

# CAPTAIN JIM'S COURTSHIP

By A. E. RICE, Portland

(Continued from Last Week.)

The meaning of the whole strange proceeding flashed through Barbara's mind, and it appeared so ridiculous, so grotesquely comical that the child placed the lamp on the floor and burst out in wild laughter. Captain Jim looked at her severely, which had the effect of checking a second spasm.

"I know it," remarked the child, her eyes sparkling with merriment. "I'll just bet it's that old tree a-scapin' agin the shed."

He scowled at her. He could scarcely believe his senses. The idea of this child ridiculing his assertion.

"I tell you it be a wild beast, that's got in thar. Most likely drove down from the heights by the snow. Didn't it spring on tew me? Look here." Some faint marks showed on his face. "Just the tips of them ferocious claws tetcht me, as I sprung back."

Barbara's eyes expanded. She took up the lamp and looked at his face. He stooped low to facilitate the examination. "Well," she said, feigning astonishment, "I said as how that old tree would scratch somebody some day."

He didn't relish the way Barbara laughed at his experience. Angrily seizing a rocking chair he jammed it against the table, then turning to her he said "I should think yer ma'd be skeert some, tew be a livin' here alone."

"I should opine," replied the matter-of-fact young miss. "She wants to go away, but ain't got no rocks."

Barb., she kin a hev all the rocks she wants," said Captain Jim, with a tinge of settled determination.

"She kin?" asked the astonished child.

"She kin!" reiterated he.

"Do yer really mean it?" asked Barbara, still doubting him.

"Sartin," replied Jim.

At that moment three distinct knocks were heard on the front door.

"The's the old gal herself; I knows the taps," exclaimed the child. She placed the lamp on a chair, then unlocked and opened the front door.

Captain Jim had come prepared, anticipating the possibility of trouble with MacDonald. His imagination pictured him as a powerful, passionate individual. Had he made inquiries he would probably have discovered that MacDonald was a mere creation of Barbara's, or rather the joint creation of her ma's and Kitty's brains, for the purpose of hoodwinking him. His conscientious scruples checked any leaning toward doubt of MacDonald's existence. His belief in Barbara's story, at the time of Captain Tom's surprise party was absolute, so that when the taps sounded on the front door he fished up a pistol from his back pocket.

"Just as a precaution," partly to show MacDonald, in case it was he and not Annie, who was about to enter, that he (Jim) was armed, and partly to assure Annie, should it really be her, that he was prepared to protect her and the "chillun."

"Captain Jim here," said Annie with evident satisfaction, upon entering.

"I hurried home to welcome you." She looked about the disordered kitchen, as though astonished. "Why, what is all this about?" He flourished the pistol and frowned because he imagined that under the present circumstances it conveyed an impression of courage.

"Annie," said he, "don't you be skeert. You an the chillen be safe." She was about to laugh, but checked herself, and appearing terrified, quickly asked, "Why, what is the matter? Why are these things piled against the door? And that pistol?"

"Just a precaution, that's all my dear. There be cats in the shed," replied Jim seriously.

"Oh, Jim, you frighten me!" said Annie, and she added timidly, "are they tom cats?" Ma turned her back on Jim to conceal her effort to suppress a laugh. Captain Jim replied, "they be wild cats or cou-jars, I'm sartin, but I be a-goin' tew drive 'em off though," wiping his brow with a blue handkerchief.

"No, no, Jim," pleaded Annie, her face still averted from him. "They'll kill you. How many are there?"

"I swan thar whar two. I felt the fur when they sprung on tew me," replied the dauntless captain.

"Oh, Jim dear, are you hurt?" inquired Annie, with admirably affected concern.

"Just a few scratches, but they ain't nuthin' tew whar I'd go through fer you dear."

"I guess the old gal claw'd him," said Barbara, in an undertone. The remark was heard by ma, who cast a sharp, meaning glance at the child. Barbara understood it and added softly, "but I'm mum, I is, 'cause he's goin' to come down with the rocks."

Annie could not control herself longer, and she burst out in a fit of laughter, which she concealed from Jim by turning her face and wringing her hands as though in anguish. "What shall I do; oh, what shall I do. And my poor children." She rushed off to the bedroom and shut herself in.

Captain Jim rushed after her, but too late, the door was closed. He shouted through the keyhole, "you best be calm now, my dear."

