

# The RANCH at the WOLVERINE

By B.M. BOWER

**SYNOPSIS.**

CHAPTER I.—Martha, low-browed, uncounted, horn of soft and speech and nature, with her shiffling husband Jase, journey over desert trail, driving four oxen and are the pioneers whose lurching wagon first fords the Wolverine stream. Jase is ready to stop at the first green spot, but Martha insists on plodding along another full day's journey. That night, through natural instinct, two of the oxen stray into a narrow gorge, and feast on the rich grasses of the cove, where they are found by Martha who recognizes the little, hidden Eden as the place of her dreams and the phenomena at once take possession. Later they are joined by another couple who are impressed with the Wolverine and also establish a home. To them is born a daughter, christened Billy Louise.

**CHAPTER II.**

**A Book, a Banquet, and a Bed.**  
**B**ILLY led the way straight to the low, dirt-roofed stable of logs and stopped with his nose against the closed door. Billy Louise herself was deceived by the whirl of snow and would have missed the stable entirely if the leadership had been hers. She patted Blue gratefully on the shoulder when she unseated him. She groped with her fingers for the wooden peg in the wall where the saddle should hang, failed to find it and so laid the saddle down against the logs and covered it with the blanket.  
 "Just turn your horse in loose," she directed the man shortly. "Blue won't fight, and I think the rest of the horses are in the other part. And come on to the house."  
 It pleased her a little to see that she obeyed her without protest, but she was not so pleased at his silence, and she led the way rather indignantly toward the winking eye which was the cabin's window.  
 At the sound of their feet on the wide doorstep her mother pulled open the door and stood fair in the light, looking out with an anxious look.  
 "Is that you, Billy Louise? Oh, ain't Peter Howling Dog with you? What makes you so terrible late, Billy Louise? Come right in, stranger. I don't know your name, but I don't need to know it. A storm like this is all the intercession a fellow needs, I guess."  
 "What about Peter?" Billy Louise asked. "Isn't he here?"  
 "No, and he ain't been since an hour or so after you left. He saddled up and rode off down the river, to the reservation, I reckon."  
 "Then the chores aren't done, I suppose?" Billy Louise went over and took a lantern down from its nail, turning up the wick so that she could light it with the candle. "Go up to the fire and thaw out," she invited the man. "We'll have supper in a few minutes."  
 Instead he reached out and took the lantern from her as soon as she had lighted it. "You go to the fire yourself," he said. "I'll do what's necessary outside."  
 "Why?" Billy Louise, her fingers still clinging to the lantern, looked up at him. He was staring down at her with that intent look she had objected to on the trail, but she saw his mouth and the little smile that hid just back of his lips. She smiled back without knowing it. "I'll have to go along, anyway. There are cows to milk, and you couldn't very well find the cow stable alone."  
 "Think not?"  
 Together they went out again into the storm they had left so eagerly. Billy Louise showed him where was the pitchfork and the hay and then did the milking while he piled full the mangers. After that they went together and turned the shivering work horses into the stable from the corral where they huddled, rumps to the storm, and the man lifted great forks of hay and carried it into their stalls, while Billy Louise held the lantern high over her head like a western liberty. They did not talk much, except when there was need for speech, but they were beginning to feel a little glow of companionship by the time they were ready to fight their way against the blizzard to the house, Billy Louise going before with the lantern, while the man followed close behind, carrying the two pails of milk that was already freezing in little crystals to the tin.  
 "I didn't quite catch your name, mister," Mrs. MacDonald said after they had begun the meal. "But take another biscuit, anyway."  
 "Warren is my name," returned the man, with that hidden smile because she had never before given him any opportunity to tell it—"Ward Warren. I've got a claim over on Mill creek."  
 Billy Louise gave a little gasp and distractedly poured two spoonfuls of sugar in her tea, although she hated it sweetened.  
 "I've got to tell you why even at the price of digression. Long ago, when Billy Louise was twelve or so and lived largely in a dream world of her own, she had one day chanced upon a paragraph in a paper that had come

