

The Homesteader

Copyright, All Rights Reserved

By
ROBERT J. C. STEAD

Author of "The Cow Puncher," Etc.

OUT INTO THE NIGHT.

Synopsis.—Dissatisfied because of the seemingly barren outlook of his position as a school teacher in a Canadian town, John Harris determines to leave it, take up land in Manitoba and become a "homesteader." Mary, the girl whom he loves, declares she will accompany him. They are married and set out for the unknown country. They select a homestead, build a home and put in a crop. Returning from selling his first crop, Harris finds his wife almost insane from loneliness and with immediate expectation of becoming a mother. A son is born and they name him Allan. The story now jumps forward 25 years. Harris is prosperous and all for getting rich. Mary is toll-worn and saddened over the change in her husband. Allan works on the farm. Beulah, the pretty daughter, is rebellious at the shut-in farm life. Jim Travers is an unusual hired man and he is secretly in love with Beulah. Harris and Allan clash with Jim and he leaves

CHAPTER VI—Continued.

Harris was accustomed to his daughter's frankness, and as a rule paid little regard to it. He was willing enough to be flayed, in moderation, by her keen tongue; in fact, he took a secret delight in her unrestrained sallies, but that was different from defiance.

"We'll talk about that some other time, too," he said. "And you'll milk the cows tonight as usual."

Beulah opened her lips as though to answer, but closed them again, arose, and walked out of the kitchen. For her the controversy was over; the die was cast. Her nature admitted of any amount of disputation up to a certain point, but when the irresistible force crashed into the immovable object she wasted no wind on words. With her war was war.

Harris finished his meal with little relish. His daughter was very, very much to him, and an open rupture with her was among the last things to be imagined. . . . Still, she must learn that the liberty of speech he allowed her did not imply equal liberty of action. . . . His wife, too, had behaved most incredibly. After all, perhaps he had been hasty with Jim. No doubt he would meet the boy in Plainville or somewhere in the district before long, and he would then



"Too Far," She Agreed. "But You Started It; Let's See You Stop It."

have a frank little talk with him. And he would say nothing more of the incident to his wife. He was beginning to feel almost amiable again when recollection of Beulah, and the regard which she was evidently cultivating toward Travers, engulfed his returning spirits like a cold douche. It must not come to that, whatever happened.

"You better go over to Grant's, Allan, if you're goin'," he said as he left the table. "I've some shears to change that'll keep me busy until you get back."

An hour later Allan returned, accompanied by George Grant, and operations in the field were resumed. Father and son were both anxious to make up for lost time, and the work that night long after their usual hour for quitting. It was quite dark when the two men, tired and dusty,

came in at the close of their long day's labor.

The table was set for two. "We have had our supper," Mary explained. "We thought we wouldn't wait any longer."

"That's all right," said Harris, trying to be genial. But he found it harder than he had supposed. He was very tired, and somewhat embarrassed following the unpleasantness at noon. He had no thought of apologizing, either to wife or daughter; on the contrary, he intended to make it quite clear to them that they had been at fault in the matter, but he would take his time about reopening the subject.

When supper was finished Allan went to the stables to give final attention to the horses—a duty that had always fallen to Jim—and Harris, after a few minutes' quiet rest in his chair, began to remove his boots.

"The cows are not milked, John," said his wife. She tried to speak in a matter-of-fact way, but the tremor in her voice betrayed the import of the simple statement.

Harris paused with a boot half unlaced. While his recollection of Beulah's defiance was clear enough, it had not occurred to him that the girl actually would stand by her guns. He had told her that she would milk the cows tonight as usual, and he had assumed, as a matter of course, that she would do so. He was not accustomed to being disobeyed.

"Where's Beulah?" he demanded.

"I guess she's in her room."

Harris laced up his boot. Then he started upstairs.

"Don't be too hard on her, John," urged his wife, with a little catch in her voice.

"I won't be too hard on anybody," he replied curtly. "It's a strange thing you wouldn't see that she did as she was told. I suppose I have to plug away in the field until dark and then come in and do another half-day's work because my women folk are too lazy or stubborn to do 't themselves."

If this outburst was intended to crush Mary Harris it had a very different effect. She seemed to straighten up under the attack; the color came back to her cheeks, and her eyes were bright and defiant.

"John Harris," she said. "You know better than to say that your women folk are either lazy or stubborn, but there's a point where imposition, even the imposition of a husband, has to stop, and you've reached that point. You didn't have to stay in the field until dark. There's another day coming and the plowing'll keep. It isn't like the harvest. 'T was just your own contrariness that kept you there. You fired the best man you ever had today, in a fit of temper, and now you're trying to take it out on us."

Harris looked at her for a moment; then, without speaking, he continued up the stairs. He felt that he was being very unfairly used, but he had no intention of shrinking from his duty as a husband and father, even if its discharge should bring pain to all of them.

He found Beulah in her room, ostensibly reading.

"Why are the cows not milked?" he demanded.

