

The Red Road

A Romance of Braddock's Defeat

By Hugh Pendexter

Illustrations by
Irwin Myers

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SYNOPSIS

Impoverished by the open-handed generosity of his father, Virginia's gentleman, young Webster Brond is serving as a scout and spy for the army under General Braddock preparing for the advance on Fort Duquesne. He has just returned to Alexandria from a visit to the fort, where, posing as a Frenchman, he has secured valuable information. Braddock, bred to European warfare, fails to realize the importance of the news. Brond is sent back to Fort Duquesne, also bearing a message to George Croghan, English emissary among the Indians. Brond joins his friend and fellow scout, Round Paw, Indian chief, and they set out. On the way they fall in with a typical backwoodsman, Balsar Cromit, who joins them.

CHAPTER II—Continued

"Why didn't these two strangers stop your bloody work? At least the white man, if he be white. If George Croghan had been here, he'd 'a' stopped you quick enough."

"Mebbe so, mebbe not, Mother Cox. But Croghan's in Great cove. So it's no good talking his name, Mother Cox," bantered Cromit.

"How do you know he's in Great cove?" I demanded.

The widow eyed me with stern disapproval, but was quick to take the words from Cromit's mouth and told me:

"He was here three days ago and bound for there. Some of his dratted Indians are straying 'round the country, and he's looking 'em up. And when he ain't hunting up his Indians, he's trying to hire our men to work on Braddock's road. Let the red-coats make their own road, I say. When our men-folks go to the Ohio they don't have no road laid down for 'em to walk on. They just git up and git."

"Where is McDowell and his men? Where are the Craigs?" I asked.

"McDowell's folks is in Great cove. I told you," huskily reminded the drover.

"And the Craig brothers are on the road to Shippensburg," said the widow. "McDowell's gone to help drive out some witches."

"But he and his men haven't time to help drive out the French," I said. She eyed me blankly, and then berated me:

"Of all the numbskulls! There ain't no French near'n Fort Duquesne. They can't hurt us with Braddock's army going ag'in 'em. But witches right among us can 'spell' our cattle and send sore pains to our children. Merciful land! What good to drive the French from the Allegheny if witches can work their evil spells in our homes?"

"If it wa'n't for these beeves, I'd go back and help clean out the devil's nest," muttered the drover.

"There'll be no tormenting of poor people on the charge of witchcraft if George Croghan is in the cove," I told them.

I walked up the horse-path toward Parnal's Knob with Round Paw at my heels. We covered a quarter of a mile when a yell behind caused us to look back. Cromit was coming on the run and his legs carried him rapidly. I expected trouble and handed my rifle to Round Paw. Cromit halted and informed me:

"I ain't no call to sell my soul to the devil. I don't banker to see no witches, but I'll go with you. Just stopped to git my knife. Old Braddock will give me a new gun, but he might be stingy with his knives." And he patted a large butcher knife worn without a sheath. Did he trip and fall it would be a miracle if he escaped inflicting a severe injury on himself.

The belief in witches and wizards in western Pennsylvania and Virginia was widespread. The Old world immigrants had brought along their superstitions as well as their Bibles. Once they had ventured into the unbroken forests and made a clearing and felt the solitude closing about them like a wall they worked new fancies into the old tales. If there were werewolves in Europe, why should there not be as bad, or worse, diabolic agencies in this new land of gloomy ancient forests, weird waterfalls and wild mountains?

What with the Palatine Germans and their greswome beliefs, the Irish with their fairies, the Scotch with their gnomes and other strange hill creatures, and the English with their devotion to ghosts, it was small wonder that almost any community along the frontiers should possess those who implicitly believed in witchcraft. Nor was this delusion lacking in New England and other colonies.

As we drew clear of the hills we beheld two-score men and women grouped at the foot of a low hill on which stood a log cabin.

The door of the cabin was open but I saw none of the occupants. Nor were the people at the foot of the hill giving much heed to the cabin as we came up. Their interest was confined to a woman groveling on the grass and making a great outcry.

I pushed my way through the crowd and looked down on the young woman. She was having a fit of some kind. "What's the matter here?" I asked. "This young woman is witched, sir," cried a gray-haired woman.

"Witched by Elsie Dinwold," growled a man; and he turned to shake his clinched hand at the cabin on the hill. "But she'll witch us no more! We'll burn that nest. Fight the devil with fire! Der Hexenkopf has bred witches long enough. We've sent for John Hokes, sir. He's a rare wizard. He'll soon take the spell off this poor sufferer."