from town wrapped around a package of matches. It was all about Ward Warren. The name caught her fancy, and the text of the paragraph seized upon her imagination. Until school filled her mind with other things she had built adventures without end in which Ward Warren was the central figure. Sometimes, when she rode in the hills, Ward Warren abducted her and led her into strange places, where she tried to shiver in honest dread. Often and often, however, Ward Warren was a fugitive who came to her for help. Then she would take him to a cave and hide him, perhaps, or she would mount her horse and lead him by devious ways to safety, and upon some hilltop from which she could point out the route he must follow she would bid him a touching adieu and beseech him in the impossible language of some old romancer to go and lead a blameless life.  
 "Jase has got all gone feelings now, mommie," Billy Louise remarked irrelevantly during a brief pause and relapsed into silence again. She knew that was good for at least five minutes of straight monologue with her mother in that talking mood. She finished her supper while Warren listened abstractedly to a complete biography of the Melikes and "earned all about Martha's energy and Jase's shiffliness."  
 "Ward Warren?" Billy Louise was saying to herself. "Ward Warren? There couldn't possibly be two Ward Warrens; it's such an odd name. Well!"  
 Then she went mentally over that paragraph. She wished she did not remember every single word of it, but she did. And she was afraid to look at him after that, and she wanted to dreadfully. She felt as though he belonged to her. Why, he was her old playmate! And she had saved his life hundreds of times at immense risk to hers, and he had always been her devoted slave afterward and never failed to appear at the precise moment when she was beset by Indians or robbers or something and in dire need! At that point Billy Louise started herself and the others by suddenly laughing out loud at the memory of one time when Ward Warren had killed enough Indians to fill a deep washout so that he might carry her across to the other side!  
 "Is there anything funny about Jase Melike dying, Billy Louise?" her mother asked her in a perfectly shocked tone.  
 "No. I was thinking of something else." She glanced at the man eying her so distrustfully from across the table and gurgled again. It was terribly silly, but she simply could not help seeing Ward Warren calmly filling that washout with dead Indians so that he might carry her across it in his arms.  
 The more she tried to forget that the funnier it became. She ended by leaving the table and retiring precipitately to her own tiny room in the lean-to where she buried her face as deep as it would go in a puffy pillow of wild duck feathers.  
 He, poor devil, could not be expected to know just what had amused her so. He did know that it somehow concerned himself, however. He took up his position mentally behind the wall of aloofness which stood between himself and an unfriendly world, and when Billy Louise came out later to help with the dishes he was sitting absorbed in a book.  
 The next morning the blizzard raged, so that Warren stayed as a matter of course. Peter Howling Dog had not returned, so Warren did the chores and would not let Billy Louise help with anything.  
 "I wish we could get him to stay all winter instead of that Peter Howling Dog," Mrs. MacDonald said anxiously after he had gone out. "I just know Peter's off drinking. I don't think he's a safe man to have around, Billy Louise. I didn't when you hired him. I haven't felt easy a minute with him on the place. I wish you'd hire Mr. Warren, Billy Louise. He's nice and quiet."  
 "And he's got a ranch of his own. He doesn't strike me as a man who wants a job milking two cows and carrying slop to the pigs, mommie."  
 "Well, I'd feel a lot easier if he had him instead of that breed. Only we ain't even got the breed half the time. This is the third time he's disappeared in the two months we've had him. I really think you ought to speak to Mr. Warren, Billy Louise."  
 "Speak to him yourself. You're the one that wants him," Billy Louise answered somewhat sharply. She adored her mother, but if she had to run the ranch she did wish her mother would not interfere and give advice just at the wrong time.  
 "Well, you needn't be cross about it. You know yourself that Peter can't be depended on a minute. There he went off yesterday and never fed the pigs

