

Youth Rides West

By Will Irwin

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THE STORY SO FAR

On their way to the new Cottonwood gold diggings in Colorado in the early Seventies, Robert Gilson, easterner, and his partner, Buck Hayden, a veteran miner, witness the holdup of a stagecoach from which the express box is stolen before the bandits are scared off. Among the hold-up victims are Mrs. Constance Deane, and Mrs. Barnaby, who intends to open a restaurant in Cottonwood. Gilson meets Marcus Handy, editor on his way to start the Cottonwood Courier. Arriving in town, Gilson and Hayden together purchase a mining claim. A threatened lynching is averted by the bravery of Chris McGrath, town marshal. Gilson becomes disgusted with gold digging, while with its unending labor and small rewards, and so the sudden appearance of Shorty Croly, old-time partner of Buck, is not altogether disconcerting to him. Gilson takes a job on the Courier and arrives in town in time to file a claim to Shorty. His acquaintanceship with Mrs. Deane ripens. As the Courier grows in power a civic spirit is awakened. Following a crime wave, which the marshal seems to oversee, Handy in his newspaper demands a new gold. Gilson meets Mrs. Deane in a notorious section of the camp. In love with her and knowing she has a husband, Gilson, noting that she seems upset about something attempts to comfort her.

CHAPTER VIII—Continued

—10—
But as the hammering of blood against my brain died out, as the red mist cleared from my eyes, I realized that Constance had not returned my kiss, that her arms clung to me not in an embrace but as though she had grasped at me for support, for safety. Then her hands fell from my neck, began gently to push me away. We stood, facing each other. Again that black mood lay on her face. She swayed, grasped at her saddle horn. I stepped forward—this time in fear she might fall, she was trembling so—but one hand lifted itself for an instant and warned me back. Now her trembling increased to a quaking which shook her whole body, broke her speech into queer fragments as she said:

"Robert—why did you—why did we—do this?"

"You know why," I said. "Because I love you!"

"Yes!" said Constance, and repeated it as though the words were a poem. "You love me!"

"And you too!" I said. "You too!"

She started to answer; and with another rush of blood against the base of my brain, I anticipated her word. But she did not speak. And suddenly trembling stopped.

"If I did," she said, "what good would it do? What could come of it?"

I saw what she meant; and the obstacle between us, which only just now had appeared so featherly light, became a stone wall.

"I shouldn't have done this!" she went on, every moment becoming more the mistress of herself. "Shouldn't have let you do it."

"You couldn't have stopped me!" I replied. "I couldn't stop myself."

"Such things are always in the woman's hands." Almost was she again the Constance I knew. I had rent for an instant the veil over her soul; now I could feel its edges drawing together again. She turned to where the two horses, unperceiving witnesses of this crisis in human affairs, were grazing through their bits on the edge of the stream. "Hadn't you better hitch them?" she said. "Then come back here and talk—if you wish to talk this over any further."

The simple act of catching the horses, tossing the bridles over their heads, steadied me also. I turned back. She had seated herself on a broken pillar of the castle rock, and her eyes regarded me steadily as I advanced.

"Robert," she began, "don't you think you had better go away?"

"From camp?" I asked.

"From me. See me no more. You will be safest so."

"Safe from what?"

"From yourself—and me!"

"What is the danger in you?"

"Robert, a man is always in danger when he loves a married woman!—unless—" here her voice grew sharp for an instant, "unless this is only a flirtation with you. Unless you are that kind of a man."

"I couldn't tell you," I said, "how much this isn't a flirtation. Don't you think I've fought it? Don't you know that I did what I did just now because my guard was down, and you touched me and I was carried beyond myself?"

"I know all that," she said. "I'm trying to be very honest now. And it isn't honest in me, Robert, to say I doubt your honor. I'm certain of that. You're not like—well, our friend Barbara, for example."

"He was—familiar?" I asked, my hands clutching.

"Oh, somewhat. But don't let that trouble you. With you, it's different. Don't you think you'd better leave me—for your own good?"

