

The Homesteader

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By
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CHAPTER X—Continued.

Harris met his son on the platform. "What d'ye think, Dad? A letter from Riles." He drew the crumpled missive from its envelope. "Looks like a laundry ticket," he said, "but I figured it out, and he wants you to sell the farm and buy a coal mine."

Harris read the letter through, not without some difficulty. At first he was inclined to laugh, but the earnestness of Riles impressed him through the makeshift English.

"What d'ye think of it, Dad?" said the younger man, at length. "Of course we don't know anything about coal, but then—"

"It must look good to Riles or he wouldn't want to put any money in it," commented Harris, after a few minutes' reflection. "Riles is pretty cautious. He's got money in the bank drawn three per cent; he's afraid to lend it out among the farmers. And he ain't easy talk'd into a new scheme, either."

"D'ye suppose we could sell the farm?" The idea of a big, profitable speculation suddenly appealed to Allan with much greater force than the prospect of three years on a meadow. He knew that vast sums of money had been made, and made quickly, in the Far West, but he had never before thought of himself or his father sharing in this sudden wealth.

"D'ye suppose we could sell the farm?" he repeated. It began to seem that the short-cut to wealth hinged on the possibility of selling the farm.

"I guess we could sell it, all right," said Harris. "Maybe not for that much cash, but we can get cash on the agreement, if we need it." He was not a man to act precipitately, or risk all on a single throw unless he were very, very sure of the result.

"Of course, maybe it's all right," he continued. "But it's a good thing to buy your buggy before you throw away your cart. If this thing's as good as Riles says, it will keep until we can see it for ourselves. If it don't, something else'll turn up."

"Yes," said Allan, "but if we find it's all right when we get there, and we've only a few measly hundred dollars along, we'll want to kick ourselves all the way home. Lots of fellows are making big money just because they had some capital to work with, and why shouldn't we do it, too? Couldn't you fix it some way to get the money without coming back, if everything looks all right? That'd save time and expense, too."

"There's something in that. There's time to see Bradshaw yet before the train comes. We'll kind o' leave it standin' in his hands."

They made a hurried call on Bradshaw, and asked him to be on the lookout for a buyer for the farm.

"Mind, I'm not actually puttin' it up for sale," Harris cautioned him, "but I want you to keep your eye open for a buyer. Forty thousand dollars takes the whole thing as a goin' concern, an' the more cash the better. Get a line on the buyer if ye can, and if I send you word to sell, you sell, and if I don't send you word, don't do anything. You understand?"

The lawyer wrote something on a sheet of paper. "This is a power of attorney, which will enable me to complete the documents without the delay of sending them to you, if you should decide to sell," he explained. Harris signed the paper, and Allan witnessed it.

With this understanding the journey westward was undertaken, and completed without event of importance.

Riles met them on the station platform. He had met every train for a week, as it had been agreed that it would be better that the Harisses should not visit Gardiner's ranch until plans were more fully developed. Jim was still there, and Gardiner insisted that Jim should not meet Harris at present. He allowed Riles to think that he feared trouble if former employer and employee should meet; as a matter of fact, he feared that if their coal mine proposition should reach the ears of Travers the young man would attempt to dissuade Harris from having anything to do with it, or at least would urge a fuller investigation than might be desirable. Besides, he meant to make of Travers an unwitting party to the affair.

Riles, in overalls and shirt-sleeves, leaned against the iron rail at the back of the station platform, his big hands stuffed in the bulging band of his trousers, and his under-jaw busy with an ample ration of tobacco. He watched the passengers alighting from the train with little interest; he had no particular expectation of meeting

Harris on this occasion, and, if the truth be told, he had little desire to meet him. Riles had no pang of conscience over his part in the plot against his old neighbor, but he had an uneasy feeling of cowardice. When suddenly his eye fell on Harris and his big, strapping son, his first impulse was to slip away in the crowd before they should notice him. But it was only for a moment; the next, Harris was calling, "Lo, Hiram," and the two were shaking hands as old friends met in a far country.

"Didja get my letter?" asked Riles, ignoring the commonplaces with which it was their custom to introduce any important topic. "Didja sell the farm?"

"I got the letter Hiram, but I didn't sell the farm. Thought we'd just have a look over this coal mine before goin' into the business altogether."