their noon slop, and I had to carry it out myself. And my lumbago has bothered me ever since just like it was going to give me another spell. You can't be here all the time, Billy Louise—leastways you ain't—and Peter!"  
 "Oh, good gracious, mommie! I told you to hire the man if you want him. Only Ward Warren isn't!"  
 Ward Warren pushed open the door and looked from one to the other, his eyes two question marks. "Isn't what?" he asked and shut the door behind him with the air of one who is ready for anything.  
 "Isn't the kind of man who wants to hire out to do chores," Billy Louise finished and looked at him straight. "Are you? Mommie wants to hire you."  
 "Oh, well, I was just about to ask for the job, anyway." He laughed, and the distrust left his eyes. "As a matter of fact, I was going over to Jim Larson's to hang out for the rest of the winter and get away from the loneliness of the hills. The old Turk's a pretty good friend of mine. But it looks to me as if you two needed something around that looks like a man a heap more than Jim does. I know Peter Howling Dog to a fare-you-well. You'll be all to the good if he forgets to come back. So if you'll stake me to a meal now and then and a place to sleep, I'll be glad to see you through the winter or until you get some white man to take my place." He took up the two water pails and waited, glancing from one to the other with that repressed smile which Billy Louise was beginning to look for in his face.  
 Now that matters had approached the point of decision her mother stood looking at her helplessly, waiting for her to speak. Billy Louise drew herself up primly and ended by contradicting the action. She gave him a sidelong glance which he was least prepared to withstand, though, in justice to Billy Louise, she was absolutely unconscious of its general effectiveness and twisted her lips whimsically.  
 "We'll stake you to a book, a banquet and a bed if you want to stay, Mr. Warren," she said quite soberly; "also to a pitchfork and an ax, if you like, and regular wages."  
 His eyes went to her and steadied there with the intent expression in them. "Thanks. Cut out the wages and I'll take the offer just as it stands," he told her and pulled his hat farther down on his head. "She's going to be one stormy night, lay-dees," he added in quite another tone on his way to the door. "Five o'clock by the town clock, and all-'s well!" This last in still another tone as he pushed out against the swooping wind and pulled the door shut with a slam. They heard him whistling a shrill, rollicking air on his way to the creek—at least it sounded rollicking the way he whistled it."  
 "That's 'The Old Chisholm Trail' he's whistling," Billy Louise observed under her breath, smiling reminiscently, "the very song I used to pretend he

always sang when he came down the canyon to rescue me. But of course I knew all the time he's a cowboy. It said so—"  
 The whistling broke, and he began to sing at the top of a clear, strong lunged voice an old, old trail song beloved of punchers the West over.  
 "What did you say, Billy Louise? I'm sure it's a comfort to have him here, and you see he was glad and willing—"  
 But Billy Louise was holding the door open half an inch, listening and slipping back into the child world wherein Ward Warren came singing down the canyon to rescue her. T words came gustily from the creek down the slope:  
 "No o-haps, no sicker, and a-pourin' down rain, And I swear by the Lord I'll never night-hard again, Coma to yi youpy, youpy-a, youpy-a, Coma to yi youpy, youpy-a!"  
 "Feet in the stirrups and seat in the saddle, I hung and rattled with them long-horn cattle, Coma to yi!"  
 "Do shut the door, Billy Louise! What you want to stand there like that for? And the wind freezing everything inside! I can feel a terrible draft on my feet and ankles, and you know what that leads to!"  
 So Billy Louise closed the door and laid another sider root on the coals in the fireplace while her mind was given over to dreamy speculations, and



The Whistling Broke and He Began to Sing.

## WAR SECRETARY SAYS MISTAKES MAGNIFIED

Answers Senator Chamberlain's Accusations and Explains Circumstances.