"Is George Croghan in the valley?" "Gone yesterday for Will's creek." The sufferer did not fancy any shifting of attention and renewed her screaming and kicking.

"The devil hates water. Bring me a bucketful," I commanded. I rolled up the wide sleeves of my hunting shirt as if intending to bathe my hands before attempting even a partial cure. A bucket of water was placed before me. I picked it up and dashed it over the woman. Spitting like a cat she came to a sitting posture. When she could get her breath she began calling curses down on my head.

"The devil hates cold water," I repeated. "The woman is all right now if she will keep out of the moonlight for three nights."

"Then you are a wizard and can remove spells?" eagerly asked the gray-haired woman. Others were staring at me with much respect.

"Some spells," I admitted. "Now tell me how this woman was spelled."

It seemed that Elsie Dinwold, who lived with her uncle in the cabin on Der Hexenkopf, or the Witches' Head, as the little hill was called, had laid a most malevolent trap for the woman for hobbling to her cabin for a dry shift. It consisted of a barrel and a witch snake.

The narrator was here interrupted by several, who insisted Elsie Dinwold had changed herself into a snake, or had entered the body of the snake—preferably the latter as the snake was still in the barrel and the accused was in her cabin. The victim had been induced by some magic arts to pause and look into the barrel. She beheld a large rattlesnake with Elsie Dinwold's eyes.

The barrel was pointed out to me. I walked to it and looked inside. My flesh crawled as I encountered the relentless malignity of the serpent's staring eyes.

I directed the men to kill the snake and would have remained to make sure it was done had not the appearance of a slim figure in the cabin door set the crowd into a wild uproar. The woman stepped outside and was followed by a man badly crippled, for he walked with difficulty even while using two canes. Some in the gathering began gesticulating, and then they were sweeping up the hill, a frantic mob.

"Why all this fuss over a snake in a barrel?" I asked, fearing some harm would be inflicted on the woman and the cripple.

"She is a woman of Der Hexenkopf!" accused a woman, pointing a trembling finger.

"She comes of a foul brood," excitedly explained a man.

I took time to look more closely. The woman, scarcely more than a girl, had suddenly taken alarm for the man's safety, and had interposed her slim figure between him and her accusers. Her loosened hair was blowing about her face and half-veiling her thin features. She leaned forward as she watched us, her body lithe and wiry as a boy's, her lips parted in a little feline snarl.

Knowing me to be a stranger and yearning for an impartial judge, she centered her wild gaze on me and panted:

"I'm no witch. These folks be fools! I live here alone with my uncle. He is old, a cripple with rheumatic pains. Several years ago the beastly Germans named this place Der Hexenkopf. My poor mother died from fear and sorrow. My two sisters, older'n me, were driven out of the valley. I am last of the women to live on the Witches' Head, and they won't let me live in peace."

"Keep your wicked jaws closed tight, or we'll pin 'em together," roared the red-faced man.

Didn't Have Nerve to Cook the Little Pig

A Cleveland housewife who was entertaining some very special friends from out of the city, wanted to have a dinner that would linger in their memory for some time to come. What could be nicer, she thought, than a roast suckling pig?

Accordingly the little pig was sent home from the butcher's, unwrapped and laid on the kitchen table, where her small son caught sight of it and burst into tears.

"Don't cook that dear little piggie!" he wailed, disconsolately. His mother sent him from the kitchen and picked the pig up to carry it across the room.

"In that moment," she reports, "my courage failed me. There was some-

I waved my hands for silence and requested:

"Will some of you good folks tell me what she has done besides putting the snake in the barrel?"

It was the old man, her uncle, who enlightened me.

"They say she sent a sickness to Oscar Kluck's white horse," he tremulously explained. "Oscar Kluck came here this morning early and asked me to pay four pounds for the hurt done the animal. I had no money."

"He was a good hoss, my white one. I refused four pounds for him," cried Kluck. "Now she's spoiled him—the d-d spawn!"

Some one tugged my elbow. It was Cromit. His face was weak from fear, and his voice trembled as he whispered:

"I've been looking at the white horse. I know horses. He's old and oughter be shot. He was never worth four pounds. Four shillings would be nearer." He scuttled back to the Onondaga. The cripple was speaking.

"If she confesses and promises never to do it again, shall she be left unharmed?"