"I thought I made it clear to you at noon that they wouldn't be milked by me," she answered, "and there didn't seem to be anybody else hankering for the job."

"Beulah," he said, trying to speak calmly, "don't you think this nonsense has gone far enough?"

"Too far," she agreed. "But you started it—let's see you stop it."

"Beulah," he said, with rising anger, "I won't allow you to talk to me like that. Remember I'm your father, and you've a right to do as you're told. Haven't I given you everything—given you a home, and all that, and are you goin' to defy me in my own house?"

"I don't want to defy you," she answered, "but if you're going to let your temper run away with you, you can put on the brakes yourself. And as for all you've done for me—maybe I'm ungrateful, but it doesn't look half so big from my side of the fence."

"Well, what more do you want?" he demanded.

"For one thing, I wouldn't mind having a father."

"What do you mean? Ain't I your father?"

"No!" she cried. "No! No! There's no father here. You're just the boss—the foreman on the farm. You board with mother and me. We see you at meal-times. We wouldn't see you then if you didn't have to make use of us in that way. If you have a spare hour you go to town. You're always so busy, busy, with your little things, that you have no time for big things. I'd like to

see you think about living instead of working. And we're not living—not really living, you know—we're just existing. Don't you see what I mean? We're living all in the flesh, like an animal. When you feed the horses and put them under shelter you can't do anything more for them. But when you feed and shelter your daughter you have only half provided for her, and it's the other half, the starving half, that refuses to starve any longer."

"I'm not kickin' on religion, if t a't's what you mean, Beulah," he said. "You get goin' to church as often as you like, and—"

"Oh, it's not religion," she protested. "At least, it's not just going to church; and things like that, although I guess it is a more real religion, if we just understood. What are we here for, anyway? What's the answer?"

"Well, I'm here just now to tell you those cows are to be milked before—"

"Yes, dodge it! You're dodgin' that question so long you daren't face it. But there must be an answer some-



With a Light Cloak About Her Shoulders and a Suitcase in Her Hand, Slipped Quietly From the Front Stairs and Out Into the Night.

where, or there wouldn't be the question. There's Rites, now; he doesn't know there is such a question. He takes it for granted we're here to grab money. And then, there's the Grants. They know there is such a question, and I'm sure that to some extent they've answered it. You know, I like them, but I never go into their house that I don't feel out of place. I feel like they have something that I haven't—something that makes them very rich and shows me how very poor I am. And it's embarrassing to feel poor among rich folks. Why, tonight George Grant stopped on his way home to say a word to me, and what do you suppose he said? Nothing about the weather, or the neighbors, or the crops. He asked me what I thought of the Venezuelan treaty. Of course I'd never heard of such a thing, but I said I hoped it would be for the best, or something like that, but I was ashamed—so ashamed he might have seen it in the dusk. You see, they're living—and we're existing."

If Beulah honed by such argument to persuade her father, or even to influence him, she was doomed to disappointment. "You're talking a good deal of nonsense, Beulah," he said. "When you get older these questions won't worry you. In the meantime, your duty is to do as you're told. Right now that means milk the cows. I'll give you five minutes to get started."

Harris went to his room. A little later Beulah, with a light cloak about her shoulders and a suitcase in her hand, slipped quietly down the front stairs and out into the night.

CHAPTER VII.

Crumbling Castles.

At the foot of the garden Beulah paused irresolute, the suitcase swinging gently in her hand. She had made no plans for the decisive step events of the day had forced upon her, but the step itself she felt to be inevitable. She was not in love with Jim Travers; she had turned the whole question over in her mind that afternoon, weighing it with judicial impartiality supposing all manner of situations to try out her own emotions, and she had

come to the conclusion that Travers was merely an incident in her life, a somewhat inspiring incident, perhaps, but an incident none the less. The real thing—the vital matter which demanded some exceptional protest—was the narrow and ever narrowing horizon of her father, a horizon bounded only by material gain. Against this narrowing band of outlook her vigorous spirit, with its dumb, insistent stretchings for the infinite, rebelled. It was not a matter of filial duty; it was not a matter of love; to her it was a matter of existence. She saw her ideals dimly enough at best, and she would burst every cord of affection and convention rather than allow them to be submerged in the gray, surrounding murk of materialism.

Perhaps it was custom and the subtle pullings of association that drew her feet down the path across the bench to the edge of the stream that gurgled gently in the still night. The stars blinked a strange challenge from the sky, as though to say, "Here is the tree of knowledge, if you dare to drink thereof."

At length she turned her back on the stream and took the path past the house and down to the corral, where she paused, her ear arrested by the steady drone of milking. A lantern sitting on the black earth cast a little circle of light and threw a docile cow in dreadful silhouette against the barn. And by that dim light Beulah discerned the bent form of her mother, milking.

"I can't tell you where Beulah is, John. She left here last night."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

TREASURES OF BUDDHIST ART

Marvelous Collection Preserved for Centuries in the Temple of Daigoji in Japan.

