

A Man for the Ages

A Story of the Builders of Democracy

By Irving Bacheller

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Samson and Sarah Taylor, with their two children, Joseph and Betsy, travel by wagon from their home in Vergennes, Vt., to the West, the land of plenty. They find a new country, the country of the Shoshone, in Idaho.

CHAPTER II.—At Niagara Falls they meet a party of mountaineers, among them a youth named Jim McNeil, who also decides to go to the Shoshone country. All of the Shoshone Indians are friendly and agree to help the newcomers. The life of a youth, Samson Taylor, in the Shoshone country is described. He is a young man of energy and courage. He is a good hunter and a good fighter. He is a good friend and a good neighbor. He is a good man in every way.

CHAPTER III.—Among the Taylor's are Samson and his young daughter, Betsy. Samson and Betsy are very fond of each other. They are very happy and contented. They are very good friends and very good neighbors. They are very good men in every way.

CHAPTER IV.—Samson decides to leave his home and go to the Shoshone country. He is a good man and a good friend. He is a good hunter and a good fighter. He is a good man in every way.

CHAPTER V.—A few days later Harry Kelo and his wife, Sarah, arrive in the Shoshone country. They are very happy and contented. They are very good friends and very good neighbors. They are very good men in every way.

CHAPTER VI.—Taylor helps Samson and his wife, Sarah, to find a good place to live. He is a good man and a good friend. He is a good hunter and a good fighter. He is a good man in every way.

CHAPTER VII.—Waiting for his arm to heal, Harry Kelo meets Samson and his wife, Sarah. They are very happy and contented. They are very good friends and very good neighbors. They are very good men in every way.

CHAPTER VIII.—Samson confesses to Harry that he has been a good man and a good friend. He is a good hunter and a good fighter. He is a good man in every way.

CHAPTER IX.

In Which Jim Kelo Makes History, While Abe and Harry and Other Good Citizens of New Salem Are Making an Effort to That End in the Indian War.

In the midst of springtime there came cheering news from the old home in Vermont—a letter to Sarah from her brother, which contained the welcome promise that he was coming to visit them and expected to be in Beardstown about the fourth of May. Samson drove across country to meet the steamer. He was at the landing when the Star of the North arrived. He saw every passenger that came ashore, and Elphadlet Biggs, leading his big bay mare, was one of them, but the expected visitor did not arrive. There would be no other steamer bringing passengers from the East for a number of days.

Samson went to a store and bought a new dress and sundry bits of founce for Sarah. He returned to New Salem with a heavy heart. Sarah stood in the open door as he drove up. "Didn't come," he said mournfully. Without a word, Sarah followed him to the barn, with the tin lantern in her hand. He gave her a hug as he got down from the wagon. He was little given to like displays of emotion. "Don't feel bad," he said. "I've given them up—I don't believe we shall ever see them again," said Sarah, as they were walking toward the door. "I think I know how the dead feel who are so soon forgotten."

"They're probably heard about the Indian scare and would expect to be massacred if they came."

"Indeed the scare, now abating, had spread through the border settlements and kept the people awake at night. Samson and other men, left in New Salem, had not to consider plans for a stockade.

"And then there's the fever an' ague," Samson added. "Sometimes I feel sorry I told 'em about it, because they'll think it worse than it is. But we've got to tell the truth if it kills us."

"Yes, we've got to tell the truth," Samson replied. "There'll be a full road coming through here one of these days and then we can all get back and forth easy. If it comes it's going to make us rich. Abe says he expects it within three or four years."

Sarah had a hot supper ready for him. As he stood warming himself by the fire she put her arms around him and gave him a little hug. "You poor, tired man," she said. "How patient and how good you are!" There was a kind of apology for this season of weakness in her look and manner. Her face seemed to say: "It's all, but I can't help it."

"I've been happy all the time, for I knew you was waiting for me," Samson remarked. "I feel rich every time I think of you and the children. Say, look here."

He untied the bundle and put the dress and founce in her lap. "Well, I want to know!" she exclaimed, as she held it up to the candlelight. "That must have cost a pretty penny."

"I don't care what it cost—it ain't half good enough—not half," said Samson. "As he sat down to his supper he said: "I see that stayer, Biggs, get off the boat with his big bay mare. There was a dark following him with another horse."

