

THE BACKWOODSMAN

By Acton Seymour

"Don't read any more — there's no need of any more!"

"Poor boy," she said, thinking she understood, though her heart was breaking, "it is cruel — wickedly cruel. It kills you to listen. I am sorry I read your —"

"Cruel! No, Clare; it is life to me, that letter. It is strength, hope, love, happiness, that letter! Oh, the words are choking me. I must say them. I must go down at your feet and tell you the words that have been bursting in me all these days. I'll go away after I say them. You want no discarded lover, I know that. But I want to tell you that I never knew love till I loved you. It was only a boy's liking — that other! This is a man's passion, and —"

She put her hand on his arm. "Hush!" she said, looking past him. She said it gently. "I want to listen, Harry. But it's too sacred for others to hear."

He followed her gaze, and saw Romeo Bragg at the door of the camp, trying to look innocent. He took her hand.

"Strength is in me again," he declared. "Come, my Clare! Come up to the hill. Let's get nearer heaven — for it is sacred, what I have to tell you!"

"I've said it would happen," said Romeo Bragg to Governor Harris; "the only thing is, he's hung out longer'n I expected he would."

"Where do you reckon they're going to?" asked Harris.

"Heard him say something about heaven," chuckled Bragg. "But if that girl ever looked at me the way she looked at him, just now, I'd reckon that old earth was a good place to stay a while in."

"They'd better not go too far," mumbled Harris. "I ain't said anything about it — for I didn't want to worry a sick man or Miss Clare. But I'm knowin' to it that that hyena of a young Wiggin has been hangin' around this place on the sly for some time."

"You must be mistook," declared Bragg, turning to his duties; "he don't want any more George provender passed to him. He ain't got appetite for it."

The two who slowly climbed the hill did not see the skulking figure that ran away toward the deeper woods of the summit. The man who ran evidently did not want to encounter them in the open where those at the camp would detect him.

It was Blinn Wiggin who ran.

He found a hiding place near the top. He seemed to guess that they would come that way. His shelter was a hole under the looming shadow of the roots of an upturned tree that had been felled by a tempest. The roots held in their meshes the broad plat of earth, mixed with stone, and the heavy mass was set on edge, supported in that position by the prostrate trunk. Wiggin squeezed himself down close to the plat in the hollow it had left. He swung his rifle into position. He commanded the path.

But there was another skulking figure in the hilltop woods, a figure that had followed Blinn Wiggin for many days.

It appeared now with cautious steps. It saw what ambuscade Wiggin had prepared. It was Noel, the Bear, treading with the soft foot of the trailer. He heard the voices of the young people, as they climbed slowly, favoring Harry's new cavalcade.

Noel stood for one moment, motionless. He understood.

He threw his knife and ran to the rear of the upraised plat. He peered at its upper edge, as though he intended to clamber up and drop on the man waiting there with rifle aimed. But, glancing down, he saw something that brightened his dull eyes. When the tree had fallen its trunk had been splintered across a boulder. The stub at the plat was joined to the tree only by strands of wood fiber, already half rotted.

The Indian had the quick knowledge of his forebears in regard to the affairs of the woods.

He knelt upon the trunk. He began to cut at the fibers with his keen knife, grunting all the while like a quillpig at his gnawing. Wiggin growled a curse, and threw back a handful of pebbles to scare what his ear told him was a meddlesome porcupine finding his supper of spruce bark. The slashing of the knife blade sounded like an animal's teeth. With his grunts, the old man made the illusion complete.

Wiggin could not emerge to bother with a porcupine — the creature mattered nothing to him at that moment. He was after bigger game. It was almost in sight on the path, now. His finger pressed softly on the trigger. Hate blazed in his eyes. He had waited long, but he had never dreamed of such an opportunity as this. He would kill him at her feet. As for the girl who had scorned him, well —

The last fibers snapped. The weight of rocks and earth flipped the stub of tree upright. With a hollow "plock," with movement as swift as a steel trap, the plat came back into its old-time place, fitting into its hollow as though it never had been disturbed. Ten feet deep, under the stub of tree, Blinn Wiggin was entombed, life crushed from him as a fly dies under a housewife's palm.

"There's Noel, the Bear, from the Aznaki tribe," whispered Clare, as they passed the spot. She pointed up at the old Indian, standing beside the stump of tree, his arms folded, his face calm. "He has been wandering through the woods lately like a lost soul. There's gossip that some one has deceived his grand-daughter, White Lily — the pride of the tribe. Poor old man!"

They went on, hand in hand, and left him there.

He was there when they came down again, Harry George's lips sweet with her kisses, his soul brimming with the joy of living and loving.

THE END

BATTILING WITH THE CLOUDS

Mankind Has Been Trying to Fight the Threatening Hail-Storm From Time Immemorial.