Daigoji, the head temple of the Ono school of the Shingon sect of Buddhism in Japan, situated not far from Kyoto, in the Uji district, suggests by its name its relation to Emperor Daigo, who reigned from 898 to 930. Its name originated from the fact that its founder, Abbot Shoho, came to this village and exclaimed after he drank from an old farmer's spring: "The water was as good as daigo!" It is a Buddhist word meaning an unctuous rich liquor. The posthumous title of the emperor must have originated from his devotion to the temple and its founder, as well as from his burial in the temple grounds.

Rare specimens of Buddhist art and literature, carefully preserved as the temple treasures of Daigoji, and exhibited recently at Tokio, through the efforts of Dr. Katsumi Koroita of the editorial staff of historiographical materials in Tokio Imperial university, bring the story of the temple down to 300 years ago. Among the peculiar paintings in the temple are the "flower viewing screens," pictures of horse training and a collection of fan paintings said to be rare treasures. In the literary collection there is an illustrated copy of the third roll of "Scripture of Cause and Effect of the Past and the Present." It was made nearly 1,200 years ago, but the colors in the picture are as fresh as the present day pigments. This scroll is considered the oldest that extant in Japan of colored art on paper.

Economy.

Melville Boggs, generally reputed to be the best informed person in the village concerning the affairs of his neighbors, was telling a friend, and recently returned after an absence of some years, of the troubles of Susan Smith and Peter Jones. "Susie, she has 'broken off her engagement with Peter," he said. "They's been goin' together for about eight years, durin' which time she has been inculcatin' into Peter, as you might say, the beauties of economy. But when she discovered, just lately, that he had learnt his lesson so well that he had saved up 217 pairs of socks for her to darn after the wedding she appeared to conclude that he had taken her advice a little too literally, an' broke off the match."

Calmness.

A restless, bright-eyed urchin was scrambling up on the back of the railway seat, and reaching out his arms and legs in all directions. Every few minutes he knocked off the tall silk hat of the fat man in the seat beyond, and presently an umbrella came tumbling down from the upper rack, nearly brainning the fat man. When the latter could stand the strain no longer, he turned to the occupant of the seat behind and said emphatically: "Madam, will you kindly look after your son? He is extremely annoying." The lady, already burdened with three other mischievous imps, said in a most casual voice: "Johnny, sit down. The gentleman's nervous."—Judge.

The first tenement house in New York city was built in 1833. It was a four-story building and stood in what is now Corlears park.

BOY SCOUTS

(Conducted by National Council of the Boy Scouts of America.)

THE HAPPY SCOUTMASTER

The National Council of the Boy Scouts of America, at its eleventh annual meeting, held in New York City a short time ago, adopted a resolution expressing heartfelt appreciation of the loyal and self-sacrificing service of the volunteer workers in the movement, throughout the nation. This is a recognition due from all of us who have sons or who are interested in the welfare of boys, all of us, who understand that what our youth is being taught today, will determine what our America will be tomorrow.

In an article in a recent issue of scouting appears this fine commentary on the happy scoutmaster who "valiantly serves his country in time of peace. Placing duties above rights, service above self, he fares forth to win for his country the heart of youth, the hope of the world.

"The happy scoutmaster perceives that what makes his efforts worth while is not only that through wholesome play he may save a boy from the error of his way, but also that life being real and earnest and practical a boy must learn to labor, and it is the happy scoutmaster who kindles within the heart of youth the fires of ambition—passion to make the most of himself, the will to work, to serve his country and to honor and reverence his God.

"The happy scoutmaster finds the motive power of his own life in the scout oath and law and counts that day lost wherein no good turn is done. Nobly inspired, his boys follow the same vision splendid and like knights of old find the Holy Grail in helping other people at all times. He is, indeed, the happy scoutmaster; when so prepared, he wins the confidence of the boy and offers opportunity for youth to prove how gloriously it will do the right wherever there is such a man to lead.

"Many serve their country valiantly. Some have lived, and given much; others have died, and given all. But who more than the happy scoutmaster for his country's sake lays down his life? Having one life to give to his country, he gives it freely that youth may be served.

"While others concern themselves with seeming weightier matters, the happy scoutmaster lays foundations that make safe the future building of democracy."

THERE WITH "FIRST AID."



Boy Scouts Know "First Aid" and Are Useful When Accident Comes to Man or Beast.

SPEED.

An Englishman, recently arrived in the U. S. A., at New York city, asked a smart looking newsboy to show him about the city.

When they came to the American Surety company building, the Englishman asked: "Pray, my lad, how long did it take to build that building?" "About two years," the boy replied. "My, that was quite long, we could build it in a year." Next they came to the National Park bank building. "How long did it take to build that building?" the Englishman asked. "About a year," was the answer. "That was a long time. We English would have built it in six months." Then they came to the Woolworth building. "And how long were you building this wonderful structure?" "I don't know sir," replied the boy. "It wasn't there last night."—Boys' Life.