Barbara watched the maneuver and remarked to herself, "the old gal is a-plainin' on him slick."

Jim paced the floor in an agitated manner. "It's no use; I hev got tew tackle them critters myself, an' tew onc't Barb., bring me a carvin' knife."

"Ain't got no carvin' knife. Got a bread knife." She took a knife from a small cupboard near the stove and offered it to him. He grasped it, saying, "thet'll do." He glanced at its carving dimensions, tested its stiffness and felt its edge, but his agitated mind was evidently incapable of determining its formidable character.

Barbara suggested the use of an umbrella. "What fer?" asked Jim.

"Why, to skeer them cats away," replied the surprised child. "Open it sudden like, an' they'll jest scamper off, worse than whipped monkeys."

"Peers sort o' possible," reflectively remarked Captain Jim, "give me the umbrella." Barbara handed him an old umbrella, and asked if he didn't want something to tie about his neck, adding ominously, "them cats' most allus do go fer a feller's jalar."

Jim laid the knife and pistol down on the floor, and proceeded to examine the umbrella, saying, "yes, I reckon you be right, Barb. I shud a-think so."

With the remark, "I'll git somethin'," Barbara tripped lightly into the bedroom and quickly returned with one of ma's old colored walking skirts.

"You jest wrap this 'bout yer neck, an' I'll hold the lamp."

Captain Jim wrapped the skirt about his neck, much as he would a large muffler, and feeling some confidence in his armor he said, "Barb., you was born smart, you wus."

Barbara grasped the lamp and impatiently remarked, "Air you ready? Oh, I forgot, them things must be pulled away." She replaced the lamp on the floor and removed the chairs and table, piled against the door.

Jim gripped the knife between his teeth, held the umbrella with his left hand, and pistol with his right, then said quietly, "I be ready."

At that moment ma looked out from the bedroom. The sight of Captain Jim in his war paint sent her back with screams of laughter.

Barbara angrily shouted to ma, "if you don't stop that you'll scare them cats away."

Jim looked at the child aghast. "Damned if the gal ain't a-thinkin' it be a picnic."

Barbara having pushed the barricade away, again picked up the lamp. "Now," said she, "now, when I open the door you jest bounce right in there like a bolt o' lightning. Come closer."

Jim began to realize his danger. It must be remembered that he acted from conscientious motives. It had not occurred to him that he encountered any but wild animals in the woodshed.

Barbara's ridicule seemed to him the very essence of innocence, and it had the effect of making him very determined to drive the animals away. He was also urged on by the secret desire to be regarded by Annie as a hero, yet now, at the moment he is about to carry out his determination, a quailing feeling came over him, for he said softly and quite seriously to himself, "don't reckon that I dass tackle them ferocious critters with them weepsons alone."

The child heard him and stared at him. "What, air you skeert already?" said she astonished.

Captain Jim returned the child's stare for a moment, then pulled his hat down over his eyebrows. He humped his back and bowed his head low for a rush. "Count three, Barb. I be a-goin' tew do or die fer Annie. I shud a-think so."

Barbara seized the door knob with her right hand, then slowly said, "one, two, three, go," and pushed open the door.

Jim rushed into the shed, spreading the umbrella and discharging the pistol right through it, and yelling in the most frantic manner.

When Barbara suddenly pushed open the door, an inrush of wind blew out the light. "Gracious," said she, "the lamp's blow'd out. Whew, it's cold. I'll jest git a match," and so saying, she reached out and pulled the door shut.

Finding himself in sudden darkness, Jim backed up against the outer wall and then holding the umbrella in front of him, as a shield, ducked his head under it for protection, and yelled "scat," at every thrust of his knife, which he made first on one side, then on the other as fast as possible.

In the meantime, while Barbara leisurely lit the lamp, ma came out of the bedroom and asked if Captain Jim was frightened.

"I speck he is," answered the child, "anyway he's a-hollerin' like a greased pig whar's bein' ketcht. Harken tew him."

"Bring out the light. Yap, yap!" yelled Jim, as he stabbed the air with the bread knife.

Barbara answered, "T's comin', you old hen."

"Be you a-goin' to be all night a-comin'?" again called Jim from the shed.

"Scat, yap, yap!"

Barbara opened the door slowly and entered the shed. "Pshaw, ther 'aint nuthin' here," she said.

