

THE BACKWOODSMAN

By Alyn Seymour

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Love laughs at others than locksmiths! He mocks the plans of sober business.

The Great Trust Co. said: "Go!" The girl pleaded: "Stay."

The Great Trust Co.'s command imposed months of exile in the shadows of the big woods. The girl asked only for a few hours before that exile began.

The Great Trust Co. was impersonal and curt; a corporation with tentacles so far-flung that, though the soul of it was hot where its mighty schemers wrought in secret, its extremities, that did its will in execution, were cold and callous.

But the girl was not impersonal. Tears were in her eyes, though her lips pouted when he strove against her urgings. And she was so cozy and small that he could have hidden her in his arms where she stood on the station platform — and with difficulty kept himself from doing so.

And, when her hands crept into his, he forgot the huge, cold, impersonal corporation, let the train go on without him, went home with her in that everlasting partnership of two — and lost twenty-four hours. And what twenty-four lost hours meant in the affairs of the men of the north country he discovered after he had left the girl.

Harry George had some sort of excuse for not realizing what penalties this delay on his part incurred, for he had been waiting three weeks for the Great Trust Co. to decide on his application. But a young forester cannot be insistent.

The brain and heart of the Great Trust Co. are in Montreal. Granite and mystery surround. The mystery has many names. Its agents in the far St. John country know it as the Great Trust Co. It is said that, under other names to shield its clutching fingers, it reaches to grasp the water powers and to hold for its own the great forests of the nation.

When George answered its summons, he went up into the towering building on St. James street and found no mystery. He was directed to the one whose name he had given as a passport at the gate that closed the avenue of rubber matting. Beyond the door marked "Superintendent of Field Work," he expected to find — well, the Great Trust Co. personified in some degree, in flesh and blood. The listless little man who waved him to a chair with a hand that held a cigarette did not seem qualified to dictate for the baronies of forest and mountain and lake and river.

"Mr. George," he began, and then picked languidly among the papers on his desk. The packet that he secured and flicked idly, as he talked, contained the forester's letters and credentials.

"Mr. George!" He snapped away the cigarette butt. "This Great Trust country! Have you been there?"

"No, sir."

"That will not make much difference in your efficiency as far as we are concerned." He tapped some pencil jottings on the back of George's indorsements. "I have ordered two of our explorers to meet you at Norray Junction; that's on the main line through to St. John. I have written their names here — Smart and Niles. They'll take you on to Corran-che. That's your jumping-off place. Branch line and logging railroad. You'll outfit there at our company store."

The young man took his papers and the hand that extended them.

You will please understand, Mr. George that as a practical forester you are cooperating with our explorers. Merely cooperating, I will say. They know more about present commercial values of standing timber than you do." It was plainly not to soften this blunt appraisal that he added: "They're old-fashioned woodsmen, the kind that can go through a stand of timber on the jog trot and estimate better with the eye in one day than a professional forester can with his calipers in a month."

George felt sudden anger, the dictum was so listlessly decisive. He kept his tongue between his teeth, however.

"We've got men enough to tell us what timber is worth, standing. You

are something of an experiment with us. We want you to go through with those men on the fly, and report your opinion as to the future; it isn't saw-mill business with us, you understand. We could throw away a twenty-five-thousand-dollar sawmill a few years from now and not feel it. But a million-dollar pulp mill is a different proposition. That anchors us. We want your opinion of prospects, of needs in the conservation line, of plans for replenishing — what to take at present, and what to leave.

and eyes. You seem to have good legs!"

It was the first time the little man had shown that he noticed the personality of this new servant of the Great Trust Co.

George flushed and got upon his feet. The reference to the personal seemed to indicate that the superintendent had finished his business talk.

"Then I am not to stop for actual plotting and measurements, sir?"

"Mr. George, we have a million or so acres bought, and more than a million under consideration. The word 'stop' doesn't belong with your job. We are hiring only a few pairs of eyes instead of an army of caliper chaps. The caliper fellow follows you when you have reported. Will you kindly pay very strict attention to these last words of mine? They're the important part of your instructions."

George, towering with his six feet of sturdy manhood over the little man who squinted at him, bowed.