"Constance, is it absolutely hopeless?"

"Absolutely," she said finally, firmly.

"But you're in trouble. I want to help. If there's one chance in a hundred million to help you, I want that more than anything else that I can have in life," I said.

She rested her elbow on her knee, dropped her chin into her palm, and gazed at the stream.

"Robert," she said finally, "if I let you stay in my life—do you think you can go on as before—just coming to talk to me now and then until—until perhaps I go away?"

"If that is all you will give me—I have no choice!"

"I can give no more. Even then, I warn you that you are likely to be burned."

"But will you be burned? That is a thing which matters."

"No, it doesn't matter. I am already browned—scorched—withered."

"Constance, won't you tell me about yourself?"

"That isn't living up to the conditions," she replied. "No!" Suddenly, with one of her light movements, she slipped to the ground. "I'm going now. Would you mind fixing the reins for me?" As I turned to throw the bridle over her horse's head, I saw that she had swung unaided from a wayside rock into the side-saddle.

"Where were you going?" she asked, looking not at me but at her hands as they grasped the reins.

"To Forty-Rod. Matter of a little story about a fire," I said. "It isn't really important. It—" But now she looked at me shook her head.

"No. Go on with it. I want to ride back alone. Try to forget this afternoon. Let us play it hasn't happened." With the touch of an expert horsewoman, she gathered the reins, and her brown nag started up.

She broke him into a trot, into a lope. Once she looked back, saw me staring after her, turned her head quickly to face the road. Then she disappeared round the hill.

The aftermath of Marcus Handy's editorial on the political incompetence of Cottonwood was blurred and obscured for both the camp and me by another event, which seemed temporarily much more important in the scheme of fate.

I was wakened next morning by prolonged knocking at my door, and by the protesting grunts of Marcus Handy. As I struggled out of sleep, I saw Marcus sitting up in bed in his white-and-red nightshirt, holding his 45-caliber sidearm at ready. Then from outside a voice spoke; and Marcus, as he grasped the meaning of the words, laid down his revolver with another grunt, pulled the clothes over up his ears, and fell once more asleep.

"Does Bob Gilson live here?" All right. Buck—Buck Hayden—wants to see you out to his claim right away. Says it's important!" came a heavy voice from without.

I hurried myself out of bed; anticipating accident and calamity, dressed, hurried to the livery stable for my horse and through a clear, inspiring June air rode up the busy creek toward the rocky curve which I seemed to have abandoned such eternities ago. Busy all the way with speculation, as usual in such circumstances I reviewed every possibility except the true solution.

Was trouble breaking between Buck and Shorty? I wondered, as I rode toward the claim. Even had there been a tragedy? And, whatever happened, I must get through this thing quickly. For I did not want to miss a single one of those noon breakfasts at Mrs. Barnaby's, which were midday dinner for the rest but noon breakfast for me and where daily I met—Constance Deane.

This was the claim, at the curve of the creek; but what had happened to the cabin? It's thatched and sodded roof lay on the bank, braced up six feet high on posts; from beneath it protruded various familiar objects of human use, such as our Dutch oven, my old set of red blankets. Where the cabin itself had stood were only chips, piles of sawdust, strips of bark, a trampled door.

I was haloned from the hillside across the creek. I looked up, and was aware of a new object in the landscape. A timbered hole gaped at me, black and brutal-mouthed; beside it lay a fresh new dump, so small that even my expert eye could see how shallow as yet was the tunnel which fed it.

From that orifice Buck had emerged, taking off his hat to extinguish a miner's lamp, was walking toward me with his customary even stride, but rapidly, jerkily. I dismounted, started toward him; he waved me back. As he approached, I saw that his eye glinted with some unnatural excitement.

"Got to see you alone, kid—all alone!" he shot out. He looked round; his eye rested on that ridiculous shack of thatching and poles. Into this he drew me. He squatted on his heels, scrutinized all approaches before he burst out:

"Kid, don't it beat the Dutch?—I've struck it—struck it rich!"

