

The Ranch at the Wolverine

By B. M. BOWER

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CHAPTER XI.

Fortune Kicks Again.

IT was past noon when Ward rode down the steep slope to the creek bank just above his cabin. He was sunk deep in that mental depression which so often follows close upon the heels of a great outburst of passion. Mechanically he twitched the reins and sent Rattler down the last shelf of bank—and he did not look up to see just where he was. Rattler was a well-trained horse, since he was Ward's. He obeyed the rein signal and stepped off a two foot bank into a nest of loose piled rocks that slid treacherously under his feet. Sure-footed, though he was, he stumbled and fell, and it was sheer instinct that took Ward's feet from the stirrups in time.

Ward sprawled among the rocks, dazed. The shock of the fall took him out of his fit of abstraction and he scrambled away from Rattler as the horse scrambled up and stood shaking before him. He tried to scramble up also.

Ward sat and stared stupidly at his left leg where, midway between his knee and his foot, it turned out at an unnatural angle. He thought resentfully that he had had enough trouble for once without having a broken leg on top of it all.

"Now this is one device of a fix!" he stated dispassionately, when pain had in a measure cooled his first anger. He looked around him like a man who is taking stock of his resources. He was not far from the cabin. He could get there by crawling. But what then?

Ward looked at Rattler, standing docilely within reach of his hand. He considered getting on—if he could, and riding—well, the nearest place was fifteen miles. And that was a good, long way from a doctor. He glanced again at the cabin and tried to study the situation impersonally. If it were some other fellow, now, what would Ward advise him to do under the circumstances?

He reached down and felt his leg gingerly. So far as he could tell it was a straight, simple break—snapped short off against a rock, he judged. He shook his head over the thought of riding fifteen miles with those broken bones grinding their edges together. And still, what else could he do?

He reached out, took the reins and led Rattler a step nearer so that he could grasp the stirrup. With his voice he held the horse quiet while he pulled himself upright upon his good leg. Then, with pain hurried, jerky movements he pulled off the saddle, glanced around him and flung it behind a buck brush. He slipped off the bridle, flung that after the saddle and gave Rattler a slap on the rump. The horse moved away and Ward stared after him with set lips. "Anyway, you can look after yourself," he said, and balanced upon his right leg while he swung around and faced the cabin. It was not far—to a man with two sound legs. A hundred yards, he judged.

Ward crawled there on his hands and one knee, dragging the broken leg after him. It was not a nice experience, but it served one good purpose—it wiped from his mind all thought of that black past wherein Buck had figured so shamefully. He had enough to think of with his present plight, without worrying over the past.

In half an hour or so Ward rested his arms upon his own doorstep and dropped his perspiring face upon them. He lay there a long while in a dead faint.

After awhile he moved, lifted his head and looked about him dully at first and then with a certain stoical acceptance of his plight. He looked into the immediate future and tried to forecast its demands upon his strength and to prepare for them. He crawled farther up on the step, reached the latch and opened the door. He crawled in, pulled himself up by the foot of his bunk and sat down weakly with his head in his hands. Like a hurt animal, he had obeyed his instinct and had crawled home.

His eyes went slowly around the cabin, measuring his resources and his needs and limitations. He pulled his one chair toward him—the chair which Buck Olney had occupied so unwillingly—and placed his left knee upon it. He managed to reach the cupboard where he kept his dishes, and took down a bottle of liniment and a box of carbolyzed vasoline which he happened to have. He was near the two big zinc water pails which he had filled that morning just to show Buck Olney how cool he was over his capture, and he bethought him that water was going to be precious in the next few weeks.

He lifted down one pail and swung it forward as far as he could and set it on the floor ahead of him. Then he swung the other pail beside it. Painfully he hitched his chair alongside, lifted the pails and set them forward again. He did that twice and got them beside his bunk. He went back and inspected the teakettle, found it half full and carried that also beside the bunk. Then he rested awhile.

Bandages! Well, there was a new flour sack hanging on a nail. He stood up, leaned and got it, and while he

was standing he reached for the cigar box, where he kept his bachelor sewing outfit—two spools of very coarse thread, some large eyed needles to carry it, an assortment of buttons and a pair of scissors. He cut the flour sack into strips and sewed the strips together; his stitches were neater than you might think.

