

The Settling of the Sage

By HAL G. EVARTS

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WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

At the Warren ranch, the "Three Bar" a stranger applied for work as a rider. Willemette Ann Warren—known to all as "Billie," the owner of the ranch. The girl's father, Cal Warren, had been the original owner. The newcomer is put to work. Cattle "rustlers" have been troubling the ranch owners. The new hand gives his name as Cal Harris. By his announcement in favor of "squatters" he incurs the enmity of a rider known as Morrow. The will made by Cal Warren stipulated that half the property should go to the son of his old friend, William Harris, under certain conditions. The new arrival is the man, and he discloses the fact to Billie. Slade, a ranchman with an unsavory reputation, visits Billie. Slade, endeavoring to embrace Billie is interrupted by Harris. While the riders are at their evening meal, far out on the range, six outsiders join them. Billie knows them to be "rustlers." To test Harris' courage the girl appoints him temporary foreman, suggesting that he order the visitors to leave. Somewhat to her surprise he does so. The men depart, making threats. Billie makes Harris permanent foreman. Catching Morrow leaving cattle were they can be stolen. Harris discharges him. Riding with Billie, a man presumably Morrow, shoots at Harris. Three Bar riders start in pursuit of Morrow. One of them, Bangs, is ambushed and killed.

CHAPTER V—Continued

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The old man was gloomy and silent, his face set in sorrowful lines as he went about his work, and it was evident that he was continually brooding over the fate of the youth he had loved.

Billie could not shake off the remembrance of the boy's adoring gaze as his eyes had followed every move she made and in some vague way she felt that she was responsible for the accident. She often rode near Rile Foster, knowing what was in his mind. He spoke but little and in common with the rest, he never once mentioned Bangs.

At the end of a week Slade rode up to the wagon as the men were working the cows gathered in the second circle of the day. He jerked his head to draw her aside out of range of Waddles' ears.

"How's the Three Bar showing up this spring?" he asked abruptly.

"Better than ever," she retorted and he caught a note of defiance in her voice.

"You're lying, Billie," he asserted calmly. "The Three Bar will show another shrinkage this year."

"How do you know?" she flashed; and the distrust of him that Harris had roused in her, lately submerged beneath the troubling thoughts of Bangs, was suddenly quickened and thrown uppermost in her mind.

"I know," he asserted. "It's my business to know everything that goes on anywhere near my range. You say you want to run the Three Bar brand yourself. There's not a man in this country that would touch a Three Bar cow if you was hooked up with me."

"And then the Three Bar would be only one out of a dozen or more Slade brands," she said.

For no reason at all she was suddenly convinced of the truth of Harris' suspicions concerning Slade. She noted that his eyes traveled from one man to the next till he had scrutinized every one that worked the herd.

"Are you looking for Morrow?" she demanded, and instantly regretted her remark. Slade's face did not change by so much as the bat of an eye and he failed to reply for a space—too long a space, she reflected—then turned to her.

"Morrow—who's he?" he asked.

"And why should I look for him?"

"He rode for you last year," she said.

"Oh! That fellow. I recall him now. Bleak-looking citizen," he said.

"And what about him?"

"You tell me," she countered.

"That new foreman of yours—the fellow that was scouting round alone for a few months—has been talking with his mouth," Slade said. "If he keeps that up I'll have to ask him to speak right out what's on his mind."

"He'll tell you," she prophesied.

"What then?"

"Then I'll kill him," the man stated.

The girl motioned to Lanky Evans and he rode across to them.

"Lanky, I want you to remember this," she said. "Slade has just promised to kill Harris. And if he does I'll spend every dollar I own seeing that he's hung for it." She turned to Slade. "You might repeat what you just told me," she suggested.

Slade looked at her steadily.

"You misunderstood me," he stated.

"I don't recall any remark to that ef-

fect or even to mentioning the name of Harris. Who is he, anyhow?"

Evans slouched easily in the saddle and twirled a smoke.

"Now let's get this straight what I'm to remember," he said. "Mr. Slade was saying that he planned to down Cal Harris the first time he caught him out alone. I heard him remark to that effect." He turned and grinned cheerfully at Slade. "That's his very words—and I'd swear to it as long as my breath held out. I'll sort of repeat it over to myself so that I can give it to the Judge word for word when the time comes."

Slade favored him with a long stare which Lanky bore with unconcern, smiling back at him pleasantly.

"I've got my little piece memorized," Evans said; "and in parting let me remark that Cal Harris will prove a new sort of a victim for you to work on. If you tie into him he'll tear down your meat-house." He turned his horse and rode back to the herd.

