

KEITH OF THE BORDER

A TALE OF THE PLAINS

By RANDALL PARSONS
Author of "MY LADY OF THE SOUTH,"
"WHEN WILDERNESS WAS KING," etc.

Illustrations by BRADDOCK BELL.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

By Force of Arms.

With her heart throbbing fiercely, she clung to the outer door of the vestibule endeavoring to see a little of what was transpiring without. About her was dense darkness, and she dare not explore the surroundings. Behind could be heard, through what must have been a thin partition, the various distractions of the stage, shifting scenery, music, shuffling feet, voices, and the occasional sound of applause. The girl had nerved herself to the encounter with Hawley, but this waiting here in darkness and uncertainty tried her to the uttermost. If some one should venture out that way how could she excuse her presence or explain her purpose? She found herself trembling in every limb from nervous fear, startled by every strange sound. Would the man never come? Surely Christie herself must be ready to depart by this time.

Almost prepared to see before the doors there conformed up within her mind, they left her as if by magic the sentiment her straining eyes distinguished the approach of a dim figure without. She could not tell who it was, only that it was the unmistakable form of a man, and that he was whispering softly to himself. It might not prove to be the gambler, but she must accept the chance, for flesh and blood could stand the strain of waiting no longer. Yet she was not conscious of fear, only of exaltation, as she stepped forth into the open, her blood again circulating freely in her veins. At the slight creak of the door the man saw her, his whistle ceasing, his hat tilted. Instantly she recognized him as Hawley, her heart leaping with the excitement of encounter.

"Why, hello, Christie," he said familiarly. "I thought I was early, and expected a ten minute wait. I came out as soon as you left the stage."

"Oh, I can dress in a jiffy when there is any cause for hurry," Hope responded, permitting herself to drift under his guidance. "Are you disappointed? Would you prefer to commence with nature?"

"Well, I should say not," drawing her hand through his arm, and then getting it with his own. "I have seen about all I care to of nature, but not of Christie MacLaire."

"You may learn to feel the same regarding her," Hope answered, afraid to encourage the man, yet eagerly fearful lest she fail to play her part aright.

"Not the slightest danger," laughing lightly, and pressing her arm more closely against his body. "Although I must confess you exhibited some temper when I was late to-night."

"Did I not have occasion to? A woman should never be kept waiting, especially if her engagement be imperative."

"Oh, I am not finding any fault, you little spit-fire. I like you all the better because you fight. But the trouble was, Christie, you simply jumped on me without even asking how it occurred. You took it for granted I was



Mad With Terror, She Pulled the Trigger.

"Well, weren't you?" and the girl glanced inquiringly up into his face, as they passed out of the alley into the light of the Troadero's windows. "You certainly acted that way."

"No, I did not; but you wouldn't listen, and besides I had no time then to explain. There's a lot happened this afternoon I want to tell you about. Will you give me time to talk with you?"

"Why, of course," surprised at the question, yet full of eagerness. "Why should you ask that?"

"Because I want you alone where no one can overhear a syllable. I'm afraid of that damned hotel. You never know who is in the next room, and the slightest whisper travels from one end to the other. That is one way in which Keith got onto our deal—he had a room next to Willoughby and Scott, and overheard them talking. I'm not going to take any more chances. Will you go to 'Sheeny Joe's' with me?"

She drew back from him. "Sheeny Joe's?" You mean the saloon near the depot?"

"Sure; what's the use of being so squeamish? You sing and dance to a saloon crowd, don't you? Oh, I know you're a good girl, Christie, and all that. I'm not ranking you with these fly-by-nights around here. But there's no reason that I can see why you should shy so at a saloon. Besides, you won't see any one. Joe has got some back room where we can be alone, and have a bite to eat while we're talking. What do you say?"

"Oh, I would rather not," Hope faltered, bewildered by this unexpected request, already half-tempted to break away and run. "Really I—I don't want to go there."

Hawley was evidently surprised at this refusal, naturally supposing from her life that Miss MacLaire's scruples would be easily overcome. This obstinacy of the girl aroused his anger.

"You women beat the devil," he ejaculated, grumpy, "pretending to be so damn particular. Maybe you'd rather stand out there on the prairie and talk" with a sweep of his hand around the horizon.

"Yes, I would," catching desperately at the straw. "I'm not afraid of you; I'm not blaming you at all, only I—I don't want to go to 'Sheeny Joe's.'"

He looked at her, puzzled at her attitude, and yet somewhat reassured by her expression of confidence. Oh, well, what was the difference? It might be better to let her have her own way, and the change would not materially interfere with his plans. Of course, it would be pleasant sitting together at one of Joe's tables, but he could talk just as freely out yonder under the stars. Besides, it might be as well now to humor the girl.