Ma had followed the child to the door, and on seeing Captain Jim's ridiculous position, sank on a chair near the door, in a spasm of laughter.

Barbara sentimentally remarked to Jim, "must a driv' 'em out that door, I guess."

Captain Jim quickly recovered his composure and said "I jest reckon they got skeert and skunked off." He then cautiously moved to the shed door and pulled it shut. "Thar, Annie's sick tew," shutting up the umbrella. "Most like a faint-

ed. Thet little drap of brandie'll come in handy now. I shud a-think so," he then added in an undertone. "Barb., bring me the lamp." She did as requested, but he could not find the flask. He carefully scraped away the snow, looked behind the woodpile, and exclaimed, "Damned, if in ain't gone." His astonishment mingled with anger was plain. He cast a sharp, meaning look at the child. She returned his gaze and said slowly, "wot's gone?"

He smartly flung the umbrella on the woodpile, put the pistol in his pocket and proceeded to the kitchen, saying a bit sternly to Barbara, "come in."

Captain Jim at once turned to Annie who was doubled up on the chair, doing her utmost to control and conceal the wild fit of laughter that had seized her. He believed she was "scared tew fits." His stern, fixed expression of countenance relaxed, softened, and gave place to anxiety.

"My immaculate Annie," he endearingly exclaimed, "I 'low'd it wud come night a-prostratin' you." He tenderly lifted her up, carried her across the room and gently laid her on the lounge. Then thrusting his hand in his vest pocket, produced a silver dollar. "Barb., go tew the nighest drug store fer some brandy," so saying, he laid the money on the table.

Barbara replied, "must go tew First street. Aint no drug stores out this way. Want me to go now?"

"Yes," answered Captain Jim, "an' git back quick as you kin."

"All right," said the child, as she picked up the coin from the table, "I'll jest git my coat an' fly."

"Barb." exclaimed he, fixing his eye meaningly on her, "a two-legged critter played that game on me."

"Must a-bin one of them cou-jars," responded Barbara.

"Mum! understand!" cautioned Jim, at the same time he slipped a four-bit piece in her hand. "Thet's fer Christmas sweets, you an' the chillun."

Barbara smiled her sweetest and exclaimed, "all right, papa, mum air the word." She then hastened to the bedroom for her coat.

Captain Jim then removed the skirt from around his neck and laid it on a chair and placed his hat on top of it. He then placed his hand on Annie's forehead, and exclaimed, "my poor darlin'."

Annie opened her eyes, sat up and said, "Oh, Jim, I'm so glad you are safe."

He was so pleased that he at once sat beside her. "Your own Jim be alive yet, my dear."

"I was so frightened. You will not go away just yet, will you?" appealed Annie, as she again averted her face, fearing another burst of laughter.

He pressed close to her. The invitation to stay a while with this fascinating creature was rapture itself. He answered with enthusiasm: "Annie, I'd be a-stayin' with you 'till resurrection day if you'd let me. I shud a-think so." And he gently encircled her waist with his arm.

"Oh, Jim, you are so good and brave, I do not know how to thank you."

"Jest give me one and I shud think you thanked me a thousand times tew much," he replied, leaning over for a kiss.

She suspected he would attempt to snatch one, and was not deceived, but she forestalled him by artfully lifting a small phial, so that it accidentally rubbed against his nose.

He was immediately seized with a violent fit of sneezing. Upon partial recovery he said, "Annie, thet be a powerful smell."

Annie repressed a smile and explained, "only ammonia, Jim, my head aches so."

Barbara, having meanwhile entered from the bedroom, was a witness to the little checkmating move by her mother. She softly coughed.

Ma turned quickly and exclaimed in a surprised tone, "Barbara."

The child replied pertly, "you needn't 'poli-gize old gal."

Ma frowned and sharply rejoined, "Barbara, how dare you." She however, quickly altered her tone, for she saw the child was dressed to go out, and with unexcelled artfulness, said, "Why, where are you going?"

The answer appeared to astonish her, for Barbara replied stiffly, "ask dad number two," nodding toward Captain Jim.

A dead silence ensued, which was at length broken by Jim coughing. He turned and discovered Annie looking askance at him, "now, don't you be askin' any questions, dear," anticipating her speech and speaking in his most suave and affable manner. "Thet be my affair. You jest go right on, Barb., and he waived his hand for her to go."

"I'm a-movin' gov'nor," replied the child.