When the bandage was long enough he rolled it as he had seen doctors do, and fished some pins out of the cigar box and laid them where he could get his fingers on them quickly. He stood up again, reached across to a box of canned milk and pried off the lid. "I'm liable to need you, too," he muttered to the rows of cans, and pulled the box close. He took Buck Olney's knife and whittled some very creditable splints from the thin boards and rummaged in his "warbag" under the bunk for handkerchiefs with which to wrap the splints.

When he had done all that he could do to prepare for the long siege of pain and helplessness ahead of him he moved along the bunk until he was sitting near the head of it with his broken leg extended before him and took a last look to make sure that everything was ready. He felt his gun at his hip, removed belt and all and threw it back



He Felt His Gun at His Hip.

upon the bed. Then he turned his head and stared, frowning, at the black butt where it protruded from the holster suggestively ready to his hand. He reached out and took the gun, turned it over and hesitated. No telling what insane impulse fever might bring upon him—and still—no telling what Buck Olney might do when he discovered that he was not in any immediate danger of hanging.

Then he removed his boots by the simple method of slipping the legs with Buck's knife, farsed his broken leg in the same manner, braced himself mentally and physically, gritted his teeth and went doggedly to work.

A man never knows just how much he can endure or what he can do until he is making his last stand in the fight for self preservation. Ward had no mind to lie there and die of blood poisoning, for instance, and broken bones do not set themselves. So, sweating and swearing with the agony of it, he set his leg and bound the splints in place and thanked the Lord it was a straight, clean break and that the flesh was not torn.

Then he dropped back upon the bed and didn't care whether he lived or not.

Followed days of fever, through which Ward lived crazily and lost count of the hours as they passed. Days when he needed good nursing and did not get so much as a drink of water except through pain and effort. Hours when he cursed Buck Olney and thought he had him bound to the chair in the cabin. Hours when he watched for him, gun in hand, through the window beside the bunk.

He had made a final trip to Hardup two weeks before and had brought back supplies for the winter. And because his pay streak of gravel bank had yielded a fair harvest he had not stinted himself on the things he liked to eat. He lay looking over the piled boxes against the farther wall and wondered if he could reach the box of crackers and drag it up beside the bunk. He was weak, and to move his leg was agony. Well, there was a dish of prunes on the window sill.

Ward ate a dozen or so, but he wanted the crackers. He leaned as far as he could from the bed, and the box was still two feet from his outstretched fingers. He lay and considered how he might bring the box within reach.

At the head of the bunk stood the case of peaches and beneath that the case of canned tomatoes, the two forming a stand for his lantern. He eyed them thoughtfully, chewing a corner of his underlip. He did not want peaches or tomatoes just then—he wanted those soda crackers.

He took Buck Olney's knife—he was finding it a most useful souvenir of the encounter—and pried off a board from the peach box. Two nails struck out through each end of the board. He leaned again from the bed, reached out with the board and caught the nails in a crack on the upper edge of the cracker box. He dragged the box toward him until it caught against a ridge in the rough board floor, when the nails bent outward and slipped away from the crack. Ward lay back, exhausted with the effort he had made and tormented with the pain in his leg.

After awhile he took the piece of board and managed to slide it under the box, lifting a corner of it over the ridge. That was hard work, harder than you would believe unless you tried

if yourself after lying three days fasting with a broken leg and a fever. He had to rest again before he took the other end of the board that had the good nails and pulled the box up beside the bunk.

In a few minutes he made another effort and pried part of the cover off the cracker box with the knife. Then he pulled out half a dozen crackers and ate them, drank half a dipper of water and felt better.

He had held himself aloof from the men of the country. He knew the Seaback riders by sight; he had talked a little with Floyd Carson two or three times and had met Seaback himself. He knew Charlie Fox in a purely casual way, as has been related, and Peter Howling dog the same.

None of these men were likely to ride out of their way to see him. And now that his mind worked rationally he had no fear of Buck Olney's vengeful return. Buck Olney, he guessed shrewdly, was extremely busy just now putting as many miles as possible between himself and that part of Idaho. Unless Billy Louise would come or send for him he would in all probability lie alone there until he was able to walk. Ward did not try to comfort himself with any delusions of hope.