"You have?" I asked inexorably.

"I sure have—Shorty and me have—as rich as—" Buck paused, as though to find a simile wild enough to express the situation. "Rich as h—l!" he concluded.

From my whirl of thoughts and emotions, not all generous, I brought out another triviality.

"Gold quartz?" I asked.

"Gold quartz your grandma!" ejaculated Buck. "Gold's a sucker proposition. No! What I've got is the only poor man's ore. Silver carbonates!"

He might have been talking Arabic for all I grasped the dramatic meaning in that technical term. But Buck was running on:

"You can scoop her out with a spoon—assays three hundred to the ton—she widens as she goes in—that stuff we hated so like pizen—"

"That sand?"

"You've called it. Shorty seen it!" Buck stopped here, fumbled through the pockets of his overalls, produced a creased paper. "Here's where you come in," he said. "It was a mining claim, filled out in my name and as yet, I saw, unregistered. 'Ain't our claim!' Buck hastened to explain. "It's the ground next. And—" waved an excited hand toward the hillside—she's crammed with it, jammed with it! You can't lose! Your play is to git this registered quick, before the rush starts. Ride, boy!"

Yet I lingered to extract the details. Two years before, Shorty, as Buck expected it, had been "shoved out of Mexico." With a "college-bred mining expert"—Buck's phrase again—he had been looking for gold. And down in Chihuahua they had found the natives washing not gold but a brittle sand. It was lead carbonates bearing

clerk; and his manner was insinuating. By good fortune, I carried most of my money on my person, as was the fashion in Cottonwood. I drew out a gold double-eagle, balanced it carelessly as I said:

"I'd be sorry to trouble you, but I want it done now." The clerk fell immediately to work; in ten minutes, I had the title, all registered and sworn; and he had, besides his fee, my twenty dollars. Another glimpse, I reflected, into the run of affairs at Cottonwood. My little piece of justifiable bribery had occurred to me just in time; for as I mounted and rode away, I passed the gold double-eagle, balanced it carelessly as I said:

"I'd be sorry to trouble you, but I want it done now." The clerk fell immediately to work; in ten minutes, I had the title, all registered and sworn; and he had, besides his fee, my twenty dollars.

Summer pruning, done properly, has the most beneficial effect, especially as regards cordon and espalier, or other trained trees. The branches should be kept at 12 inches distance apart, and the leading growths shortened to insure proper breaking of the buds throughout the whole length of the branches, which, of course, results in side shoots, says the Gardeners' Chronicle.

The side shoots should be gone over during the season of early growth, when they have made six to eight leaves, and pinched back with the finger and thumb nail to five leaves.

The shoots will push growth from one or two of the upper buds, and these laterals should be pinched back to two leaves. If the trees are very vigorous, or the autumn wet, a third pinching may be needed. The immediate result is to keep the side shoots within bounds. The leading, or extension, shoot will be clean and vigorous, and the growths from the buds lower down will be well nourished. At the autumn or winter pruning of these side shoots, four buds are left on each, if the tree be young and vigorous, or three will suffice on old trees or those of modern vigor. The reason for leaving four buds is that two must make some growth, while the two lower ones make only a little wood and a few leaves, practically spurs, to develop into fruit buds the following year.

Concentrated sour milk is a tasty, semifinal product. As poultry feed it is mixed with water or dry mash.

Good results are obtained with the product when fed to baby chicks in a dilution of 1 to 8; when fed to laying hens either in paste form or in a mixture of 1 pound of paste to 1 pound of dry mash; and when fed for crate fattening at the rate of 40 pounds of the paste to 100 pounds of mash.

The utilization of surplus skim milk in manufacturing this concentrated product promises a greater outlet to the dairymen for his products and assures the poultryman of a uniform supply of a good feed that has excellent keeping qualities.