"All right, Christie," his voice regarding its pleasant tone. "You shall have your way this time. There is too much at stake for us to quarrel over this."

Frightened, yet not daring to resist or exhibit the least reluctance, she clung to his arm, and permitted him to lead her to the right down a dark passage and out into the open land beyond. He had to feel his way carefully, and scarcely spoke, yet proceeded as though the passage was reasonably familiar and he had some definite point in view. She answered in monosyllables, now thoroughly regretful of having permitted herself to drift into this position, yet not in the least knowing how to extricate herself. Hawley took everything for granted, her very silence convincing him of her acquiescence. With throbbing pulse, Hope felt the small revolver hidden within her dress, undoes a button so that, in emergency, she might grasp it more quickly. Hawley felt the movement, the trembling of her arm.

"You are afraid, just the same," he said, pressing her to him lover-like. "Darkness always gets on a woman's nerves."

"Yes, that and loneliness," resenting his familiarity. "Do we need to go any farther? Surely, we are alone here."

"Only a few steps; the ravine is yonder, and we can sit down on the rocks. I want to smoke, and we will be entirely out of sight there."

He helped her down the rather sharp declivity until both were thoroughly concealed below the prairie level. Feeling about with his hands he found the surface of a smooth rock, and seated her upon it. Then a match flared, casting an instant's gleam across his face as he lighted his cigar. Blacker than ever the night shut down about them, and he groped for a seat beside her. She could perceive just one star peering through a rift of cloud, and in her nostrils was the pungent odor of tobacco. With a little shiver of disgust she drew slightly away from him, dreading what was to come. One thing alone she felt was in her favor—However familiar Hawley attempted to be, he was evidently not yet sufficiently sure of Miss MacLaire to become entirely offensive. She might not have frowned at his love-making, but apparently he had not yet progressed sufficiently far in her good graces to venture to extremes. Hope pressed her lips together, determined to resist any further approach of the man. However, his earliest words were a relief.

"I reckon, Christie," he said slowly, between puffs on his cigar, the lighted end of which faintly illumined his face, "you've got the idea I have brought you out here to make love. Lord knows I'd like to well enough, but just now there's more important matters on hand. Fact is, my girl, we've up against a little back-set, and have got to make a shift in our plans—a mighty quick shift, too," he added, almost savagely.

"I—I don't think I understand." "No, of course, you don't. You imagine all we've got to do in a matter of this kind is to step into the nearest court, and draw the money. One trouble is, our evidence isn't complete—we've got to find that woman who brought you up."

"Oh!" said Hope, not knowing what else to say. "Yes," he went on, apparently satisfied with her exclamation. "Of course, I know she's dead, or at least, you say so, but we haven't got enough proof without her—not the way old Waite promises to fight your claim—and so we've got to hunt for a substitute. Do you happen to know any old woman about the right age who would make affidavit for you? She probably wouldn't have to go on the stand at all. Waite will cave in as soon as he knows we've got the evidence."

He waited for an answer, but she hardly knew what to say. Then she remembered that Keith insisted that Miss MacLaire had no conception that there was any fraud in her claim.

"No, I know no one. But what do you mean? I thought everything was straight? That there was no question

about my right to inherit?"

"Well, there isn't, Christie," pulling fiercely on his cigar. "But the courts are particular; they have got to have the whole thing in black and white. I thought all along I could settle the entire matter with Waite outside, but the old fool won't listen to reason. I saw him twice to-day."

"Twice?" surprise wrung the word from her.

"Yes; thought I had got him off on a false scent and out of the way, the first time, but he turned up again like a bad penny. What's worse, he's evidently stumbled on to a bit of legal information which makes it safer for us to disappear until we can get the links of our chain forged. He's taken the case into court already, and the sheriff is here tryin' to find me so as to serve the papers. I've got to skip out, and so've you."

"What have I done to be frightened over?"

He laughed, but not pleasantly. "Oh, hell, Christie, can't you understand? Old Waite is after you the same way he is me. It'll knock out your whole case if he can get you into court before our evidence is ready. All you know is what I have told you—that's straight enough—but we've got to have proof. I can get it in a month, but he's got hold of something which gives him a leverage. I don't know what it is—maybe it's just a bluff—but the charge is conspiracy, and he's got warrants out. There is nothing for us to do but skip."

"But my clothes; my engagement?" she urged, feeling the insistent earnestness of the man, and sparring for delay. "Why, I cannot go. Besides, if the sheriff is hunting us, the trains will be watched."

"Do you suppose I am fool enough to risk the trains?" he exclaimed, roughly, plainly losing patience. "Not much; horses and the open plains for us, and a good night the start of them. We will search for me first, and you'll never be missed until you fail to show up at the Troadero. Never mind the clothes; they can be sent after us."