As the days passed he settled himself grimly to the business of getting through the ordeal as comfortably as possible. He had food within his reach and a scant supply of water. He worked out the question of diet and of using his resources to the best advantage. He had nothing else to do and his alert mind seized upon the situation and brought it down to a fine system.

For instance, he did not open a can of fruit until the prunes were gone. Then he emptied a can of tomatoes into the bowl as a safeguard against poison poisoning from the tin, and set the empty can on the floor. During the warm part of each day he laid open the window by his bunk and lay with the fresh air fanning his face and lifting the hair from his aching temples.

He tried to eat regularly and to make the fruit juice save his water supply. Sometimes he chafed jerked venison from the bag over his head, but not very often; the salt in the meat made him drink too much. On the whole, his diet was healthful and in a measure satisfying. He did not suffer from the want of any real necessity, at any rate.

He had his few books within reach. He read a good deal to keep from thinking too much, and he tried to meet the days with philosophic calm. He might easily be a great deal worse off than he was, he frequently reminded himself.

But he was lonesome—so lonesome that there were times when life looked absolutely worthless; when the blue devils made him try his plaything and he saw Billy Louise looking scornfully upon him and loving some other man better; when he saw his name blackened by the suspicion that he was a rascal—preying upon his neighbors' cattle; when he saw Buck Olney laughing in derision of his mercy and fixing fresh evidence against him to confound him utterly.

He had all those moods, and they left their own lines upon his face. But he had one thing to hearten him, and that was the steady progress of his broken leg toward recovery. A long, tedious process it was of necessity, but as nearly as he could judge the bone was knitting together and would be straight and strong again if he did not try to hurry it too much. He tried to keep count of the weeks as they passed. When the days slid behind him until he feared he could not remember he cut a little notch on the window sill each morning with Buck's knife, with every seventh day a longer and deeper notch than the others to mark the weeks. The first three days had been so hazy that he thought them only two and marked them so, but that put him only one day out of his reckoning.

He lay there and saw snow slither past his window, driven by a whooping wind. It worried him to know that his calves were unsheltered and unfed while his long stack of hay stood untouched—unless the cattle broke down his fence and reached it. He hoped they would, but he was a thorough workman, and in his heart he knew that fence would stand.

He saw cold rains and sleet. Then there were days when he shivered under his blankets and would have given much for a cup of hot coffee; days when the water froze in the pails beside the bed—what little water was left—and he chipped off pieces of ice and sucked them to quench his thirst. Days when the tomatoes and peaches were frozen in the cans so that he chewed jerked venison and ate crackers rather than chill his stomach with the icy stuff.

Day by day the little notches and the longer ones reached farther and farther along the window sill until Ward began to foresee the time when he must start a new row. Day by day his cheek bones grew more clearly defined, his eyes bigger and more wistful. Day by day his knuckles stood up sharper when he closed his hands, and day by day nature worked upon his hurt, knitting the bones together.

(Continued next week)

NOTICE TO CREDITORS.

Notice is hereby given that NEVA J. PERKINS has been appointed administratrix of the estate of Catherine A. Perkins, deceased, by the county court of Lane county, Oregon, on the 27th day of March, 1918, and that all creditors having claims against said estate are hereby notified to present the same, duly verified as the law requires, to this administratrix at the law office of H. J. Shinn in Cottage Grove, Oregon, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice.

Date of first publication of this notice will be on the 29th day of March, 1918.

NEVA J. PERKINS, Administratrix.

GERMAN THRUST CUTS BRITISH LINE

English Withdraw to Prepared Positions When Pressure Becomes Too Strong.

London.—The long heralded German offensive on the western front was launched in a tremendous attack on the British lines on a front of about 50 miles.

The main thrust on the British right flank by the Germans was south of St. Quentin and the enemy used a division for every 2000 yards of the front, there being approximately one German division against every British battalion.

There was an admitted break in the British line in the St. Quentin region the Germans forcing their way through the defensive system and compelling a British retreat to prepared positions.

Fighting of a most desperate nature has been continuous since the initial attack.

Although they have gained most of the territory they had lost since 1916, the Germans are three or four days behind their time table.