Sparrows and Pigeons

Disease Germ Carriers

Recent investigations have determined that sparrows and pigeons may carry the avian or chicken type of tuberculosis from chickens to pigs or hogs and from an infected flock of chickens to a noninfected flock. The sparrow or pigeon flies from infected pens or flocks to a healthy flock and contaminates the feed. There is also strong circumstantial evidence that sparrows and pigeons can transmit fowl cholera from infected to healthy flocks of chickens. It is also possible that they may transmit roup, sore head and the larvae of different kinds of worm parasites. It is also said that sparrows and pigeons carry or transmit the virus of hog cholera on their feet.

No doubt chicken lice and mites are transmitted from farm animals to pigeons and sparrows.

Possibly pigeons cover greater areas than sparrows, hence are more dangerous.

When possible prevent sparrows and pigeons from feeding with farm animals. Some one must discover a method of eradicating sparrows; and when pigeons are raised, bred and fed on farms they should be kept to themselves.

Spray Cherry Trees for

Control of Leaf Spot

The fight against cherry leaf spot has only begun when the growers finish the application of summer strength concentrated lime-sulphur immediately after harvest, states A. Freeman Mason, extension specialist in fruit growing at the New Jersey College of Agriculture, New Brunswick. At least two additional sprays must be applied, at intervals of two weeks, if the disease is to be kept in check.

Cherry leaf spot is one of the most serious diseases attacking the sour cherry. Small brown spots appear on the leaves in midsummer. These leaves soon turn yellow and fall off, occasionally resulting in practically complete defoliation by the middle of August.

The presence of large, healthy green leaves is essential to the production of fruit buds for successive crops.

The defoliation of the cherry tree weakens the tree and makes it less able and less likely to set fruit on succeeding years.

The application of three successive sprays of concentrated lime-sulphur diluted one part to five parts of water, at intervals of two weeks, starting immediately after harvest, will control leaf spot and will enable the tree to retain its foliage until October.

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"I galloped on. From the door of the Courier burst Johnnie, the office boy—mercurial, excitable, Celtic.

"The boss is hurted—oh, the boss is hurted!" he gasped.

I rushed inside. Marcus sat at his desk, head and back hunched over his arms. There was blood on the scattered papers. And then—he moved—moved, turned round, faced me. His nose was bleeding. So was a cut over his left eye. One side of his mouth was beginning to puff, but the other smiled.

"He beat me up," said Marcus, "that dirty crook McGrath—sneaked on me and got my gun and beat me up. Didn't kill me and didn't give me a chance to kill him—just beat me up. G—d, I feel relieved!"

Judicious fertilization may be needed because the grower cannot expect apple trees to grow well or to bear regular and profitable crops unless plenty of plant food is supplied.

Apple trees require pruning and training. This is necessary to develop trees which will bear a heavy load of fruit without their limbs breaking.

It is necessary to prune and train the trees properly in order to facilitate such orchard operations as spraying and harvesting.

Take the mystery out of fruit growing. There is no hocus-pocus or black magic in fruit growing. Neither can the room be unbalanced, since the floor has all the furniture and decoration, and the walls give the effect of light-headedness. Decoratively it is just as important to have the upper part of the room interesting as the lower part. No one wants to look constantly at the floor for inspiration! The tendency, indeed, is to look at the eye level, and if there is nothing but blank wall, the effect is disconcerting and foolish, and there is less of good opportunity to see something infinitely worthwhile.

"All right," he said, "come back tomorrow." I had not expected this; and my ingenuity was taxed to invent a lie plausible enough to suit the circumstances. I created it at last—something about having to leave camp that afternoon to be gone a week.

"It's all the will give me—I have no choice!"

"I can give no more. Even then, I warn you that you are likely to be burned."

"But will you be burned? That is a thing which matters."

"No, it doesn't matter. I am already browned—scorched—withered."

Two refusal of praise is a desire to be praised twice.—La Roche-ou-could.

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Horticultural News

SUMMER PRUNING OF DWARF TREES