"H-s-h. Throttle your voice down. This place is full of men on the lookout for somethin' like that, an' you can't keep it too dark until it's all settled."

"Well, ain't we going to put up somewhere?" said Allan, breaking the silence that followed Riles' warning. "There ought to be an Alberta hotel here, somewhere. I saw one in every town for the last two hundred miles."

"I got that beat," said Riles, with a sneer. "Boardin' on a lord, or duke, or somethin'."

"Don't say?"

"Yeh. You mind Gard-ner? Him 'at lit out from Plainville after that stealin' affair?"

"The one you got credit for bein' mixed up in?" said Allan, with disconcerting frankness. "A lame kind of a lord he'd make. What about him?"

"Well, he struck a soft thing out here, fo' sure. This lord I'm tellin' here, fo' sure. This lord I'm tellin' here, fo' sure."



"Does Taste Kind o' Snaky," Said Harris.

you about's gone off home over some bloomin' estate or other, an' Gard-ner's runnin' his ranch—his 'bloody-well ranch' he calls it. Gets a good fat wad for ridin' round, an' hires a man to do the work. But it was Gard-ner put me on t' this coal mine deal."

"Let's get settled first, and we'll talk about Gardiner and the mine afterward," said Harris, and they joined the throng that was now wending its way to the hotels.

"How's your thirst, Hiram?" inquired Harris, after he had registered. "Pretty sticky," confessed Riles. "But they soak you a quarter to wash it out here."

"Well, I got a quarter." "A quarter apiece, I mean."

"Well, I got a quarter apiece," said Harris. "Come on."

Riles followed, astonishment over Harris' sudden liberality, and misgiving as to how he himself could avoid a similar expenditure, struggling for uppermost place in his mind.

"Pretty strong stuff they have here," he said, after Harris and Allan had "set 'em up" in turn. "Keel you over if you don't watch it."

"Does taste kind o' snaky," said Harris. "Guess that's enough for this time. Now come upstairs and tell us all about this deal you have on."

When the travelers had thrown off their coats and vests, and all were seated in the little bedroom, Riles cleared his throat.

more'n I said in m' letter," he started. "As I said, it's Gard-ner you'll have t' thank for this thing, good or bad. I ain't a coal miner, an' I told 'im that, an' I told 'im you wasn't neither, but he says that don't make no difference. He says there's all kinds o' money in it, an' I reckon that's what we came out here for, ain't it?"

"Yes, provided the thing's sound," said Harris. "Anyone can see with half an eye that there's easier ways of making money than bustin' up this prairie sod for it. But you and me've worked hard for what we've got, Hiram, and we want t' go mighty careful about spendin' it."

"I suppose you've sent home word to sell your farm, have you?" put in Allan. "You'll be chippin' in at the same time?"

"Oh, yes, I'll be chippin' in. Of course. But I didn't just say to sell the farm yet. I'll have t' get back an' straighten things up some first. You see, I thought you'd get my letter before you left, an' you could kind o' make your deal then, an' your payment would hold the bargain bound until I could sell mine, y' see, Harris?" Riles was beginning to address himself mainly to the older man.

"Don't take me up wrong," said Allan. "I'm in on this along with Dad, if he's in; an' if he's out, I'm out. But I was just kind o' curious about it."

"It's all right, it's all right," assured Riles, with great magnanimity. Inwardly he was cursing Gardiner for having left this task to him. He was suspicious of a trap in the simplest question, and feared that any minute he might find himself foundering in a mesh of contradictions.

"Where is this coal mine, and who's got it?" said Harris.

"I ain't saw it myself," admitted Riles. "They're awful p'liclar about lettin' people see it," he continued, with a sudden flash of inspiration. "It's so valuable, y' know."

"Fraid somebody'll bring it home in their pocket, I suppose," said Allan.

Riles pretended to laugh heartily. "But where is it?" insisted Harris. "Is there a railroad near, or how do you get at it?"

"It's up in the mountains, an' that's all I can tell you; but it's all right, an' there's a pile o' money in it. I guess I better bring Gard-ner down in the morning, an' he'll explain all about it. Y' see, he knows the fellow 'at owns it, an' I don't, an' he'll be able to tell you. That is, if you're goin' in on it. Gard-ner won't say much unless he knows you're goin' in on it."