"You are going into a queer place — the Great Trust country — where there happen to be strange conditions just at present. You are not to interest yourself in those conditions, or to waste time up there inquiring into them. You are to get into the woods as quietly as possible. You are to stay there. The fewer people who know just why you are there, the better. Keep your eyes on trees instead of human beings. Otherwise, you won't be of any value to us." He had pushed a button, and the boy had appeared. "Call at the treasurer's office on your way out. The boy will show you. Your expenses will be advanced. You can reach Norray Junction to-morrow night, if you start to-day. Our men have orders to meet you there."

George started that day. His celebrity in getting out of Montreal would have interested even the listless little man of the Great Trust Co. From the telegraph office nearest to the big building, he sent two messages; the little man would have been pleased to know that he put business first — he ordered his trunk from his boarding house in Westmount, directing that it be put on the train that was to take him through that city. Then, he wrote a second message, lingering over it as though trying to soften its brutal abruptness.

"Good news, bad news. Am passing through Toronto on International to-day. The big folks have taken me. Can you come to station for a word?"

It was addressed to the girl.

Then, he raced to the Grand Trunk station, wholesome example for all young men — a faithful servant, who had heard, and who obeyed. Outwardly an example; inwardly, he realized and confessed to himself that the wings of haste were plumed principally for Toronto. And yet it was his firm determination to rush on. He told her so — confessed it to her in the first jumble of speech after he had greeted her on the station platform.

"But where — where does this new work take you, dearest?" she asked, her upraised eyes brimming.

"North, under the big trees."

"A week — a fortnight?"

"Months," he owned, trying to smile.

"Months — months? And you dancing along on your way like this with only a pat and a good-by for poor little me? Harry George, you get your coat and your bag, and come with me and ask my pardon."

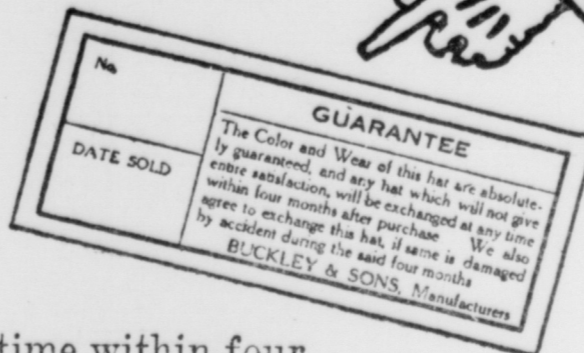
"Mary, they have told me to go. I must —"

"And I tell you you must stay. There is a to-morrow for your hateful old business. Months — and you ready to run away and deny to me a

Did you ever know of a hat guarantee so strong as this?



Think of it—



The Buckley creates styles where lesser makers are content to follow the beaten path.

Another feature of the Buckley is that it is strictly a Union-made hat.

Note the "accident clause" in the guarantee. Many have wondered at its insertion, claiming that it makes it too easy for a man to get a new hat. That feature of the guarantee was prompted by a strong belief in the inherent honesty of mankind and a desire to remove all possibility of quibbling or questioning on the part of the merchant. Backed with that clause, your hatter is in a position to hand you out a new hat without hesitation and without suspicion.

Any good hat store can get you the Buckley—the price is no greater than for an ordinary hat. They sell for \$2.50.

a new hat any time within four months, to any man who can show a Buckley hat that has succumbed to wear and tear, or to accident, within that length of time after date of purchase.

The man who wears Buckley hats is sure of a reasonable hat-cost—because the makers of the Buckley guarantee that each Buckley hat shall be good for at least four months' wear.

The man who is Buckley-hatted knows that he is "hat-right" not only as to quality, but also as to style—the style supremacy of the Buckley has long been recognized. English as to quality, it conforms to American style tendencies.

BUCKLEY HATS

few poor little minutes — till to-morrow! Why, Harry George, can you stand there and look at me and repeat that you meant it?"

"But, men are waiting. And, Mary —"

"I am waiting. I am here."

"It was then that she put her hands into his and pleaded. She did not listen to him. He had never found her willing to listen to the serious things of life. Life had not worn its solemn visage when it fronted her winsome daintiness. She had always laughed life and seriousness, and the matter-of-fact that takes care for the morrow, out of their doldrums. He had wished sometimes — chiding himself for his New England proclivities — that she would listen a bit more patiently to his grave plans for their future, instead of insisting on playing butterfly among the flowers of their love. But Mary Laroche, transplanted from the South! He had always sighed, kept his counsel, surrendered his hands to hers, and allowed her to lead him.

