hand tied behind my back. If that was all I could do I would have to go to work. The real clever card player begins where the miniature Kellers leave off.

"Of course, in my business I use the pass. The pass was used in gambling when the best thing a magician could do with cards was to tell fortunes. That with me is just a sort of side issue. Sometimes it makes my work a little easier. The real trick is knowing how to shuffle the cards and things like that."

A Lesson In Dealing.

At the gambler's suggestion a pack of cards was sent for. It was a fresh deck and the revenue stamp was still in place. The cards were removed from

the case and shuffled. Then they were passed to the gambler. "Suppose," said he, "that we are playing a five-handed deal. I want to win the pot. Now, here are the cards."

"While he had been talking he had idly 'ripped' the pack several times. Now he dealt five hands, four of them face up. The fifth hand lay face down before him.

"Now," he began, "number one has three kings, a seven of hearts and six of clubs. He wants two cards."

Two cards were dealt face down. "Here," went on the gambler, "are three jacks, a ten spot and an ace. He wants two cards." The cards were dealt. The third hand drew to a pair of queens, the fourth to aces, while the gambler showed a pair of threes. He took three cards.

"Number two," he said, "might have held out that ace to see what he could do toward getting another ace. I held that on top." He turned the top card and there was an ace. "This being the case, I had to deal the second card through the game thus." The thumb being on the top of the pack, the gambler dealt several cards, each time drawing down the top card and returning it to place as soon as he had caught the edge of the second.

"To get back to the deal: Number one took two cards. He drew two sevens. That makes him a full house. He will bet a lot. Number two did not hold the ace out, so he gets two aces. The cards were turned, and there were two sixes. The pair of queens became three queens and two fours. The fourth man had been given another ace but no pair. That made three full houses and a pair of threes, with the gambler drawing to a pair. Pausing a moment to let the prospective betting reached for his draw.

"I guess," he drawled, "this little pack of three will exemplify 'poker luck' and incidentally rake in the pot." He turned the