"Good land!" said Sarah. "I hope he isn't coming here. Mrs. Onstot told me today that Jim Kelo has been getting letters from him."

body could see that," Samson reflected. "She ought to be looked after pretty careful. Her parents are so taken up with shooting and fishing and books they kind of forget the girl. I wish you'd go down there tomorrow and see what's up. Jack is away, you know?"

"I will," said Sarah. It was nearly two o'clock when Samson, having fed and watered his horses, got into bed. Yet he was up before daylight, next morning, and singing a hymn of praise as he kindled the fire and filled the tea kettle and lighted his candle lantern and went out to do his chores while Sarah, partly reconciled to her new disappointment, dressed and began the work of another day. So they and Abe and Harry and others like them, each under the urge of his own ambition, spent their great strength in the building and defense of the republic and grew prematurely old. Their work began and ended in darkness and often their days were doubled by the burdens of the night. So in the reckoning of their time each year was more than one.

Sarah went down to the village in the afternoon of the next day. When Samson came in from the fields to his supper she said: "Mr. Biggs is stopping at the tavern. He brought a new silk dress and some beautiful linen for Mrs. Kelo. He tells her that Jim has made a new suit for her. Claims he has quit drinking and gone to work. Jim and her mother are terribly excited. He wants them to move to St. Louis and live on his big plantation in a house next to his—root free."

Samson knew that Biggs was the type of man who weds Virtue for her dowry. "A man's judgment is needed there," said he. "It's a fifty Jack is come. Biggs will take that girl away with him sure as shooting if we don't look out."

"Oh, I don't believe he'd do that," said Sarah. "I hope he has turned over a new leaf and become a gentleman."

"We'll see," said Samson. They saw and without much delay the background of his pretensions, for one day within the week he and Jim rode away and did not return. Soon a letter came from Jim to her mother, mailed at Beardstown. It told of their marriage in that place and said that they would be starting for St. Louis in a few hours on the Star of the North. She begged the forgiveness of her parents and declared that she was very happy.

"You had! Isn't it?" said Sarah when Mrs. Waddell, who had come out with her husband one evening to bring this news, had finished the story. "Yes, it kind of spyles the piece," said Samson. "I'm afraid for Jack Kelo—'frail it'll bust his fiddle if it don't break his heart. His wife is alone now. We must ask her to come and stay with us."

"The Athens have taken her in," said Mrs. Waddell. "That's good," said Sarah. "I'll go down there tomorrow and offer to do anything we can."

When Mr. and Mrs. Waddell had gone Sarah said: "I can't help thinking of poor Harry. He was terribly in love with her."

"Well, he'll have to get over it—that's all," said Samson. "He's young and his wound will heal."

It was well for Harry that he was out of the way of all this, and entered upon adventures which absorbed his thought. As to what was passing with him we have conclusive evidence in two letters, one from Col. Zachary Taylor, in which he says: "Harry Needles is also recommended for the most intrapud conduct as a scout and for securing information of great value. Compelled to abandon his wounded horse he swam a river under fire and under the observation of three of our officers, through whose help he got back to his command, bringing a bullet in his thigh."

With no knowledge of military service and a company of untrained men, Abe had no chance to win laurels in the campaign. His command did not get in touch with the enemy. He had his hands full maintaining a decent regard for discipline among the raw frontiersmen of his company.

When the dissatisfied volunteers were mustered out late in May, Kelo and McNeil, being sick with a stubborn fever, were declared unfit for service and sent back to New Salem as soon as they were able to ride. Abe and Harry joined Captain Lee's company of Independent Rangers and a month or so later Abe re-enlisted to serve with Captain Early, Harry being under a surgeon's care. The latter's wound was not serious and on July third he too joined Early's command.

This company was chiefly occupied in the moving of supplies and the burying of a few men who had been killed in small engagements with the enemy. It was a band of rough-looking fellows in the costume of the frontier fur and workshop—ragged, dirty and unshorn. The company was disbanded July tenth at Whitewater, Wisconsin, where that night, the horses of Harry and Abe were stolen. From that point they started on their long homeward tramp with a wounded sense of decency and justice. They felt that the Indians had been wronged, that the greed of land grabbers had brutally violated their rights. This feeling had been deepened by the massacre of the red women and children at Bad Ax.

