

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 gentleman, young Webster Braddock 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. Braddock is sent back to Fort Duquesne, also bearing a message to George Croghan, English emissary among the Indians. Braddock 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 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 heeves, 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 hanker 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, diabolical 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 Elese 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 Elese 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 now 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 Elese 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 Elese 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 than 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.

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(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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 boss, 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 Elese. 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 buddled 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.)

Horticultural News

CODLING MOTH IS MENACE TO APPLE

The codling moth causes more apples to go to the cull pile in North Carolina than any other insect, yet proper spraying will hold this costly pest in check.

"Injury from the codling moth is caused by the larva or small pinkish worm," says C. H. Brannon, extension entomologist at North Carolina State college. "This larva passes the winter sealed in a cocoon under the bark of the tree and in cracks at the base of the tree and in the ground. There are two and sometimes three generations in this state. The moth emerges about two to three weeks after the petals fall and begins to deposit eggs when the temperature warms up in the spring. Eggs are laid on the leaves. These eggs hatch in about seven to ten days."

Mr. Brannon states that these worms first feed on the under side of the leaves but later enter the apple at the blossom end. Here they remain for 30 or 40 days and emerge through the side of the fruit. The adult moth lives only about a week after emerging. The second generation of worms generally enter the apple from the side.

The best way to kill off the first generation is to be sure that the blossom end of the apple is filled with arsenate of lead poison before it closes. The spray may be applied several weeks before the worms seek to enter the fruit. The second spray will kill those worms feeding on the under side of the leaves and those which try to enter the apple from the side, and the third is timed to poison the second generation while they are hatching in greatest numbers.

Few Realize Necessity of Plant Food and Water

We can realize the necessity of feeding the strawberry plants, when we learn that this little, high-yielding plant has a limited or small root system when compared with other fruits, therefore to gather and have the necessary plant food and water to produce a large crop of berries, its root system must necessarily be well developed. Think of the amount of water that must be gathered for it to produce its berries, not taking into consideration that larger amount necessary for its maintenance. For the same reason, plant foods as well as water, must be readily accessible and available so the limited root system can readily absorb them. All these conditions which so materially affect the development, size, and character of a strawberry crop, must necessarily be as ideal as possible if the largest yields of big, marketable berries are desired, furthermore these yields cannot be accomplished if strawberry plants are grown too thickly in the row, or the plants are dwarfed for the want of food or water during their period of development.

Lime-Sulphur Useful in Control of Red Mites

The red mite is a pest which is attracting no little attention, and more growers each year desire to plan their spray program so as to insure better control of the pest. Noticeable injury occurs in all of our leading fruit growing districts, especially in unsprayed or poorly sprayed orchards. Lime-sulphur as used in the different applications mentioned in the standard spray schedule still constitutes the chief means of control, although there is a tendency for some orchardists to make at least one application with oil in the hope that the special treatment will insure greater protection to the trees than has been secured with lime-sulphur.

Horticultural Notes

Spray schedules are now available for many of the more important insect pests of the orchard and garden.

A cross between the Chinese Bush peach and J. H. Hale, two semi-dwarf types, has resulted in progeny more vigorous than either parent.

Several kinds of oil are offered as dormant sprays for fruit trees. Better make sure you know what kind you should use before you buy.

Either dig out the old fruit trees or plan to destroy the pests that harbor in them. If your trees are worth while trim them up; cut out the dead limbs, destroy the pests, and make them producers.

Spraying is cheap insurance against insect pests attacking fruit and garden crops. It is necessary for best results that the proper insecticide be used, that it be applied in a thorough manner, and at the right time.

Early in the century practically all the fruit produced in New Jersey was transported to market by horse-drawn vehicles or by rail. Today the auto truck is not only a big factor in fruit transportation but also in the operations of fruit production.

Hare Evidently Had Good Ear for Music

The late Rev. R. Eastcote of Exeter, England, once told the story of five choristers who, one Sunday evening, were walking along the banks of the Mersey in Cheshire. After a time they sat down on the grass and began to sing an anthem. A hare passing with great swiftness toward the place where they were sitting stopped at about twenty yards distance from them.

She appeared to be highly delighted with the music, and as soon as the singers ceased returned slowly to the wood. When she had nearly reached the end of the field the choristers began to sing again.