"To-night!" she cried, awakening to the immediate danger, and rising to her feet. "You urge me to fly with you to-night—now?"

"Sure, don't be foolish and kick up a row. The horses are here waiting just around the end of the ravine."

She pressed her hands to her breast, shrinking away from him.

"No! No! I will not go!" she declared, indignantly. "Keep back! Don't touch me!"

Hawley must have expected the resistance, for with a single movement he grasped her even as she turned to fly, pinning her arms helplessly to her side, holding her as in a vise.

"Oh, but you will, my beauty," he growled. "I thought you might act up and I'm ready. Do you think I am fool enough to leave you here alone to be pumped dry? It is a big stake I'm playing after, girl, and I am not going to lose it through the whims of a woman. If you won't go pleasantly, then you'll go by force. Keep still, you tigris! Do you want me to choke you?"

She struggled to break loose, twisting and turning, but the effort was useless. Suddenly he whistled sharply. There was the sound of feet scrambling down the path, and the frightened woman perceived the dim outlines of several approaching men. She gave one scream, and Hawley released his grip on her arms to grasp her throat.

She jerked away, half-stumbling backward over a rock. The revolver, carried concealed in her dress, was in her hand. Mad with terror, scarcely knowing what she did, she pulled the trigger. In the flash she saw one man throw up his hands and go down. The next instant the others were upon her.

(To be Continued.)

Stanley's Dog Knows His Route.

New York Herald.

Representative Stanley, who as chairman of the Steel Investigating Committee, has opened the season on predatory wealth and trusts in general, employs a stenographer who delights in describing his extremely human character and general kindness to all men and beasts.

"Down in Henderson, Ky., where he lives, Mr. Stanley has an old dog," said the stenographer. "Every morning when at home Mr. Stanley takes a walk down town and stops in a little cafe before going to his office. The dog always waits outside for him. And do you know that Mr. Stanley's absence from home has made the dog so disconsolate that regularly every morning he goes to the same place and waits a little while for Mr. Stanley and then trots home."

The dog story was repeated to Mr. Stanley and he laughed heartily.

"Yes, that darned dog does do that," he admitted. "The brute is disgracing me in Henderson. He not only goes to one saloon, but he spends the whole day visiting every barroom in Henderson looking for me."

The Laurens Glass works plant has been completed and the factory will be operating the first of next month. The plant will get its material from a fine bed of silica which is to be mined from the Big Knob mountain, located near Barksdale, six miles west of this city. A spur track is to be run from the Greenville branch of the Charleston and Western Carolina railroad to the mountain, the contract for this work having been given several days ago.

AUTO DEATH TOLL.

Racer Buck and Mechanic Receive Fatal Injuries when Car, Going at Terrific Rate, Turns Somersault.

Elgin, Aug. 26.—The 305-mile road race today, won by Lon Zengel, in a National, with Harry Grant second, and Hugh Hughes third, was not accomplished without its toll of death and injuries.

Dave Buck, the veteran Chicago automobile racer, and his mechanic were killed, as the result of an accident to his Pope-Hartford. Buck had his back broken, but lived until tonight. Sam Jacobs, mechanic, died instantly, his neck being broken. Buck was within eleven laps of the finish, going sixty-four miles an hour, when his right forward wheel threw a tire. The machine turned a complete somersault.

MOVING PICTURE TRAGEDY.

Panic Caused Death of Twenty-Six.

Canonsburg, Pa., Aug. 27.—Twenty-six dead from suffocation; 25 seriously hurt and 30 suffering from minor injuries.

That is the amount of human toll exacted by an inexcusable panic at a moving picture show in the Canonsburg opera house Saturday night. The moving picture machine developed a slight defect. It sputtered a bit. A small boy shouted "Fire!" at the same time starting for the narrow exit. Botus Dubrowski, a foreign miner, a giant in proportions, jumped from his seat and ran wildly for the same exit. In a moment there was a fighting, struggling mass after him. At the head of a narrow stairway which led to the street the foreigner tripped. As he rolled down the stairs he swept others from their feet who were awaiting their turn to enter the theatre, and soon there was an indescribable mass of human beings at the foot of the steps battling like madmen.

The bodies clogged the way. The men walked over them and fought for positions of safety until overwhelmed by the height of the moving mass behind, they too were crushed down to death.

It was all ended in a few minutes. Firemen, policemen and coolheaded citizens untangled the human mass. The unhurt and those slightly injured were pulled from the top of the pile. Next came the more seriously hurt. Then the rescuers came to the silent forms of those who had reached the fatal stairway first. One after another the victims, many of them women and small children, were carried to the sidewalk. All had been suffocated.

Manager Ferguson endeavored to stop the panic. Accompanied by his wife he went to the stage. Calling loudly to the frightened people to follow, he led fully 300 to safety.