A number of mounted men went with them and gave them a ride now and then. Some of the travelers had little to eat on the journey. Both Abe and Harry suffered from hunger and sore feet before they reached Peoria, where they bought a canoe and in the morning of a bright day started down the Illinois river.

They had a long day of comfort in its current with a good store of bread and butter and cold meat and pie. The prospect of being fifty miles nearer home before nightfall lightened their hearts and they laughed freely while Abe told of his adventures in the cam-

aign. To him it was all a wild comedy with tragic scenes dragged into it and woefully out of place. Indeed he thought it no more like war than a picnic stoking and that was the kind of thing he hated.

Harry had not heard from home since he left it. Abe had had a letter from Rutledge which gave him the news of Jim's elopement. The letter said: "I was over to Beardstown the day Kelo and McNeil got off the steamer. I brought them home with me. Kelo was bigger than his trouble. Said that the ways of youth were a part of the great plan. 'Thomas! Thomas!' he said. 'They are the teachers of wisdom and who am I that I should think myself or my daughter too good for the blessing it is written that Jesus Christ did not complain of them?'"

"Have you heard from home?" Abe asked as they paddled on. "No, a word," said Harry. "You're not expecting to meet Jim Kelo?"

"That's the best part of getting home for me," said Harry, turning with a smile. "Let her drift for a minute," said Abe. "I've got a letter from James Rutledge that I want to read to you. There's a big lesson in it for both of us—something to remember as long as we live."

Abe read the letter. Harry sat motionless. Slowly his head bent forward until his chin touched his breast. Abe said with a tender note in his voice as he folded the letter: "This man is well along in life. He hasn't youth to help him as you have. See how he takes it and she's the only child he has. There are millions of pretty girls in the world for you to choose from."

"I know it, but there's only one Jim Kelo in the world," Harry answered mournfully. "She was the one I loved."

"Yes, but you'll find another. It looks serious, but it isn't—you're so young. Hold up your head and keep going. You'll be happy again soon."

"Maybe, but I don't see how," said the boy. "There are lots of things you can't see from where you are at this present moment. There are a good many miles ahead of you, I reckon, and one thing you'll see plainly, by and by—that it's all for the best. I've suffered a lot myself but I can see now it has been a help to me. There isn't an hour of it I'd be willing to give up."

They paddled along in silence for a time. "It was my fault," said Harry presently. "I never could say the half I wanted to when she was with me. My tongue is too slow. She gave me a chance and I wasn't man enough to take it. That's all I've got to say on that subject."

Some time afterward in a letter to his father the boy wrote: "I often think of that ride down the river and the way he talked to me. It was so gentle. He was a big, powerful giant of a man who weighed over two hundred pounds, all of it bone and muscle. But under his great strength was a woman's gentleness; under the dirty, ragged clothes and the rough, brown skin grimy with dust and perspiration, was one of the cleanest souls that ever came to this world. I don't mean that he was like a minister. He could tell a story with pretty rough talk in it, but always for a purpose. He loved to look at the stars at night and the colors of the sunset and the morning dew on the meadows. I never saw a man so much in love with fun and beauty."

They reached Havana that evening and sold their canoe to a man who kept boats to rent on the river shore. They ate a hot supper at the tavern and got a ride with a farmer who was going ten miles in their direction. From his cabin some two hours later they set out afoot in the darkness.

"Going home is the end of all journeys," said Abe as they tramped along. "Did it ever occur to you that every five creature has its home? The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field and forest, the creepers in the grass, all go home. Most of them turn toward it when the day wanes. The call of home is the one voice heard and respected all the way down the line of life. And, ye know, the most wonderful and mysterious thing in nature is the power that foot animals have to go home through great distances, like the turtle that swims from the Bay of Biscay to his home off Van Diemen's Land. Somehow, coming over in a ship, he had blazed a trail through the pathless deep more than ten thousand miles long. It's the one miraculous gift—the one call that's irresistible. Don't you hear it now? I never lie down in the darkness without thinking of home when I am away."

"And it's hard to change your home when you're wanted to it," said Harry. "Yes, it's a little like dying when you pull up the roots and move. It's been hard on your folks."