"I am afraid to let you go alone. Wild animals about, too," said ma, and she looked at Jim.

But Jim did not heed the hint and remained discreetly silent, with his eyes cast to the floor.

Barbara proceeded to the front door, stopped and looked back at ma, "oh, I'm not skeert any," replied the child.

"Well, hasten home as soon as possible," commanded her mother.

"All right," and Barbara passed out into the darkness.

"Be you a-feelin' better, dear?" asked Captain Jim.

"Yes, Jim, but I am in dread of that hateful MacDonald," replied Annie.

"Be he a worryin' of you much?"

"Yes, Jim," and then with a cough, added a little "Ab." "He followed me tonight, I think."

Captain Jim frowned and looked straight at the opposite wall, saying in an undertone, "be the villain that took thet drap o' brandy."

Annie instantly assumed most singular contortions.

Jim became alarmed, thinking she had taken a fit.

(To be Continued.)

## HAPPENINGS HERE IN OREGON

### FRUIT PROSPECTS IN LINN.

Prunes Will Yield Big, but Peaches and Pears are Blighted.

Fruit men report that the prune yield in Linn county this year will exceed that of any previous season. The numerous large orchards around Albany have been covered with blossoms, and now the fruit has set successfully. The weather has been just the kind needed, and nothing but a freeze could now destroy it. The young fruit is too far advanced to be injured by frosts, unless they were very heavy and continued for some time.

There will be no peaches around here. Of the fruits which may be considered a crop the yield in pears will probably be the lightest. The pear trees seem to be blighted. Early in the season the trees were covered with blossoms, but just about the time for the fruit to set the blossoms withered and died. It does not look like the work of frost, but is pronounced blight by orchardists.

Nothing but prolonged cold weather can prevent the largest fruit yield in the history of Linn county.

### HEADED TOWARDS BURNS.

Surveyors for Electric Road Start Out from Baker City.

A surveying party of 12 men under Chief Engineer Howe started from Baker city recently to survey a route for an electric railway from that place to the John Day valley and Prairie city. Major J. W. Bonta is having the survey made in the interest of the Oregon Wonder mine. The promoters say that the road will eventually penetrate Harney county as far as Burns.

### Smallpox Under Control.

For some time past the board of health of the county of Crook and city of Prineville have been issuing bulletins daily giving the facts in regard to the persons affected with smallpox in that city. Now all those having it are practically well of the disease. It has been concluded by the board that no necessity exists for the further issuance of the bulletins. The board fully believes that the town is now entirely free from the disease, having had no new cases since April 27, although there are now several cases in quarantine who were exposed prior to that time, and a few of them may yet be stricken down.

### Farm Hands Wanted.

Farm hands in Eastern Oregon are scarce and farmers are applying to employment agencies at Portland for men. There will be steady employment throughout the wheat and fruit belt for a great many more men than are there now, until after the crops are garnered.

### Marion Crops Look Well.

A heavy shower of warm rain fell in Marion county last Saturday and great good will result to all growing crops. Farmers report crops generally in an excellent condition.

### Dredges for Oregon Rivers.

The war department has awarded to the Featherstone foundry and machine company, of Chicago, a contract for building two dredges for use in Oregon rivers. They will build one dredge for the Upper Willamette and Yamhill rivers for \$25,000, and another for the Upper Columbia and Snake to cost \$22,500. Both dredges are to be ready for use within six months.

### Preparing for Log-Rolling.

The Woodmen of the World are preparing to have a big log rolling in La Grande May 18 and 19. One hundred and twenty-five candidates will be initiated into the order at that time. The program comprises a parade of fraternal societies, competitive drill for a trophy, log chopping and sawing contest. Reduced rates have been secured on the railroads.

### Brick Yard at Weston Rushed.

The Weston brickyard is working its full capacity, turning out 40,000 bricks per day, with more orders than it can fill this summer and fall. Lumber and all kinds of building material is short in this section on account of the unusual number of new houses being built at Walla Walla, Pendleton and towns in this section of Umatilla county.

### Union Depot Exhibit.

The board of trade of Dallas has taken steps to collect material for an exhibit to be forwarded to the Oregon information bureau at the Union depot in Portland. The board has contributed a good sum of money for the purpose, and the county court has contributed \$50 for the purpose of acting in concert with the board of trade.