From time immemorial mankind has endeavored to find some physical means of preventing hailstorms. In antiquity the custom of hurling javelins and other missiles against clouds that threatened a discharge of hail was widespread. In the middle ages the aid of the sorcerer who claimed the power of influencing the weather — was invoked to the same end. Bells, also, were believed to be efficacious in averting hailstorms. Early in the nineteenth century metal-tipped poles were set up in great numbers in many parts of Europe, in the belief that they would draw off the free electricity of the air, which was assumed to be the chief cause of hailstorms. About 1893 the custom of "hail-shooting" was introduced in Europe, especially in vine-growing districts, and soon became immensely popular. This consisted in bombarding the clouds with various special forms of cannon. In the year 1900 five hundred of these cannon were in use in France and Spain, 2,000 in Austria-Hungary, and 10,000 in Italy. This custom still flourishes. It is, however, open to the fatal objection that, even should it prove efficacious, the expense entailed in systematic protection by this method is in excess of the benefits to be obtained.

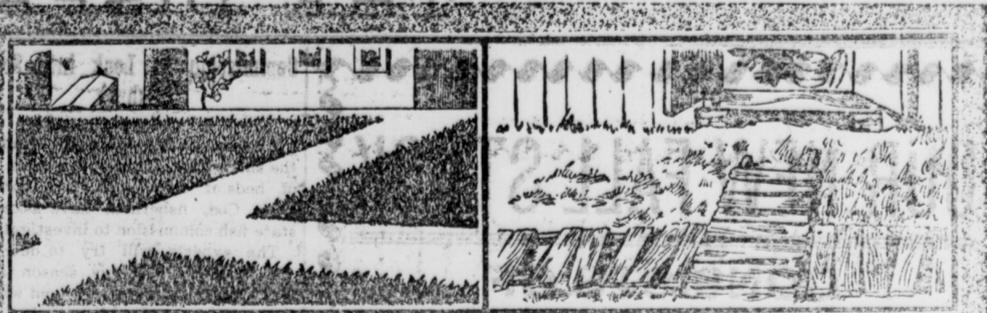
WHERE THEORIES SUFFER

The only justification America has yet had comes direct from the self-satisfaction of the individual American. His satisfaction, however, is both unmistakable and voluble, says a writer critic. He is content, though the competition becomes daily more severe and evident. He is beginning to realize now that many are handicapped at the very outset, that the struggle is prolonged by the stronger for the sheer joy of conquest, and even that a good third of the energy expended is consumed in piling up success on the top of victory. Yet a cheerful acceptance of the situation is the price of his individuality, his optimism, and his chance of winning out, and he pays it ungrudgingly. There is a greater measure of content and less of a sense of environmental injustice in America than anywhere else in the world today. And the principles of conduct and social relationships, though elemental, are like the rules of a game, there is an immediate appeal to public censure or approval, and little discrepancy between theory and practice.

Naturally our theories suffer when compared with idealistic and more divorced codes. Where every man is supposed to consider his own interests, no social blame is imputed, and no one, except for initial handicaps, has an excuse. That is not, on the whole, an unenviable state of affairs; the American temperament only approximates it. As an instinctive theory, this is what it believes in. Yet with every man theoretically for himself, public spiritedness prevails to a marked and unusual degree. For every man drives a frank bargain with the community; there is a competitive and open market for altruistic wares. Consider for a moment that phenomenon of our civilization, the millionaire philanthropist. Is he an enigma, this person who has seemed to change character and tactics under our very eyes? By no means; if Americans worship money, they worship it as power, as cornered energy and not in an intrinsic and miserly way.

Sifting Out the Manchus

The Chinese rebels, who are the "original" Chinese, have resorted to an ancient, Jewish trick to sift out the real Chinese from the doomed Manchus.



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Instead of saying to the suspect "Say now Shibboleth," as the Gheadites said to the Ephraimites, they say to them, "Say Mushillu," the Chinese word for "six." And if the suspect doesn't pronounce it right according to ancient Chinese fashion, he gets it in the neck, literally, as the Ephraimites got it who said "Shibboleth" instead of "Shibboleth."

The test imposed by the Chinese insurgents is a numerical one. The suspect is told to count. When he passes six his fate is sealed.

If the suspect says "Lo-ow" he is spared. If he says "Lo-kee-haw", as the Manchus do, it's all day with him. "Then they took him and slew him."

Spruce for British Admiralty

The British Admiralty has recently placed an order for 200,000 feet of white spruce to be used in the manufacture of oars for the rowboats of warships. It is perhaps not generally known that the superior quality of the white spruce grown in the Queen Charlotte Islands, off the coast of British Columbia, was discovered years ago by British naval officers of the North Pacific station. The kind of timber was found to be ideally adapted for making oars, and it is now used exclusively for that purpose by His Majesty's vessels throughout the world. The timber will be shipped east by the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Light from Sugar

This phenomenon, the cause of which has not yet been satisfactorily explained, may be observed when discs of loaf sugar are mounted on a lathe and rapidly rotated while a hammer plays lightly against them. An almost continuous radiation of light may be thus produced from the sugar. It has been shown that the light does not arise from heating of the sugar, and it is believed to be caused by some change taking place in the sugar crystals. The act of crystallisation is known to be sometimes accompanied by flashes of light. The practical bearing of these experiments is on the question of the possibility of obtaining artificial light by methods as yet untried.