"Let her say she is a witch and then leave the valley this day, never to come back, and she shan't be whipped," a man promised.

"But I can't go," wailed the girl. "Who would take care of my uncle? The dear God knows I would gladly go and never look toward this place again if my uncle could go with me!"

"Never mind me, little Elsie. You must not be whipped," groaned her uncle.

"Teach the d-d brat we can break her spells!" screamed a woman.

"She threatens us with the devil's power! She should be burned and her ashes scattered at midnight," loudly declared a man in English but speaking with a thick accent.

I interposed: "Enough. There will be no burning, nor whipping. She is scarcely more than a girl. You people talk like crazy folks."

"And who be you, mister, to come to Der Hexenkopf and say what we'll do and what we won't?" a woman fiercely demanded of me.

"I am recruiting for Braddock's army. Three pounds sterling to every man who enlists. A fine red coat and a fine new musket. This man beside me is Balsar Cromit from McDowell's mill. He has enlisted. My red friend, back there is an Onondaga Indian. He will bring an ax in his hand if I call. I have this rifle, which makes a good club. The young woman shall not be whipped."

"Horror! No whipping!" yelled Cromit, and he stretched forth his half-closed hands and began turning on his heel in search of any who might care to argue the point more intimately.

I had no intention of getting into a rough-and-tumble fight with the settlers, so I threw up the rifle and held them back. While they were huddled together the Onondaga let out a war-whoop and came charging up the hill, bounding high and swinging his ax. The women screamed and fell back; the men forgot me to cover the retreat of the women. I yelled for the Indian to halt and for the settlers to listen. When I had secured their attention I said:

"Drop back a bit and let me talk with the woman alone. This is no place for either her or her uncle. Perhaps it can be arranged for both to leave this valley."

With much grumbling and many loud threats they accepted the truce and retired some distance down the hill. Cromit and the Onondaga had no wish to draw closer to the cabin, so I went to the forlorn couple alone. The man was seated on a log, leaning forward by resting on his canes, and breathing heavily. His eyes were bulging in a fashion I did not like. The girl glared at me, unable to believe I could be a friend, yet puzzled at my defiance of her neighbors.

"You have nothing to fear from me, child," I told her.

"Child!" she bitterly repeated. "I'm an old woman. I stopped being a child when very small. My mother was pretty. Till they called her a witch her hair was as brown as mine. My father went over the mountains, where no one had been, and never came back. That was when I was a baby. My uncle lived here with us and supplied us with meat. Then they called my mother a witch, and she died."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

thing so-much like a little baby about that poor little pig that I set it down in a hurry. I realized then and there that I didn't have the nerve to cook it. Like my son, I wiped the tears out of my eyes and put the 'dear little piggie' out of my mind forever. We had roast beef for dinner."

Polar Temperatures

The fact that it is colder at the South pole than it is at the North pole has been explained by the fact that the South pole is believed to lie in the middle of a large continent and also at a higher elevation than the North Geographical pole. This would account for a lower temperature.

SHEER FROCKS AND SHEER HATS; SUMMERY STRAWS MAKE BOW



DEPARTED is the hour of glory for the "boyish" vogue. Fickle fashion has decided that women must again look feminine and lovely. The whole style stage is set for just that—a summer of picturesque and enchanting modes.

Sheer frocks, with fluttery silhouettes, big drooping brims, portrait hats, to be explicit, her raiment lace-laden, ribboned and belowered, parasols, fans, jewels and all the bewildering fancies which play to "vanity fair"—thus does fashion solve milady's "what-to-wear" problem for now and until further notice.

When it comes to the styling of pretty dainty sheer frocks, fine knife plaiting is playing a most generous part. Tiers expressed in the plaited ruffle effect are fashion's favorite treatment for skirts. If the tiers be scalloped, as here pictured, the theme is all the more fascinating.

Many women who do their own sewing are delighted with the idea of the plaited skirt. By taking their material to the plaiter and the hemstitcher, they find, at the cost of a few cents, their frock takes on that cachet, which removes the stigma of looking "homemade." With the material for the skirt plaited, the rest of the making of this dress is a simple matter which the home sewer need have no hesitancy in undertaking.

A fichu neckline like the one shown here is also suggested to the woman who makes her own clothes. This

A Fashionable Costume.

types are not going to have it all their own way.

Considering that it is summertime, and that brims are "in" again, likewise summery straws, it would seem that the world of fashion is about to experience a season of "real millinery."