All authorities agree that the British retirement is perfectly orderly. There is no flight, no panic. They are maintaining their alignment throughout. It is stated authoritatively that most of the losses in men and material have already been replaced.

The British are holding the gates to Albert determinedly against the Hindenburg masses.

Hindenburg is striving desperately to break through—now here, now there—unmindful of the huge gaps torn in his massed ranks by the British guns. The German stormtroops are so thick the gaps close automatically like holes in soft dough.

Simultaneously with lunges in the direction of Albert, the most furious attacks are being flung southward against a line through Pozières and the St. Gobian forest, curving outward along the road to Roye and Noyon.

Between the last named, assault followed in rapid succession.

The French and British are forcing the enemy to pay dearly for every inch of ground. Nestle was taken only after furious combats, the French resorting to bayonets, grenades and knives, fighting body to body in a death lock.

FRENCH TROOPS RELIEVE BRITISH

Paris.—The French on Saturday went to the assistance of the British and took over a sector of the battle front, the war office announces. In the region of Noyon and on the right bank of the Oise, heavy fighting with the Germans is in progress.

Entire confidence reigns that the Germans' last trump in the world battle will be overthrown when the proper moment comes. The allied military authorities were fully cognizant that the enemy's supreme effort would cause a retreat until measures could be taken to check the irruption into the allied positions.

There is every sign that the terrific attack, in which apparently some where in the neighborhood of 1,000,000 Germans of all arms are engaged, is being slackened. The resistance of the allies seems firmer and the arrival on the scene of French reserves, sent up to the southern flank, brought welcome support to the British who sustained the first powerful rush.

CITY OF PARIS BOMBARDED

Ten-Inch Missiles Are Fired From German Point 70 Miles From Paris.

Paris.—The German "monster cannon," firing 10-inch shells, which has been bombarding Paris, has been located in the forest of St. Gobain, west of Laon and exactly 122 kilometers (approximately 76 miles) from the Paris city hall.

The force of the explosion of the shells was not greater than that of many shells dropped on the city in the past from airplanes.

Although during the earlier hours of the bombardment the shells arrived at 20-minute intervals, later they began arriving every 15 minutes on the average, and some of them even fell 12 minutes apart. In military circles the belief was expressed that the Germans were using two long-distance guns.

Bolsheviki Recapture Odessa.

Moscow.—The Ukrainian Bolsheviki forces have recaptured Odessa from the teutons, after a bloody fight, according to an official telegraph agency dispatch received here.

Huns Hang Red Guards.

London.—German officers operating in Finland and the Ukraine have ordered the soldiers to take no prisoners, but to hang all Red Guards, as they are only baubles.

JOS. E. DAVIES



Joseph E. Davies, successful candidate at the primaries for the Democratic nomination for United States Senator from Wisconsin.

AMERICANS SHELL TEUTONS WITH GAS

With the American Army in France.—Hundreds of gas shells were fired by the American artillery on the Toul sector into the village of St. Baussant. The American observers reported that the work of the artillery was effective.

At the same time high explosive shells were fired into the town against batteries in the rear of the cemetery and into Sonnard Wood, where there were other enemy guns.

Our artillery dropped a number of large shells into Joli Wood, and after firing a few minutes secured direct hits on the target, causing a tremendous explosion, followed by dense columns of smoke as a big enemy munitions dump blew up. The first explosion was followed by two others less severe. Our shells also made direct hits in the enemy's first and third line trenches.

Intermittent artillery duels have been in progress both on our Toul front and in the Luneville sector, where American troops are in training.

BRIEF NEWS OF THE WAR

American forces in training in Lorraine are still holding onto the trenches northeast of Badenville which were recaptured last week. In this region our artillery is continuing to batter the German lines and a number of scouting parties, which have penetrated the German positions, report that enemy works have been considerably damaged.

The assault launched by the Germans against the British front has reopened the fighting season in the west. The German attack began with a brief but overwhelming artillery bombardment with high explosive and gas shells, at dawn on March 21 in the rolling country north of the Oise, 94 miles northeast of Paris. From Croisilles, south of Vendeville, a distance of 47 miles, the Germans concentrated this preliminary barrage in which a number of Austrian batteries participated. The German infantry divisions thereupon advanced to the attack along the flanks of the salient in front of Cambrai. Furious fighting continues on the northern flank between Croisilles, Bullecourt and Lagnicourt; on the southern, along the line Gouzeaucourt-Hargicourt-Leveguier and extending across the Crozat canal to beyond La Fere.