"I'll play your own game," the girl told Slade. "If anything happens to another man who is riding for me and I have any reason to even suspect you were at the bottom of it I'll swear that I saw you do the thing yourself. The Three Bar is the only outfit with a clean enough record to drag anything up for an airing before the courts without taking a chance. This rule of every man for himself won't hold good with me."

She moved toward the wagon and Slade kept pace with her, leading his horse.

"You're a real woman, Billie," he said. "You better throw in with a



Harris Sat on a Rock and Reviewed the Plans He Had Formulated.

real man—me—and we'll own this country. I'll run the Three Bar on ten thousand head whenever you say the word."

"I'd rather see it on half as many through my own efforts," she said.

"And some day I will."

"Some day you'll see it my way," he prophesied. "I know you better than any other man. You want an outfit of your own—and if the Three Bar gets crowded out you'll go to the man that can give you one in its place. That will be me. Some day we'll trade."

"Some day—right soon—you'll trade your present holdings for a nice little range in hell," a voice said in Slade's ear and at the same instant two huge paws were thrust from the little window of the cook-wagon and clamped on his arms above the crook of his elbows. Slade was a powerful man but he was an infant in the grip of the two great hands that raised him clear of the ground and shook him before he was slammed down on his face ten feet away by a straight-arm thrust. His deadly temper flared and the swift move for his gun was simultaneous with the twist which brought him to his feet, but his hand fell away from the butt of it as he looked into the twin muzzles of a sawed-off shotgun which menaced him from the window. The face behind the gun was the face of Waddles.

"I'm about to touch off a pound of shot if you go acting up," Waddles said. "Any more talk like you was just handing out and you'll get smeared here and there."

"Are you running the Three Bar?" Slade asked.

"Only at times, when the notion strikes me," Waddles said. "And this

is one. Whenever you've got any specific business to transact with us why come right along over and transact it—and then move on out."

Billie Warren laughed suddenly, a gurgle of sheer amusement at the sight of the most dreaded man within a hundred miles standing there under the muzzle of a shotgun, receiving instructions from the mouth of the Three Bar cook. For Slade was helpless and knew it.

"Waddles, you win," he said. "I'll be going before you change your mind."

As the man walked toward his horse which had sidled a few steps away the big cook gazed after him and fingered the riot gun regretfully.

The wagon did not move on when the men had finished working the herd, as the rest of the day had been set aside for kill-time. An hour after Slade's departure the hands were rolling in for a sleep. The girl saw Rile Foster draw apart from the rest and sit with his back against a rock. He was regarding some small object held in his hand. As he turned it around she recognized it as a boot heel and the reason for Rile's absence was clear to her. He had back-tracked the blue horse to the scene of the mishap.

She was half asleep when a voice some distance from the teepee roused her by speaking the name of Bangs.

"I've a pretty elastic conscience myself," the voice went on. "I'm not above lifting a few calves for the brand I'm riding for or any little thing like that, but this deal sort of gorges up in me. They'll never pinch it on to any man—they never do. Old Rile is brooding over it. He'll likely try to break even for Bangs."

Billie recognized the voice as Moore's and knew that one of her men, at least, had not forgotten Bangs. It was the first time an intimation that the affair was other than an accident had reached her ears.

The calf round-up was nearing the end. Two weeks would see the finish and supply the final tally. Harris sat on a rock and reviewed the plans he had formulated for the salvation of the Three Bar brand, realizing the weak spots and mapping out some special line of defense that might serve to strengthen them. In the seclusion of the wagon Waddles was carefully rereading a much-thumbed document for perhaps the hundredth time. A man had come in at daylight with the mail from Brill's and Billie Warren was within her teepee poring over her share of it. The men had finished theirs and were sleeping.

The girl read first the four letters in the same handwriting, one to mark each week she had been on the round-up. The fifth was from Judge Colton, her father's old friend, to whose hands all his affairs had been entrusted. After scanning this she read again the other four. Very soon now, in the course of a few months at the outside, she and the writer would meet away from his native environment and in the midst of her own. All ways before this had been reversed and her association with Carlos Deane had held a background of his own setting—a setting in startling contrast to her log house nestling in a desert of sage. The Deane house was a wonderful old-fashioned mansion set in a grove of century-old elms and oaks. She knew his life and now he would see her in her natural surroundings.

In a hazy sort of way she felt that some day she would listen to the plea that, in some fashion or other, was woven into every letter; but not till the Three Bar was booming and no longer required her supervision. Everything else in the world was secondary to her love for her father's brand and the anxiety of the past two years of its decline eclipsed all other issues.

Her reflections were interrupted by Harris' voice just outside her teepee. "Asleep, Billie?" he asked softly.

"No," she said. "What is it?"

"I've thrown your saddle on Pa-poose," he said. "Let's have a look around."

She assented and they rode off up the left-hand slope of the valley. A mile or so from the wagon Harris dismounted on a high point.