### Offers Fine Library Building.

The ladies of the Grants Pass woman's club have succeeded in getting Mr. Carnegie to change the amount of his proposed donation for a library in that city from \$5,000 to \$10,000. The citizens felt that they would rather erect a creditable building, even though the cost of maintaining the library is greater.

### CROP PROSPECTS GOOD.

Eastern Oregon Grain Growers and Fruit Raisers are Jubilant.

So far the fruit and grain prospects for this season's crop are exceedingly good in the eastern part of the state. The backward season has kept the fruit back, so that the late frosts have not done any serious damage. Grain, especially wheat, is looking fine, save for the need of rain, which would be greatly appreciated by the dry land farmers just now.

Fruit growers have late frosts to fear always, in the immediate vicinity of Baker City, but in Pine and Eagle valleys the season is from two to four weeks ahead of the former neighborhood and late frosts, owing to the lower altitude, are not so much to be feared.

Farmers and fruitgrowers, who are prepared to irrigate, are in clover this season, because there never was such an abundance of snow in the mountains as there is this year.

### LANE COUNTY'S ROADS.

Much Labor and Money Has Made Them Finest in the State.

The matter of improvement of roads has received more attention in Lane county than in any other county in the state, and the interest which is now manifest in other counties is to a large extent attributable to the results that have attended the efforts in Lane county for years past. Observing visitors have remarked repeatedly about the condition of the Lane county roads as compared with roads in other places, and these remarks have resulted in others taking up with the work that has proven so successful.

### Clean-Up on Hydraulic Placers.

Some \$700 in gold dust and nuggets, the regular monthly clean-up of the St. Helens & Galice hydraulic placer mines, of the Galice district, was brought into Grants Pass a few days ago. These placers have enjoyed a fine run this season, and have yet several weeks of work ahead of them before their water gives out. They are building a huge reservoir and enlarging their ditches, with the intention of deriving a water supply whereby their giants can be operated the whole year through.

### Wood Supply is Short.

There is a very serious shortage in the supply of firewood in Salem, and prices are certain to be high this summer and next winter. There is a possibility of what may almost be a wood famine, for the amount of wood that has been cut is far short of the quantity that will be needed for home use. As a consequence of this condition of affairs there will be good money in the wood business for farmers who have timber they can cut.

### Eastern Oregon Normal Graduates.

The graduating class of the Weston state normal school next month will consist of 12 young ladies and gentlemen. Extensive preparations are being made for the commencement exercises. The Weston college is one of the largest, most imposing and complete school plants in the state. President French will spend his vacation campaigning for an increased scholarship for next term.

### PORTLAND MARKETS.

Wheat—Walla Walla, 70@71c; valley, 75@76c.  
Barley—Feed, \$21.50 per ton; brewing, \$23.  
Flour—Best grades, \$3.95@4.25; Graham, \$3.45@3.85.  
Millstuffs—Bran, \$19 per ton; middlings, \$24; shorts, \$19.50@20; chop, \$18.  
Oats—No. 1 white, \$1.51@1.20; gray, \$1.25@1.15 per cental.  
Hay—Timothy, \$13@13.50; clover, \$10@11; cheat, \$11@12 per ton.  
Potatoes—Best Burbanks, 50c per sack; ordinary, 25@40c per cental, growers' prices; Merced sweets, \$3@3.50 per cental.  
Poultry—Chickens, mixed, 11@12c; young, 13@14c; hens, 12c; turkeys, live, 16@17c; dressed, 20@22c; ducks, \$7.00@7.50 per dozen; geese, \$6@6.50.  
Cheese—Full cream, twins, 16½@17c; Young America, 17@17½c; factory prices, 1@1½c; less.  
Butter—Fancy creamery, 22c per pound; extras, 21c; dairy, 20@22½c; store, 16@18c.  
Eggs—16@17c per dozen.  
Hops—Choice, 18@20c per pound.  
Wool—Valley 12½@15; Eastern Oregon, 8@14; mohair, 35@36c.  
Beef—Gross, cows, 3¼@4c per pound; steers, 4¼@5c; dressed, 7¼c.  
Veal—8@8½c.  
Mutton—Gross, 7@7½c per pound; dressed, 8@9c.  
Lamb—Gross, 4c per pound; dressed, 7¼c.  
Hogs—Gross, 7@7½c per pound; dressed, 8@8½c.