The hare stopped, turned round, and came swiftly to the same place and remained listening in seeming rapture and delight until the singing ceased, when it returned to the woods.

Patriotic Chinese Girls

Students of the Jing Nih girls' school at Shanghai have set a new precedent in Chinese war relief work. They have organized to help the soldiers at the front and to send them gifts, including socks and cigarettes. At a recent theatrical entertainment hundreds of girls pledged themselves to procure funds and gifts for the "Nationalist boys at the front."

Cute in a Baby-Awful at Three -and it's Dangerous-

by Ruth Brittain



Thumb sucking does look sweet in a baby, but it is disgusting in the three-year-old and sometimes it hangs on until fifteen or sixteen! The habit may cause an ill-formed mouth or induce adenoids; and it always interferes with digestion. Pinning the sleeve over the hand; attaching mittens, or putting on cardboard cuffs, which prevent bending the arms at the elbows, are some of the ways to stop the habit.

Another bad habit—irregularity in bowel action—is responsible for weak bowels and constipation in babies. Give the tiny bowels an opportunity to act at regular periods each day. If they don't act at first, a little Fletcher's Castoria will soon regulate them. Every mother should keep a bottle of it handy to use in case of colic, cholera, diarrhea, gas on stomach and bowels, constipation, loss of sleep, or when baby is cross and feverish. Its gentle influence over baby's system enables him to get full nourishment from his food, helps him gain, strengthens his bowels.

Castoria is purely vegetable and harmless—the recipe is on the wrapper. Physicians have prescribed it for over 30 years. With each package, you get a valuable book on Motherhood. Look for Chas. H. Fletcher's signature on the wrapper so you'll get the genuine.

Lions at a Bargain

Lions may be bought for less than greyhounds, according to a valuation placed on wild beasts at the London zoo. Eleven are valued at only \$250 each. Tigers are worth at least double, while the Indian rhinoceros, priced at \$5,000, has the highest figure. Hippopotami are considered less valuable, one-year-old "Jimmy" being listed at \$2,000. The total valuation of all the zoo animals is nearly \$175,000.

Another Kind of Trouble

First Lady—She order take care of that cough of hers. I remember she told me once her old father died of throat trouble.

Second Lady—Ah, but his wasn't the same sort. He was hanged!

They Stay Put

"Are good husbands hard to find?" asked the sweet young thing.

"No," replied the old married woman, "a good husband spends his time around home and you always know where he is."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Not a Word

First Maid—Your fiance stutters quite a bit, doesn't he?

Second Maid—Yes; but it doesn't matter. After we are married he won't have a thing to say, anyway.

The wise worm doesn't crawl out until after the early bird has eaten his breakfast.



DON'T suffer headaches, or any of those pains that Bayer Aspirin can end in a hurry! Physicians prescribe it, and approve its free use, for it does not affect the heart. Every druggist has it, but don't fail to ask the druggist for Bayer. And don't take any but the box that says Bayer, with the word genuine printed in red!



Aspirin is the trade mark of Bayer Manufacture of Monacettecidester of Salicylicacid

Chickens Rapidly "Picked"

Machine-picked chickens may be the next innovation in the market if a machine from England is widely adopted. By this machine the feathers are plucked by suction, pin feathers and all, at the rate of a bird a minute. The feathers are drawn into a fan-shaped contraption and stuffed dry into a bag. The fan makes 500 revolutions a minute, sufficient to strip an ordinary fryer. It takes about 700 whirlings to pick an old rooster or a hen past its laying prime.

Not one person in 1,000 can describe interestingly a movie he has seen. We've quit trying.

"AS NECESSARY AS BREAD"

Mrs. Skahan's Opinion of Pinkham's Compound

Saugus Centre, Mass.—"I have taken 10 bottles of Lydia E. Pinkham's Compound and would no more be without a bottle in the house than I would be without bread. It has made a new woman of me. I used to be so cross with my husband when I was suffering that I don't know how he stood me. Now I am cheerful and strong and feel younger than I did ten years ago when my troubles began."—MRS. JOHN SKAHAN, 20 Emory St., Saugus Centre, Mass.



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POISON IVY

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Fresh Youthful Skin And Live Healthy Hair

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