"Well, he'll have to say a good deal before he knows," said Harris. "I ain't buyin' a pig in a poke. He's got t' show me, and then if it's all right, why, it's all right."

"Oh, it's all right," said Riles, although inwardly he felt little enthusiasm over the attitude of either father or son. He was annoyed that Allan should be present. On the whole, it would be better to leave the rest of the explaining to Gardiner.

"What d'ye think of it, Dad?" said Allan, when Riles was gone.

"May be all right," said Harris. "Wouldn't be surprised but it is. At

EASTERN CANADA UNDER ICE

Professor Asserts It Was Covered a Mile Deep Forty Thousand Years Ago.

Prof. A. F. Coleman of the faculty of applied science and engineering of the University of Toronto, whose hobby is studying the ice age, and who has toured many countries in his research work, believes the ice age was present in Canada about 40,000 years ago. As a result of his inspection of the rock and mountains of the territory of Gaspe, in eastern Canada, where there are valuable fishing grounds, he had been convinced that the ice which has covered that part of Canada to a depth of about a mile, never passed over that portion of eastern Canada.

The Shick-Shock mountains, which are really a continuation of the Appalachian range, are the backbone of Gaspe, and the highest land of eastern Canada. Professor Coleman did find, however, that a great glacial sheet had filled the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. He has also found that the front range of the Rocky mountains has been pushed seven miles into the prairie.

Professor Coleman was probably one of the first scientists to visit Gaspe, despite the fact that the French landed there centuries ago.

the same time, I ain't goin' to put a cent in it till I'm dead sure. And anyway, there's no use lettin' Riles think we're keen on it."

"That's what I think. You think Gardiner's all square in it?"

"I don't know. Likely he's gettin' a fat commission from somewhere, but that's fair enough, if he makes the deal. But he won't see any o' our money till I have the opinion of the best lawyer in town. That's all we can say till we see it."

"What d'ye say if we sell the old farm anyway, an' then if this mine business don't look good, we'll plunk it into farm land?"

"Might do worse," his father agreed. "We'll have a look round for a day or two, anyway."

In the afternoon Gardiner and Riles drove into town and met the Harisses in the waiting room of the hotel. Gardiner's greeting was friendly, but not overfamiliar, as became a man who had recently suffered some reflection on his character. He shook Harris and Allan by the hand, inquired after the cattle and the crops, but discreetly avoided family matters, having learned from Riles that all had not been going smoothly in their domestic affairs. Gardiner knew a little more at the back of the bar, to which he escorted his guests. Having ordered a bottle and glasses on the table, he turned the key in the door.

"You can't be too careful," he explained. "You know, the walls have ears, and if it gets out that this coal mine can be picked up at the price we have on it, it will be taken before night. I understand your money is not here yet, Mr. Harris?"

"No. Not started, I guess. The fact is, I haven't sold the farm."

"Well, I don't want to hurry you, but you've got to act quickly, or not at all. Of course, we don't figure on taking any chances. Our idea is to turn the property over at once, at a good profit. That's the way you feel about it, too, isn't it?"

"I'm not a coal miner." "Exactly. Neither are the men who own most of the mines of this country. There comes a time, Mr. Harris, when we realize that we don't have to get down with pick and shovel to make ourselves some money—in fact, the man with pick and shovel hasn't time to make any real money. I am glad you feel like I do about it, for I have already taken the liberty of putting the proposition up to a New York syndicate."

"You mean if we don't come through, they will?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The English Vocabulary

The number of English words not yet obsolete, but found in good authors, or in approved usage by correct speakers, including the nomenclature of science and the arts, does not probably fall short of 100,000. Few writers or speakers use as many as 10,000 words, ordinary persons of fair intelligence not above three or four thousand. If a scholar were to be required to name, without examination, the authors whose English vocabulary was the largest, he would specify the all-embracing Shakespeare, and the all-knowing Milton. And yet in all the works of the great dramatist there seem not more than 15,000 words; in the poems of Milton not above 8,000. The whole number of Egyptian hieroglyphic symbols does not exceed 800, and the entire Italian operative vocabulary is said to be scarcely more extensive.—George Perkins Marsh.

