

The BROWN MOUSE

By HERBERT QUICK

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SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I.—Jennie Woodruff contemptuously refuses to marry Jim Irwin, young farm hand, because of his financial condition and poor prospects. He is intellectually above his station, and has advanced ideas concerning the possibilities of expert school teaching, for which he is ridiculed by many.

CHAPTER II.—More as a joke than otherwise Jim is selected as teacher of the Woodruff district school.

CHAPTER III.—Jim, in his new position, sets out to make staunch friends of his pupils, especially two boys, Newton Bronson and "Buddy" Simms, the latter the son of a shiftless farmer, Colonel Woodruff, Jennie's father, has little faith in Jim's ideas of improving rural education methods. He nick-names him the "Brown Mouse," in illustration of an anecdote.

CHAPTER IV.—Jim's conduct of the school, where he endeavors to teach the children the wonders of nature and some of the scientific methods of farming, as well as "book learning," is condemned.

CHAPTER V.—Jennie Woodruff is nominated for the position of county superintendent of schools. The school board grows bitter in its opposition to Jim and his innovations.

CHAPTER VI.—At a public meeting Jim roundly condemns the methods of teaching in the rural schools, and makes no friends thereby.

CHAPTER VII.—A delegation of prominent women condemn Jim's methods of teaching, but he is stoutly defended by his pupils, especially Newton Bronson.

CHAPTER VIII.—Jim has Christmas dinner at Colonel Woodruff's, and listening to him, Jennie begins to do some thinking concerning his ability and his prospects.

CHAPTER IX.—In the evening Jim, as well as he knows how, courts Jennie, without, however, making much progress, though she is quickly losing her poor opinion of him.

CHAPTER X.—Jennie, elected county superintendent of schools, receives so many complaints from people of the district concerning Jim's methods of teaching that she finds herself compelled formally to ask for his resignation. After she has left, Jim is visited by Colonel Woodruff, who strongly urges him to resign, and offers to back him. Jim agrees to stick, for a while at least.

CHAPTER XI.—A meeting of the school board, which had been gathered to "get" Jim, is confronted by Jennie, who upholds him. He conducts an examination of his pupils at the meeting, to prove that he is not neglecting their "book learning," by the introduction of other subjects which he considers of importance. The splendid snowing made by the children converts many, who had doubted, to his views.

CHAPTER XII.—The novel ideas which Jim has introduced have been talked about outside the county, and he is visited by Professor Withers, extension lecturer at the state university, who invites him to deliver an address at the next annual meeting of the Farmers' institute.

CHAPTER XIII.—Professor Withers is impressed by many of the innovations made by Irwin, and so informs Colonel Woodruff and Jennie, somewhat to the astonishment of both. The colonel suggests to Jim that he (the colonel) seek election to the school board, replacing Cornelius Bonner, implacable enemy of Jim Irwin.

CHAPTER XIV.—Folowing sickness Newton Bronson, youngster whom Irwin has redeemed from idleness and folly and set on the right path, and who almost worships the teacher, keeps his father from voting at the school board election. Bronson is a friend of Bonner, and would have voted for him. As it is, Colonel Woodruff is chosen for the position, owing to Bronson's absence.

CHAPTER XV.—Jim convinces the farmers of the district of the advantages to be derived from a co-operative creamery, and it is agreed to establish one. His rise to a position of leadership in the community, and high responsibility, has made a distinct difference in Jennie's feelings toward Jim, which she is forced to acknowledge to herself.

CHAPTER XVI.—In his address at the Farmers' institute Jim makes a distinctly favorable impression. After the meeting he is offered a position as teacher in another district, with a considerable advance in salary, and agrees to consider it.

CHAPTER XVII.—Jim's friends urge him to remain at his present post, leading citizens of the district assuring him that they are "proud of him."

CHAPTER XVIII

Old Man Simms Speaks.

Young McGeehee Simms was loitering along the snowy way to the schoolhouse bearing a brightly scoured tin pail two-thirds full of water. He had been allowed to act as water superintendent of the Woodruff school as a reward of merit—said merit being an essay on which he received credit in both language and geography on "Harvesting Wheat in the Tennessee Mountains." This had been of vast interest to the school in view of the fact that the Simmses were the only pupils in the school who had ever seen in use that supposedly-obsolete harvesting implement, the cradle. Buddy's essay had been passed over to the class in United States history as the evidence of an eyewitness concerning farming conditions in our grandfathers' times.

The surnameless Pete, Colonel Woodruff's hired man, halted Buddy at the door.

"Mr. Simms, I believe," he said. "I reckon you must be lookin' for my brother, Raymond, huh," said Buddy.

"I am a-lookin'," said Pete impressively, "for Mr. McGeehee Simms."

"That's me," said Buddy, "but I ain't been doin' nothin' wrong, huh?"