Don't Trouble

There's a saying, old and rusty
But as good as any new;
'Tis "Never trouble trouble
Till trouble troubles you."

Don't you borrow sorrow;
You'll surely have your share,
He who dreams of sorrow
Will find that sorrow's there.

If care you've got to carry,
Wait till 'tis at the door,
For he who runs to meet it
Takes up the load before.

If minding will not mend it,
Then better not to mind it;
The best thing is to mend it;
Just leave it all behind.

Then don't you trouble trouble
'Till trouble troubles you;
You'll only trouble trouble,
And trouble others too.

YUAN-SHI-KAI IS CHINA'S DICTATOR

The New Premier is a Manchu and a Militarist and Will Crush the Progressives if He Can. —But Can He?

(Special Cable Service.)

PEKIN. — Yuan Shi Kai, who has accepted the premiership is considered the strongest man in China since Li Hung Chang.

The return to power of Yuan-Shi-Kai, after two years spent in enforced retirement, is a matter of grave concern to the progressives. It may mean disaster to them.

For Yuan-Shi-Kai is a great man — one whose very name is more potent with the people of China than an army. He is feared and respected throughout the empire.

And now the government, in despair



PREMIER YUAN-SHI-KAI

at the spread of revolt, has summoned from obscurity this man who was so summarily dismissed and disgraced two years ago, and has put him again in supreme control of the army and navy. Which means that Yuan-Shi-Kai has virtually been made dictator.

That's just the sort of place Yuan is best fitted for. He is a Diaz-like individual, a man of tremendous energy and of big brain. In the days of the absolute monarchy he seemed like a progressive by contrast. He was associated with Li Hung Chang and did much toward untangling the mess caused by the Boxer outbreak. But Yuan is not a progressive. He is a militarist.

Indeed Yuan represents all that China is today in military standing. For Yuan MADE the present Chinese army. When he came to power on the death of the great Li Hung Chang he set about the reorganization of the entire military establishment of the empire, and thanks to his effort China has now a thoroughly equipped and well drilled army.

Now he has been called to take the premiership. If any one in China can turn the trick he can. And that he will do his best to crush the progressive movement may be taken for granted.

For Yuan is a Manchu.

THE LIGHT HAT BEST TO WEAR

Pathological Study Goes to Show that a Heavy Hat has Bad Effect on the Continuity of Thought.

Years of study have convinced Dr. George W. Galvin, United States pathologist that heavy hats retard the growth of the intellectual powers; that the lighter the headgear the more active the wearer's brain.

When any of the senses are interfered with the train of thought is broken. A violent blow suspends thought, and sights sudden and strange have been known to drive persons insane.

Interruption of the function of the senses may come in various ways, and the heavy hat has an unfavorable effect on the continuity of thought.

A deep thinker seldom has a hat on his head when wrestling with an important problem. Edison wears no hat, simply a cap. Many men eschew the tightly fitting derby entirely. Luther Burbank, the famous naturalist, is another who never wears a hat.

A billiard player seldom wears a hat and never when at a critical stage of the game. Jockeys, golfers and baseball players invariably wear caps. I have noticed the "fans" remove their hats at a particularly exciting moment in the game.

There is much significance in the fact that college girls wear no hats at all. That it is advantageous is proved by their marked progress; they are gaining in their averages of studies.

Wrong Every Time

At a recent political meeting a speaker was attacking the Government with more venom than reason. A man at the back of the hall at last cried out, "You're wrong, sir!"

A little nettled, the orator continued without heeding. Presently, in answer to another strong assertion, came again, "You're wrong, sir!"

The speaker looked angry, but continued on the war-path. "You're wrong, sir!" again rang out.

Angry addressing the persistent interrupter, the orator cried, "Look here, I could tell this man something about the Government which would make his hair stand on end!"

"You're wrong again, sir?" came from the critic, as he stood up and removed his hat. His head was as bald as a billiard-ball.

The Power of Suggestion

Every medical man knows that various functions of the body can be influenced by the mental state, and that some ailments can be relieved almost at once by suggestion. An amusing instance of this lately occurred in the case of a very chilly patient whose friends were directed by the doctor to "surround her with hot-water bottles." The next morning the patient was decidedly relieved and enthusiastic as to the comfort received from the treatment. Imagine the surprise of her doctor when he discovered that various bottles had been duly filled with hot water and placed on the floor round the patient's bed. Apparently this had been quite as effective as if the hot water bottles had been brought into contact with the body.