Washington.—Secretary Baker Monday replied to Senator Chamberlain's charges of inefficiency in the war department at a public hearing before the senate military committee. He conceded freely that in so great an enterprise it was impossible that there should not be "delays and short comings."  
 America, Secretary Baker stated will have an army of 500,000 in France early this year, with 1,000,000 more trained and equipped ready to follow as quickly as ships can be provided to carry them—and the outlook for ships is not unpromising.  
 While many things disclosed were impressive, the committee was frankly amazed when told that the men of 32 national guard and national army divisional camps are ready to go at call.  
 He spoke extemporaneously, beginning the details of the mammoth task of building an army of 1,500,000, an answer to such complaints of inefficiency as were cited by Senator Chamberlain in his recent speech and declaring that such instances were isolated and not general.  
**Number of Complaints Small.**  
 The secretary said when he heard of the two letters read by Senator Chamberlain concerning the treatment of sick soldiers he immediately asked Mr. Chamberlain for all the details.  
 "I want to follow those through to the very end," said he, "and find out who is responsible, in order that I can punish the guilty."  
 Although more than 1,000,000 are under arms in this country, Mr. Baker said, the number of complaints received have been relatively small, probably not more than 18. In each instance, he said, investigations have been made immediately.  
 Major-General Wood, Mr. Baker said, recommended calling out a large army although the men could not be provided at once with rifles and clothing.  
 Every soldier who needs a rifle has one, Secretary Baker said, and of a better type than if the British Enfield rifle had been adopted.  
**Pershing Against Lewis Guns.**  
 Defending the lack of Lewis machine guns, Secretary Baker reiterated that General Pershing does not want Lewis guns for the ground forces, but only for aviation.  
 Some reports, the secretary said, have not proved serious upon inquiry, while others had in which case corrections followed.  
 In the case of the body of an officer who died at an aviation training school being shipped home in a sheet, Secretary Baker said, inquiry developed that the camp was in charge of a British aviation officer who followed the British method of sending bodies home unclad, the man's clothes being shipped in a separate parcel. An American officer was then put in charge.  
**Generals Decided Adoption of Rifle.**  
 Taking up Senator Chamberlain's attack on the ordnance bureau, Mr. Baker said that men's minds differed about the types of guns to be used and about the quantity. He then disclosed that the decision to adopt the so-called rechambered Enfield rifle was reached late one night in his office at a conference attended by General Pershing, who was preparing to go to France; General Scott, chief of staff; General Bliss, assistant chief; General Crozier, chief of ordnance, and General Kuhn, then head of the war college, and several other staff officers, "experts in rifles." It was late in May or early in June.  
 "That decision made that night," Mr. Baker added, referring to the conference held at which it was decided to change the American rifle, "had the unanimous consent of every man at the conference."

## SUPPLY HEAD FOR ARMY IS NAMED

Washington.—Edward J. Stettinius of New York, was appointed surveyor general for all army supplies.  
 The outbreak of the war Mr. Stettinius has been in sole charge of the allied purchases in this country and has been responsible for the development of the production of war materials.  
 The appointment of Mr. Stettinius to the new post, which is in effect that of a munitions supervisor and director for all war department purchases, was viewed as the answer of the administration to the munitions ministry bill pending in the senate. It effects a complete consolidation of all war department supply questions under the surveyor-general, and on the face of the statement issued by Mr. Baker, Mr. Stettinius is to be backed by complete authority in his responsible position.

## BRIEF WAR NEWS

The kaiser was 59 years old Sunday. A new contingent of Portuguese troops has just been landed in France. Both France and England have recently cut down the bread ration by almost half.  
 The Bolshevik government, says an announcement from the semi-official news agency, decided to break diplomatic relations with Roumania when temporary detention of the Roumanian minister failed to stop the Roumanian offensive.  
 Philipp Scheidemann, president of the Social Democratic party in Germany, answering Chancellor von Hertling's speech in the main committee of the Reichstag, is reported to have bitterly assailed the German junkers and militarists.  
 Italy has furnished a military surprise by launching an attack of apparently considerable force on her mountain front in mid-winter. The blow comes on the Asiago plateau, where the Austro-German invaders were halted early in the winter in their effort to push down to the Italian plains west of the Brenta river.  
 Foreign Minister Trotzky, addressing the congress of councils of workmen and soldiers' delegates on the question of peace, declared the Germans had masked their real intentions with fine words, but were in reality demanding all they could get. "They thought Russia needed peace at any price," Trotzky said. "They were mistaken. We still insist on a democratic peace."  
 Count Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, is reported from Vienna on good authority, has announced to the Austrian delegations that the text of his speech on the Austrian war aims was forwarded to President Wilson before its delivery. This has caused a great sensation, according to the Cologne Gazette, which interprets it to mean that actual steps already had been taken to bring about an exchange of views between the western powers and Russia and Germany.