There is a wonderful variety of straws registered on the immediate millinery program. At this moment it is the new linen-like smooth surfaced types which are receiving most attention. These are variously called sisal, bakou, ballbunt, and, of course, bangkoks are included. Contrasting these exotic smooth straws, is paillasson, a type of coarse weave and one which is proving very successful. Add to this list leghorn, hair, and tuscany, also soft yedda bodies, and one gets an idea of the infinite variety of straws which enter into the styling of milady's summer chapeau.

The models pictured are all of the smooth-surfaced type, the sort that women of smart fashion are wearing



Some Summery Hats.

styling is very smart and being quaintly feminine, tunes in with the summer program for soft and graceful silhouettes.

Speaking of necklines, a great deal of attention is being paid to them this season by fashionists. If not a scarf, then a capelet is often made of the same material as the dress.

Note the exquisite transparent hat which tops this frock. Real summery picturesqueness millinery, like this, is one of the exquisite joys of the present-day mode.

The much heralded and the much-hoped-for vogue of the straw hat has arrived, and it is all that fancy pictured in matter of exotic beauty and feminine charm.

The best of it is the return of summery straws brings with it a revival of brims, and brims mean the getting away from the recent almost stereotyped little hat, which for so long a time reigned supreme. With the re-appearance of brims, comes new and varied silhouettes which declare that from now on the persistent skull-cap

for sports or informal daytime occasions.

A very handsome black ballbunt is shown at the top. It has three large flat asters in coral, beige and old blue, made of narrow ribbon.

Below to the left is a sisal straw in natural color. It looks almost as if it were made of linen, although it is really straw. Note the interesting turn-back fold at the front brim.

The bangkok sailor is smartly trimmed with a band and plaitings of tri-colored ribbons.

The black manila straw to the left is trimmed with grosgrain ribbon edged with velvet. A huge chou of plaited malines forms a flower-like ornament.

The group concludes with a handsome black ballbunt straw, with an arrowlike ornament piercing the crown.

JULIA BOTTOMLEY.
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How Much Water Should Baby Get?

A Famous Authority's Rule

By Ruth Brittain



Baby specialists agree nowadays, that during the first six months, babies must have three ounces of fluid per pound of body weight daily. An eight-pound baby, for instance, needs twenty-four ounces of fluid. Later on the rule is two ounces of fluid per pound of body weight. The amount of fluid absorbed by a breast-fed baby is best determined by weighing him before and after feeding for the whole day; and it is easily calculated for the bottle-fed one. Then make up any deficiency with water.

Giving baby sufficient water often relieves his feverish, crying, upset and restless spells. If it doesn't, give him a few drops of Fletcher's Castoria. For these and other ills of babies and children such as colic, cholera, diarrhea, gas on stomach and bowels, constipation, sour stomach, loss of sleep, underweight, etc., leading physicians say there's nothing so effective. It is purely vegetable—the recipe is on the wrapper—and millions of mothers have depended on it in over thirty years of ever increasing use. It regulates baby's bowels, makes him sleep and eat right, enables him to get full nourishment from his food, so he increases in weight as he should. With each package you get a book on Motherhood worth its weight in gold.

Just a word of caution. Look for the signature of Chas. H. Fletcher on the package so you'll be sure to get the genuine. The forty-cent bottles contain thirty-five doses.

Street to Be Ballroom

Entertaining guests together and using the street as the ballroom is the plan being worked out by residents of one side of North street, London. Under the shadow of Westminster the neighbors of the small and ancient street have become well acquainted, and as their homes are too small for entertaining on a large scale, they propose to cover the pavement with an awning and throw open their respective houses, which will be used as places for sitting out. Dinner will be served in each house so that guests will have the choice of at least a dozen meals.

Tactfulness Rewarded

As a reward for their tactfulness during the great strike in Great Britain in 1923, policemen of Edinburgh, Scotland, are to have a recreation building. A fund for the purpose was raised by people of all ranks, most of whom were opposed to each other during the strike, and were kept in order by the police.

Poetry on Production Basis

Two high school boys called on William Herschell, poet of the Indianapolis News, asking him to honor their yearbook with a poetical introduction. "Why, yes, boys, I'd be glad to write a little verse or two for your annual. When do you want it?" "Oh," replied the boys, "we'll just sit here and wait for it."

Safe Guess

"How much do you think I made last year?" "About 50 per cent." "Fifty per cent of what?" "Whatever you say."



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