Battling for every point of vantage, giving ground only when overwhelmed by numbers and exacting a frightful toll of lives for every foot of ground abandoned, the British line is still intact. While the German onslaught gained ground at a number of points there was no sign of disintegration in the British forces. The largest gains made by the Germans have been west of St. Quentin, where they have captured Nestle. These points, which are at the tip of the teutonic attack, are more than 10 miles from the front as it stood March 21. The British losses have been heavy, but it is officially announced that, considering the magnitude of the struggle, they are not undue. On the other hand, the Germans have suffered terribly, even Berlin admitting that the teutonic casualties before Peronne were "comparatively heavy."

Huns Capture 30,000.

London.—The number of prisoners captured by the Germans now numbers over 30,000 and the number of guns 600, the German official statement says.

200 Americans Are German Prisoners.

Washington.—An official statement announces there are 200 Americans now prisoners in German camps.

GERMANS CLAIM A GREAT VICTORY

Cities of Peronne and Ham Captured and Booty Said to Be Enormous.

Berlin, via London.—The British in their retreat are burning French towns and villages and between the Somme and the Oise the Germans are still going forward.

Enormous quantities of booty have been taken by the Germans, according to the war office statement, which follows:

"Between the Somme and the Oise our corps are fighting their way forward. Chaunay has been taken.

"Our booty in war material is enormous.

"We have bombarded the fortress of Paris with long-distance guns.

"The Somme has been crossed at many points in our attack between Peronne and Ham."

"The Germans have captured Peronne and Ham and defeated British and American regiments brought from the southwest for a counter-attack on Chaunay.

The Germans are now standing to the north of the Somme in the middle of the former Somme battlefield.

Bapaume was captured in night fighting. Nestle was taken by storm, the statement adds.

British, Americans and French were thrown back through a pathless wooded country by way of Villequier-Aumont and La Nenville.

More than 45,000 prisoners and more than 600 guns have been captured, the statement says.

THIRD LOAN CALLS FOR THREE BILLION

Washington.—The third liberty loan, to open April 6, will be for \$3,000,000,000, and all over-subscriptions at 4 1/4 per cent interest.

Bonds of the first loan, bearing 3 1/2 per cent interest, and of the second loan at 4 per cent, may be converted into the new bonds, but those of the third loan will not be convertible into any future issue.

This announcement was made by Secretary McAdoo with the comment that "the great events now happening in France must fire the soul of every American with a new determination to furnish all the dollars and all the material resources of America that are needed to put an end to the execrable atrocities of German militarism."

In connection with the loan, the secretary plans to establish a sinking fund with which to purchase back any bonds of the third loan thrown upon the market, in order to aid in keeping the price up to par.

U. S. ENGINEERS IN BATTLE

Three Companies Known to Be on Fighting Areas in France.

Washington.—General Pershing called the war department that two regiments of American railroad engineers are attached to the British forces on the front attacked by the Germans.

Three companies of the engineers, he said, were working in the areas in which the German official statement mentioned the presence of American troops and no report has been received concerning them.

This message definitely disposed of reports that American reserves had been sent into the battle.

British Army Headquarters in France.—American engineers have again been in the throes of fierce conflict, in which they have done excellent work in transportation.

Small German Raider Caught.

A Pacific Port.—German's first attempt to outfit a raider at a west coast Mexican port with which to create havoc among Pacific coast shipping, has been frustrated. The auxiliary schooner Alexander Agassiz, 32 tons net, formerly owned and operated by the University of California in research work at sea, was captured 15 miles off Mazatlan by an American gunboat.

Big Army Urged By Wood.

Washington.—Back from a visit to the western battle front, Major-General Leonard Wood, in a confidential statement before the senate military committee, declared that allied military opinion is unanimous that the German offensive will fail, and urged a great increase—to 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 men—in America's army.

Making Big Guns Fast in America.

Washington.—An official summary of progress by the ordnance bureau's gun division showed that it "has arranged for the production of many thousand cannon and the erection and complete equipment of 10 plants for their manufacture."