"Come," she cried, "obey, you big boy who would play truant! One cigar you shall smoke after dinner with père. And then all for me, to tell me of the big woods and how you shall make the great fortune with which we shall live happy ever after. I will listen, this time. I will sit very close, maybe on your knee, and listen; and, if your story is pleasing, you shall have, perhaps, the reward."

There were no tears in her eyes, now. She had been a bit shocked and frightened at his astonishing attempt to break through her soft fetters. But now she was sure of him. She lifted his big hand to her lips as earnest of the promised reward.

More listless, more impersonal, now, seemed the little man back in the big office; the man who had been making him wait three weeks, and now sent him away like a rocket. Nearer, dearer, more delicious than ever before seemed this little girl, pressing close to him, regardless of obvious passers-by, careless of the grins of porters. To the nearest of these she turned, still clinging to her captive.

"Bring his coat and bag from the car," she commanded. "At once. Hurry!" And she reached up both hands,

standing on tiptoes, and put her pink fingers over his lips. "You shall not go," she panted, "until you have left me love enough to last till you come back again!" And so he forgot the listless man, forgot the appointment at Norray Junction, and went with her.

He remembered all of them in the night, after he had left her. That the woodsmen would wait for him, he felt sure. He hoped they would wait without bothering the little man in the big office with inquiries over the wire. His Canadian conscientiousness told him that for a young man bent upon success his beginning for the Great Trust Co. was not one calculated to bring him congratulatory messages from headquarters.

To get those thoughts out of his head, he hurried his breakfast and hastened to the girl. They walked together in the fresh air of the August morning.

"I forget much that you told me last night of the work of the forester," said Mary. "But if I remember, I do not like that work. You should have told me more about it when you were studying in the college here."

"But you never would listen to me, if I talked about anything else than loving you," he complained.

"It would have been a waste of time to talk about anything except love," she returned, with a smile that cleared his face. "But if I had known that forestry was a work that would take you into the woods for months when you ought to be here with me, where a girl's lover should be, I certainly should have made you study something else. A girl must not be deserted. There's only a little while to be gay in, you big boy of mine, and a girl that's engaged must have eyes only for her own beau."

"Of course," he blurted, realizing that he was selfish and jealous at the same time.

"Of course!" she mimicked. "Why should every big beau think that he must look up the girl like a canary and carry away the key while he dances up and down the lands?"

"I'm not dancing," returned George gloomily. "I'm going away to make good for both our sakes. I ask you to wait and be patient — only that."

"And sit on the perch in my cage

and chirp a lonesome little song!" She smiled brightly as she looked up at him, but there was bitterness in her tone, and something else that stirred vague uneasiness. He had hoped that his lady would pin her colors upon his breast and send him out to conflict with a heroine's faith and courage.

"You do not seem to realize that I am doing it all for you — that I am sacrificing so much in leaving you."

"I understand, now, what you wanted me to do yesterday when you came dashing along, trying to run away from me. You wanted me to cry: 'Hurrah! I'm glad you are going away from me, for long months. I want to be alone. I want you to go into those great woods and suffer and be in danger. I want you to do all that — and do not stop with me for one little hour out of all the long months. Hurry away!' Now, if I had said it, how would you have liked that, Beau Toronto, with the hard shell?"

He admitted that he would not have liked it, but the admission rather added to his general discontent. It was only when he bade her good-by, that day, took his leave of her in the sanctity of the woodbine bower which their affection had consecrated, that the old faith and understanding seemed to spring into line again between them. For she wept bitterly once more the clinging, dependent little sprite whose impracticability and elfish whims had bewitched his Puritan senses. And he was again the protecting genius, loving her the more passionately the more dependent she became.

(To Be Continued)

France To Investigate High Cost Of Food

Ramboulette, France, Aug. 31. — Jules Pams, the minister of Agriculture, was instructed, during the cabinet conference to-day, to investigate the underlying cause of the high price of food which has resulted in considerable rioting in the northern department of France.