"Let's have a medicine chat," he offered. "I've got considerable on my mind."

She leaned against a rock and he sat cross-legged on the ground, facing her and twisting a cigarette as an aid to thought. Her head was tilted back against the rock, her eyes half-closed.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Original Necktie Was More Than Ornament

The neckties men wear today were evolved from lace thingamabobs that were worn, back in the days when men's imagination let them in for rainbow hued silk and velvet clothes, to keep the neckband of the shirt together.

What men wore in those days in lieu of a tie was called a jabot or kerchief. It was not all lace, for it was a sneeze catcher as well.

After the neckkerchief had done double duty in the names of decoration and utility, a few of the more sensitive of the young bloods whose hay fever was particularly bad resented. They began carrying these kerchiefs in their hands. The custom became popular and in no time at all the cambric and lace what's-it became a handkerchief.

When the handkerchief was finally transferred permanently from the hand to the pocket, the tie around the neck, with a single mission—to bind

decoratively—had become a fixed mode, too. Starting life as a cravat, and a broad one, it has thinned down to a slim four-in-hand and sometimes it expresses itself in a bow.—Irene Kuhn in Liberty Magazine.

Business Disaster

Robert, seven years old, out riding with his parents, passed the local drug store, which had just changed hands.

"What has happened to Mr. Brown?" he was asked.

"Oh," replied Robert casually, "he's out of business; he went bank-robbed."

The Car Is First

Many an old shoe now is half-soled because the car needs new ones.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Mansfield, England, recently sent a 20-pound gooseberry pie to Mansfield Mass., a token of good will.



MARY GRAHAM BONNER

CALLERS

Judy, her little friend who lived at the other end of the town, had come to play with her.

Judy didn't have any special name so she called herself Madam Judy when she played.

"Good-afternoon," said Madam Red Apple to Judy as she arrived.

"Good-afternoon," said Judy. "Are you very well indeed?"

"I couldn't ask for better health," replied Madam Red Apple. "I've been well now for three or four days or maybe more."

"Were you sick before that?" asked Judy, in a very kindly voice.

"No, I don't think so," said Madam Red Apple, "but I can well remember how healthy I've been feeling these past few days. None of my bad headaches you know."

"Not that I really ever have headaches," she added in a much lower voice. "Yes, I feel quite like my old self."

"Oh, I am so glad to hear it," said Judy.

"Have you been well too, Madam Judy?"

"Very well indeed, I thank you."

"Are your dear little children well?" asked Madam Red Apple.

"Yes, they are well too. I left them all at home taking naps, except Edna. I brought Edna with me."

"Do let me see Edna," said Madam Red Apple.

So Judy went back to the hall where she had left Edna with her hat and coat.

Edna was a china doll with lovely bright pink cheeks, a very red mouth and dark hair.

"She looks well and healthy," said Madam Red Apple.

"I don't have to worry about her."



"Gussie is Very Well," Said Madam Red Apple.

I'm thankful to say. How is your Gussie Goodstone?"

"Gussie is very well," said Madam Red Apple. "Last week her ear ached a little and mine did, too, but she got over it in no time at all."

"Why the very next day we were both as well as could be. We just had to be careful."

"Of course, to be sure," said Judy.

"Won't you have some tea?" asked Madam Red Apple. "You always have such delicious food at your house that mother said we could have something to eat here today."

That pleased Judy and it pleased Madam Red Apple too for she loved to entertain her friends.

So she went to her mother who had the cups and saucers all ready and poured the cambric tea into the cups.

There were thin slices of bread and butter on another plate, and pieces of sponge cake on still another.

What a delicious tea they had! How pleased Judy was with her visit.

Madam Red Apple enjoyed her guest, too, so very much, and both Edna and Gussie Goodstone got along quite beautifully.

"I am so sorry you must be going," said Madam Red Apple later, as Edna and her mother, Madam Judy, were putting on their wraps.

"I've had a lovely time," said Judy. "I'm delighted to hear that, my dear," said Madam Red Apple.

"Don't be such a stranger another time. Come around soon."

Gussie Goodstone was really very proud of her mother. She had such perfect manners.

You could hardly tell the difference between her manners and the manners of almost any grownup mother.

RIDDLES

What is it that sings and has eight legs? A quartet.

What is it that goes but never gets anywhere? A clock.

What is the strongest day? Sunday, because all of the others are "week" days.

It Dick's father is Tom's son, what relation is Dick to Tom? Tom is his grandfather.

If your uncle's sister is not your aunt, what relation would she be to you? Your mother.

When may a man's pocket be empty and yet have something in it? When it has a hole in it.

Why is a printing press like the forbidden fruit? Because from it springs a knowledge of good and evil.