Of the 26 dead, 13 were children, seven of them pupils in the public schools. Today it was decided to postpone for a week the opening of the schools.

Arthur McPeake was passing the building when the bodies began to pile up at the door. The young man rushed to the rescue and was in the act of dragging a body from the pile when a man came shooting down the stairs. He struck McPeake on the back and the young man's neck was broken. Sydney Rittiger was at the performance with his fiancée, Miss Lulu Fisher. Before entering the building they had stopped at a jewelry store nearby and Rittiger had bought the ring that was to have been used at their wedding. Both were killed.

Will Lane, an employe of the Canonsburg pottery and a member of the volunteer firemen's organization, hastened to assist firemen working at the pile of bodies at the entrance, when he came upon the lifeless forms of his two children lying beside his unconscious wife.

Many other heartrending tragedies were enacted during and following the awful panic.

It developed today that there was no flash in the operating room of the theatre. Manager Ferguson of the opera house explained that when the film broke a bright light was thrown on the screen. The frightened boy imagined it was fire and unconsciously shouted the death knell of more than a score of people.

This year Young Men's Christian Associations are likely, it is said, to break all records in amount of money raised for new buildings. The success at Philadelphia, when \$1,030,000 was secured in twelve days, has given stimulus both to Young Men's and Young Women's associations. Added to this was the \$2,000,000 campaign for buildings in foreign capitals. Brooklyn women, with the aid of a few men, have just secured \$415,000; Atlanta men, \$600,000; Reading, \$217,000; Elvira, Ohio, \$127,000, where the committee asked for but \$100,000; Charleston, S. C., \$150,000; Raleigh, N. C., \$75,000; Walla Walla, Wash., \$48,000, and Ishpeming, Mich., \$22,500.

RATE COMPLAINTS FILED.

Greenville Concerns Lodge Protests with I. C. Commission.

Washington, Aug. 26.—Alleging that the Southern Railway and Dominion Steamship Company charged \$1.14 per 100 pounds on a shipment of lamp goods from New York to Greenville, S. C., the Gilreath-Durham Company, of the latter place, today filed complaint with the Interstate commerce commission on the ground that the published rate on such goods from New York to Atlanta is \$1.05 per 100 pounds, and that the higher charge to Greenville than to Atlanta is a violation of the long and short haul statute, as Greenville is nearer New York by the foregoing routes than is Atlanta.

The Lipscomb-Russell Company, of Greenville, enters a similar complaint against the same defendants for charging 60 cents per 100 pounds on shipments of coffee from New York to Greenville whereas the published rate from New York to Atlanta is 56 cents per 100 pounds.

MECHANICS COP SECOND GAME.

Bishopville Boys Unable to Find Mechanics Pitcher.

Bishopville, Aug. 25.—The second game of the three game series was played today between the Mechanics of Columbia, and the locals, and was lost to the Mechanics by a score of 9 to 1.

The pitcher used by the Mechanics appeared to be a professional. At any rate the locals were by no means in his class. The third game will be played tomorrow, beginning at 9:30 a. m.

Batteries: Bishopville, Parker and Moore; Mechanics, Hyde and Shealy.

The Greenville Piedmont says that, for a wonder, none of the northern papers have claimed that the mob which lynched a negro in Pennsylvania last week was composed of Southerners.

REV. J. B. WILSON IN ANDERSON.

Former Presiding Elder of the Anderson District.

Rev. J. B. Wilson, formerly of this city, but now of Sumter, has been spending a while here with the family of Mr. C. F. Jones. He is on his vacation, and left yesterday afternoon for Spartanburg for a short visit before returning home.

Rev. Mr. Wilson was formerly presiding elder of the Methodist churches in the Anderson district, and has many warm friends here who were glad to see him again. He is now pastor of the Second Methodist church at Sumter.—Anderson Mail.

An Anecdote Handy.

The woman was the author of a cook book that had been published at her request with wide margins and occasional blank pages for notes and additional recipes. Often she had expressed a wish to see an old copy of the book and find out to what use the blank spaces had been put. One day in a second-hand book store her husband unearthed an old volume. Noticing that it had been annotated freely, he bought it. After a day or two he said:

"How about the notes in that cook book? Were they interesting?"

"No," she said curtly, "they didn't amount to anything."

When he got a chance he looked through the book himself. Every note the book contained was a remedy for dyspepsia and stomach trouble.—New York Times.

Whom the Session Has Helped.

Springfield Republican.

This session of congress has helped the Democrats and exalted the Republican President, whatever may be the effect of it upon the Republican party. Yet the party has no other possible chieftain, and the Nebraska Republicans have pointed the way for the Republicans of the entire nation in cordially accepting the President's leadership.



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