## CHARLES W. FULTON DEAD

Oregon Statesman Passes Away at His Portland Home.  
 Portland.—Charles W. Fulton, ex-United States senator from Oregon, prominent lawyer, and for many years an active figure in the politics of the state, died Sunday afternoon at his home, 486 Weidler street, in the 65th year of his age.  
 Mr. Fulton died as the result of illness covering a period of several months. He was a distinguished lawyer and practiced his profession here for several years, after serving his term in the United States senate. He was for many years a leading figure in the politics of the state and served four terms in the legislature.  
 Russians Control Finnish Capital.  
 Copenhagen.—The red guard has won complete control of Helsinki, capital of Finland, a Stockholm dispatch reports. It is not known whether the Finnish government officials escaped from the revolutionaries.

## COUNTRY PUT UNDER STRICTER FOOD RULE

Dealers in Wheat Flour and Bakers Limited to Percentage of 1917 Requirements.

Washington.—President Wilson has placed the country on stricter food rations.  
 In a proclamation he limited wholesalers, jobbers and retailers to 70 per cent of their 1917 wheat flour requirements and bakers to 80 per cent.  
 He called for observance of two wheatless days, Monday and Wednesday, one wheatless and one meatless meal daily, meatless Tuesday and porkless Saturday.  
 Simultaneously the food administration announced its new "Victory bread," to contain 20 per cent of cereals other than wheat, after February 24.  
 It also announced Tuesday would be a porkless day in addition to Saturday.  
 These drastic steps are necessary to provide wheat for Europe, the food administration stated. Thirty per cent of America's normal wheat consumption must be sent to our allies. Only radical cuts in the American bill of fare will provide the 15,000,000 bushels monthly which the allies require.  
 Only part of the new food regulations will be compulsory under the powers possessed by the food administration. Dealers can be checked through licensing, but the food administration freely admitted that it would depend on the patriotism of the American housewife to force observance of the new war rations.  
 "Victory" war bread, the national loaf, is expected to provide the big saving in wheat consumption.  
 Graham and whole wheat breads will be classed as victory breads, but the real war loaf will be that mixed by substituting 20 per cent of rice flour, cornmeal, potato flour, oatmeal, buckwheat flour, sweet potato flour, soybean flour and other substitutes. Retailers are ordered to sell wheat flour only with an equal amount of one of these substitutes.  
 Housewives need not mix these in their baking, though this is urged.

## DISTURBANCES IN GERMANY REPORTED

London.—What news has been permitted to pass the German censor indicates that a political hornet's nest has again been stirred up in Germany.  
 Reports of disturbances in Germany again are current in Holland, and severe outbreaks are said to have occurred in the Rhenish industrial districts.  
 A dispatch from Zurich to the Exchange Telegraph company quotes the Berlin correspondent of the Frankfurter Zeitung as saying that the Pan-Germans are "kicking up a tremendous row," and declaring that Field Marshal von Hindenburg and General von Ludendorff, dissatisfied with Chancellor Hertling's speech before the main committee of the Reichstag, are again talking of retiring.  
 Emperor William, himself, has not been spared, says the Deutsche Tages Zeitung, which styles him "the present representative" of the House of Hohenzollern, probably desiring to show by a parallel between the emperor and the crown prince that the annexationists cherish the latter as the savior of Germany at the last moment "from sinking in the abyss dug by four men—Dr. von Kuehlmann, German foreign secretary; Count von Hertling, imperial chancellor; Count Czernin, Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, and Count von Roederen, German secretary of the treasury."  
 Senator Borah Defends Wilson.  
 Baltimore, Md.—Senator William E. Borah, of Idaho, in an address to an immense Patriotic Defense League meeting in the academy of music vigorously defended President Wilson's administration and congress against what he termed "the wild criticisms" of some men who, he said, could not forget partisanship, but whose real intention was to get at the bottom of some of the mistakes that have been made in the preparations for war.

## Russians Battle With Roumanians.

Petrograd.—Serious fighting has taken place between Russians and Roumanians in the neighborhood of Galatz, near the border, according to a report received from Austrian headquarters at Brest-Litovsk.

## Britain Must Have Wheat.

Washington.—An urgent appeal was made to the United States by Great Britain for more wheat. Without it, Lord Rhonda cabled to the food administration, the allies may not have food enough to win the war.

## Dry Act Ratified by North Dakota.

Bismarck, N. D.—The senate with only two dissenting votes has concurred in the house resolution ratifying the federal prohibition amendment negated by but 12 members of the two houses.