This remark brought them up to the greatest of mysteries. They tramped in silence for a moment. Abe broke in upon it with these words: "I reckon there must be another home somewhere to go to after we have broke the last camp here, and a kind of a life's compass to help us find it. I reckon we'll hear the call of it as we grow older."

He stopped and took off his hat and looked up at the stars and asked: "If it isn't so I don't see why the long procession of life keeps harping on this subject of home. I think I see the point of the furniture that makes it home, but the love and peace that's in it. It's and by our home but here any more. It has moved. Our minds begin to beat about in the mid-ocean countries looking for it. Somehow we get it located—each man for himself."

For another space they hurried along without speaking. "I tell you, Harry, whatever a large number of intelligent folks have agreed upon for some generations is

—if they have been allowed to do their own thinking," said Abe. "It's about the only wisdom there is."

He had sounded the keynote of the new Democracy. So, under the lights of heaven, speaking in the silence of the night of unchangeable mysteries, they journeyed onward toward the land of plenty.

"It's as still as a graveyard," Harry whispered when they had climbed the bluff by the mid-night after midnight and were near the little village. "They're all buried in sleep," said Abe. "We'll get Rutledge up of here. He'll give us a shakedown somewhere."

His hand rap on the door of the tavern signified more than a desire for rest in the weary travelers, for just then a cycle of their lives had ended.

To Be Continued

EASTERN CIRCUS MAKES LA GRANDE

Palmer Bros. Wild Animal Circus will be in La Grande on Monday, Aug. 15th.

A new program is promised this year and the greatest educational pageant ever witnessed heads the performance.

The Palmer Bros. Wild Animal Circus Advertising car No. 2, with its twenty billboards arrived in the city today and we predict before night that every available space upon which to post those red, blue and yellow lithographs, that so delight the hearts of the young folks, will be well covered. An extra brigade of experts with automobiles will help cover the surrounding country for miles and a week later another brigade will arrive to see that none miss the chance of knowing that the Palmer Bros. World's Greatest Wild Animal Circus is coming.

The circus, like the baseball game, is an American institution and is dear to the heart of every American, be-

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A. L. Crossman

it boy or girl; man or woman, and as an American recreation receives the hearty response of every true American.

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The food supply of this organization is enormous and worthy of consideration. The supplies are purchased every twenty-four hours. The local advertising bills, feed for stock, meat for the wild animals, blacksmith supplies, auto and miscellaneous supplies all run into a grand total expense that equals the cost of running a modern city.

Then there are crowds, from the country, the crowds on the streets, the crowds at the show, all go to make the circus worth while.

It is one big holiday event and the circus pay the bills, rain or shine. Remember the big street parade free at 10:30 a. m. Doors open at 1 and 7 o'clock, performance at 2 and 8.

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Look this over if you want a farm of 310 acres to 200 acres of cleared land. 70 acres of bottom land on Pass Creek. Out-range worth thousands of dollars, handy to this farm. The farm is cut in two by the Pacific Highway. You can load your stock right here on the S. P. R. R. cars. Get your own siding at West Saffley. See this if you want a farm. See my stock of over 100 or 115 head of fine cattle, four horses, a Studolator car worth \$1500.00 to me, 20 pigs, new binder, new 14-disk 'arrow, Peoria drill, corn plow, 5 plows, mower, rake, 3-section 'arrow, 3 cream separators, 2 wagons, hack. The water system to this house and barn cost me \$1000.00. You can have your own electric lights, hot and cold water, bath. Everything just like the city, even to the hard greens. The road is hard surfaced in front of the house.

There are 18 buildings on the farm, comprising 3 residences, 4 large barns, all kinds of fruit, I took in over \$10,000.00 on this farm in 1920. There is \$17,000 worth of portable stuff on the farm right now. The farm is only one mile from the Post Office on one side, 1-1/2 miles on the other side to Post Office and stores. The climate is just fine. I never fed my cattle any hay from the time they were year olds until I sold them and got \$100.00 a head for my steers last October. Crop, stock and everything goes with the farm, \$22,000.00. Don't need the money. I will give you terms if you put up security and loan you the money. Come and see me or call me up on the phone at my farm, 12 E 31 Cottage Grove, Oregon. Address.

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