A Slight Compensation

"A man in these times can be well roasted."

"But he can't be stewed."

Don't forget that a shallow brain often operates a fluent tongue.

Employed Two Parachutes

Though the design and operation of parachutes have been the subject of practical experiments since the eighteenth century, the American air service is the first, it is believed, to test the action and interaction of parachutes used in pairs, says Popular Mechanics Magazine. In experiments performed at Mitchel field, Long Island, N. Y., a sergeant strapped one parachute on his back, as usual, and a second on his chest. Thus encumbered, he was carried, in a two-seater plane, to a height of approximately one mile. Here he walked out on a wing, pulled the release of the rearward chute, and stepped into space. The white bag opened nicely, and he drifted down to within less than 1,000 feet. Here he pulled the second release, and the second parachute opened above him without entangling or interfering with the first.

Weather Influences Moods

Most city workers who have thought about it agree that they do their work best in windy weather. The reason is simple. Calm weather fills the atmosphere with the poisonous carbonic acid gas that is produced by human breathing. A wind sweeps this away and replaces it with stimulating oxygen. Artificially produced oxygen is now used in some offices with the object of abolishing "that tired feeling" among the employees.

PUEBLO IS SWEEPED BY NEW TORRENT

Skagway Reservoir Goes Out; River Again Rampant.

RAINFALL IS HEAVY

Loss of Life Is Estimated Variously at From 100 Minimum Up to 600. City Under Martial Law.

Pueblo, Colo. — Just when Pueblo Sunday was beginning to recover from the terrible disaster of Friday night, a dam on the Fountain river, near Colorado Springs, broke, the Skagway reservoir, between Florence and Victor, suddenly gave way, and a down-pour of rain, almost a cloudburst, caused what really amounted to three new floods.

At 2:30 o'clock in the afternoon the Skagway reservoir gave way and within an hour the swollen torrent of the Arkansas river again had inundated the low lying sections of the city.

A downpour of rain again began at 9 o'clock. The downpour amounted almost to a cloudburst. Whether or not the rain followed the course of the Arkansas river above Pueblo could not be learned because of the darkness.

At 4 o'clock Sunday morning the waters again had reached Third street. By 8 o'clock they were receding and it was believed all danger was ended. Then Skagway reservoir broke and brought the second new flood.

The river went up to Third street on North Santa Fe avenue again, following the heavy rain and the break of the reservoir and the dam. The waters went to Sixth street and Main street. Later they receded.

The Arkansas river reached Fifth and Court streets, the highest it has been since the flood when the water reached Fifth and Main streets.

At 10:25 the river was reported at its crest and beginning to subside. There was not the rush of water which accompanied Friday's flood.

Fear was expressed for the safety of people living in towns on the Arkansas river below Pueblo. There was no way of confirming it from here. It was impossible to get into other sections of the city or out of the city from the south.

The heavy rains again made the roads almost impassable.

J. L. Moorehead, secretary to the governor, said he thought the death list would not exceed 150, although reports to him ranged from 200 to 600.

The local Red Cross set a minimum death list of 100, while old residents, familiar with conditions in the Grove and Peppersauce district, where the loss of life and property damage was greatest, insisted that final investigation would show a greater number of dead.

Trees and masses of debris were coming down from the country above Pueblo on the crest of the new flood. Troops quickly cleared the business and wholesale districts. Citizens were prevented from coming within a block of the waters, while every effort was made to prevent loss of life from the new danger.

Denver Is Inundated.

Denver, Colo.—At midnight Sunday the Platte river here went out of its banks and began flooding several blocks of the west side residential district. The overflow was greatest in the vicinity of West Eleventh avenue and Umattilla street.

Several squads of police were sent to that locality to assist residents in moving out of their homes.

Three families were cared for at the city hall.

Syracuse, Kan. — A telephone message from Holly, Colo., stated that the fire whistle was blowing a warning to the people to flee to the hills. Water was reported rushing into the city.

The Amity dam, five miles west of the city, was reported to have given away. The telephone operator reports Amity washed away, with a possible loss of life.

Four persons who were detailed to keep driftwood from the piers of a bridge were reported to have gone down with the bridge.