"I have a message here," said Pete, "for Professor James E. Irwin. He's what-he-wishin' there, ain't he?"

"He's inside, I reckon," said Buddy. "Then will you be so kind and condescendin' as to stoop so low as to jump so high as to give him this letter?" asked Pete.

Buddy took the letter and was considering of his reply to this remarkable speech, when Pete, gravely saluting, passed on, rather congratulating himself on having staged a very good burlesque of the dignified manners of those queer mountaineers, the Simmses. The note was from the colonel:

"Please come to the meeting tonight, and when you come, come prepared to hold the district up. If we can't meet the Pottawatomie county standard of wages, we ought to lose you. Everybody in the district will be there. Come late, so you won't hear yourself talked about—I should recommend nine-thirty and war-paint."

It was a crisis, no doubt of that; and the responsibility of the situation rather sickened Jim of the task of teaching. Only one thing kept him from dodging the whole issue and remaining at home—the colonel's matter-of-fact assumption that Jim had become master of the situation. How could he flee, when this old soldier was fighting so valiantly for him in the trenches? So Jim went to the meeting.

How could he impose conditions on the whole school district? How could the colonel expect such a thing of him? And how could anyone look for anything but scorn for the upstart field-hand from these men who had for so many years made him the butt of their good-natured but none the less contemptuous ridicule? Who was he, anyway, to lay down rules for these substantial and successful men—he who had been for all the years of his life at their command, subservient to their demands for labor—their underling?

The season was nearing spring, and it was a mild thawing night. The windows of the schoolhouse were filled with heads, evidencing the presence of a crowd of almost unprecedented size, and the sashes had been thrown up for ventilation and coolness. As Jim climbed the back fence of the schoolyard, he heard a burst of applause, from which he judged that some speaker had just finished his remarks. There was silence when he came alongside the window at the right of the chairman's desk, a silence broken by the voice of Old Man Simms, saying "Mintah Chairman!"

"The chair," said the voice of Ezra Bronson, "recognizes Mr. Simms."

Jim halted in indecision. He was not expected while the debate was in progress. There is no rule of manners or morals, however, forbidding eavesdropping during the proceedings of a public meeting. Therefore he listened to the first and last public speech of Old Man Simms.

"Ah ain't no speaker," said Old Man Simms, "but Ah can't set here and be quiet an' go home an' face my ole woman an' my boys an' gyuhls withouten sayin' a word fo' the best friend any family evah had, Mr. Jim Irwin." (Applause.) Maybe Ah'll be thought forrard to speak hyah, bein' as Ah ain't no learnin' an' some may think Ah don't pay no taxes; but seeln' as how we've took the Blanchard farm, a hundred an' sixty acres, for five years, an' move in a week from Sat'day, we pay taxes in our rent, Ah reckon, an' howsemev'er that may be, Ah've come to feel that you-all won't think hard of me if Ah speak what we-uns feel so strong about Mr. Jim Irwin?"

Old Man Simms finished this exordium with the rising inflection, which denoted a direct question as to his status in the meeting. "Go on!" "You've got as good a right as any one!" "You're all right, old man!" Such exclamations as these came to Jim's ears with scarcely less gratefulness than to those of Old Man Simms—who stammered and went on.

"Ah thank you-all kindly, Gentlemen an' ladies, when Mr. Jim Irwin found us, we was scandalous pore, an' we was wuss'n pore—we was low-down." (Cries of "No-No!")

"Yes, we was, becuz when a man gets in a new place, he's got to lift himself up to what folks does where he's come to, or he'll make a place for himself lower'n anybody else. In the mountings we was good people, becuz we done the best we could an' the best any one done; but hyah, we was low-down people becuz we hated the people that had mo' learnin', mo' land, mo' money, an' mo' friends than what we had. My little gyuhls wasn't respectable in their clothes. My children was lgerant, an' triffin', but I was the most triffin' of all. Ah'll leave it to Colonel Woodruff if I was good fer a plug of terbacker, or a bakin' of flour at any sto' in the county. Was I, Colonel? Wasn't I perfectly wuthless an' triffin'?"

There was a ripple of laughter, in the midst of which the colonel's voice was heard saying, "I guess you were, Mr. Simms, I guess you were, but—"

"Thankee," said Old Man Simms, as if the colonel had given a really valuable testimonial to his character. "I sho' was! Thankee kindly! An' now, what am I good fer? Can't I get anything I want at the store? Can't I get a little money at the bank, if I got to have it?"

"You're just as good as any man in the district," said the colonel. "You don't ask for more than you can pay, and you can get all you ask."

"Thankee," said Mr. Simms gravely. "What Ah tell you-all is right, ladies and gentlemen. An' what has made the change in we-uns, ladies and gentlemen? It's the wuk of Mr. Jim Irwin with my boy Raymond, the best boy any man evah hed, and my gyuhls, Calista, an' Buddy, an' Jennie, an' with me an' my ole woman.