Not All Groundhogs Hibernates in Winter

Although the tradition still clings, the belief that the groundhog emerges from his hole promptly on February 2 each year has been long disproved. And now comes J. M. Nelson, who has made a study of the little rodent, to tell us that many of the species do not hibernate at all. Here is his account of their habits as published in the Farm Journal:

"There are some which burrow into the soft earth along streams and store their food for the winter months. These are never seen throughout the winter. They are the real hibernators. But there also are groundhogs which make their homes in caves and sink-holes in which they store quantities of food. They may be seen most any time during the winter, when the weather is fair.

"The groundhogs along rivers often make winter homes in places which later are covered with water for days at a time. Sealed tunnels and air-chambers give protection and, while the water may be running overhead, the groundhog will be enjoying his cache of food which he was wise enough to store before he was shut off from the world."

"Lucile is the Happiest Girl"

So many mothers nowadays talk about giving their children fruit juices, as if this were a new discovery. As a matter of fact, for over fifty years, mothers have been accomplishing results far surpassing anything you can secure from home prepared fruit juices, by using pure, wholesome California Fig Syrup, which is prepared under the most exacting laboratory supervision from ripe California Figs, richest of all fruits in laxative and nourishing properties.



It's marvelous to see how bilious, weak, feverish, sallow, constipated, under-nourished children respond to its gentle influence; how their breath clears up, color flames in their cheeks, and they become sturdy, playful, energetic again. A Western mother, Mrs. H. J. Stoll, Valley P. O., Nebraska, says: "My little daughter, Roma Lucile, was constipated from babyhood. I became worried about her and decided to give her some California Fig Syrup. It stopped her constipation quick; and the way it improved her color and made her pick up made me realize how run-down she had been. She is so sturdy and well now, and always in such good humor that neighbors say she's the happiest girl in the West."

Like all good things, California Fig Syrup is imitated, but you can always get the genuine by looking for the name "California" on the carton.

Just the Thing

Woman Customer (to druggist)—My husband's nerves are that bad 'e can't seem to get ahead; 'e's lost his ambition. Do you think it would do any good to give 'im a dose of them aspirin tablets?—Boston Transcript.

Peace never chums with worry.

For Colds -



How many people you know end their colds with Bayer Aspirin! And how often you've heard of its prompt relief of sore throat or tonsillitis. No wonder millions take it for colds, neuralgia, rheumatism; and the aches and pains that go with them. The wonder is that anyone still worries through a winter without these tablets! They relieve quickly, yet have no effect whatever on the heart. Friends have told you Bayer Aspirin is marvelous; doctors have declared it harmless. Every druggist has it, with proven directions. Why not put it to the test?



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Cuticura PREPARATIONS

THE Soap, pure and fragrant, to cleanse the skin; the Ointment, antiseptic and healing, to remove pimples, rashes and irritations; and finally the Talcum, smooth and pure, to impart a pleasing fragrance to the skin.

Soap 25c. Ointment 25c. and 50c. Talcum 25c. Sample each free.

Address: "Cuticura," Dept. B6, Malden, Mass.

Cuticura Shaving Stick 25c.



Makes Life Sweeter

Children's stomachs sour, and need an anti-acid. Keep their systems sweet with Phillips Milk of Magnesia! When tongue or breath tells of acid condition—correct it with a spoonful of Phillips. Most men and women have been comforted by this universal sweetener—more mothers should invoke its aid for their children. It is a pleasant thing to take, yet neutralizes more acid than the harsher things too often employed for the purpose. No household should be without it.

PHILLIPS Milk of Magnesia

PISO'S for Coughs

Quick Relief! A pleasant, effective syrup—3c and 6c sizes. And externally, use PISO'S Throat and Chest Salve, 35c.

PARKER'S HAIR BALSAM

Restores Color and Beauty to Gray and Faded Hair. Also, \$1.00 at Drugists. Hovey's Chem. Works, Patagonia, N. Y.

FLORESTON SHAMPOO—Ideal for use in conjunction with Parker's Hair Balsam. Makes the hair soft and fluffy. 50 cents by mail or at drugists. Hovey's Chemical Works, Patagonia, N. Y.

W. N. U., PORTLAND, NO. 6-1929.

Huge Magnet

The world's largest magnet, a 120-ton monster that weighs more than many a locomotive, has recently been completed and will act as an aid in important researches in light, electricity and radioactivity.

Torrents of water cool its huge copper coil, which carries a terrific electric current of 3,000 amperes—enough to light, say 6,000 ordinary lamps. According to its designer it keeps a powerful magnetic field unabated for hours, during prolonged experiments.

Can't Be Done

"Get a new body and have your top repaired," says an advertisement. Don't you wish you might?—Houston Post-Dispatch.