"He showed us how to get a toe-holt

into this new kentry. He teaches the children what orto be did by a rentin' farmer in loway. He done lifted us up, an' made people of us. He done showed us that you-all is good people, an' not what we thought you was. Outen what he learned in school, my boy Raymond an' me made as good crops as we could last summer, an' done right much wuk outside. We got the name of bein' good farmers an' good wukkers, an' when Mr. Blanchard moved to town, he said he was glad to give us his fine farm for five years.



"We Owe It All to Jim Irwin."

done for a pack o' outlaws and outcasts. Instid o' hidin' out from the Hobdays that was laywayin' us in the mountings, we'll be livin' in a house with two chimneys an' a swimmin' tub made outen crock-ryware. We'll be in debt a whole lot—an' we owe it to Mr. Jim Irwin that we got the credit to get in debt with, an' the courage to go on and git out agin'!" (Applause.)

"Ah could affo'd to pay Mr. Jim Irwin's salary myself, if Ah could. An' there's enough men hyah tonight that say they've been money-he'ped by his teachin' the school to make up mo' than his wages. Let's not let Mr. Jim Irwin go, neighbors! Let's not let him go!"

Jim's heart warmed. "There isn't a man in that meeting," said he to himself, as he walked to the schoolhouse door, "possessed of the greatness of spirit of Old Man Simms. If he's a fair sample of the people of the mountings, they are of the stuff of which great nations are made—if they only are given a chance.

(To be continued)

Will Thompson, who has been living at Los Angeles the past year or so, drove in yesterday from that city and will visit for a few days with his brothers and other friends here. Mr. Thompson is engaged in the auto park business in the California city and is prospering. His place will accommodate 100 cars and they are coming and going all day and until midnight. Parts of California are suffering from a protracted drought and cattle are dying by the hundreds for lack of water. Mr. Thompson made the trip from Los Angeles to Heppner, about 1,400 miles, in five days.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON

For the County of Morrow

First National Bank of Roberts, Idaho, a corporation, Plaintiff, vs. Walter Rietman, Defendant.

Notice of Sheriff's Sale on Foreclosure.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN: That under and by virtue of a foreclosure execution and order of sale, issued out of the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon for Morrow County, upon a Judgment and Decree of Foreclosure made and entered therein, on the 20th day of December, 1923, in a suit wherein the First National Bank of Roberts, Idaho, a corporation, was plaintiff, and Walter Rietman, was defendant, and to me directed, I have duly levied upon, and will sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash in hand, at the front door of the County Court House in Heppner, Morrow County, Oregon, on Wednesday, the 5th day of March, 1924, at the hour of two o'clock P. M. of said day, all of the right, title and interest of said defendant in and to all of the following described real property, to-wit: Walter Rietman,

Lots Three (3) and Four (4), and the South Half of Northwest Quarter and the Southwest Quarter of Section Two (2), in Township Two (2) North of Range Twenty-six (26), East of the Willamette Meridian, containing 319.07 acres, according to the United States Government Survey, in Morrow County, Oregon.

Said sale to be of the whole of said described lands, or so much thereof as may be sufficient to satisfy the Judgment of the Court, in the above entitled cause, to-wit, the sum of Three Thousand One Hundred Twenty-seven and 95-100 Dollars (\$3,127.95), together with interest thereon at the rate of eight per cent per annum from the said 20th day of December, 1923; the sum of Three

Hundred Dollars (\$300.00), attorneys' fees, and the further sum of Twenty-eight Dollars (\$28.00) costs, together with the costs and expenses of such sale, said sale to be made subject to the confirmation of said Court.

Dated and first published this 5th day of February, A. D. 1924.

GEO. McDUFFEE, Sheriff of Morrow County, Oregon.

41-45

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A car of poultry supplies just arrived. Anything and everything for the Hen.

Lots of Mill Feed and Dr. Hease's Stock Tonic for your Live Stock.

Sheep Dip and Lice Exterminators and other Remedies for Live Stock and Poultry.

Our Spring Stock of Single Trees, Lead Bars, Wagon Tongues, Coupling Poles, Plow Beams and Handles, Clevises, etc., just arrived.

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HARDWARE and IMPLEMENTS

"We have it, will get it or it is not made."

Miss Muriel Bell is still confined to her bed at Hotel Heppner with an attack of grippe.

Mrs. L. V. Gentry, who has been ill for two or three weeks, is still confined to her room.



Put an End to Guesswork

When you transfer an amount of money to another person, for any purpose, you are entitled to a record of the transaction that is clear on all points—the date, the amount and to whom paid.

Keep a reasonable amount to your credit in a checking account with the First National Bank. Pay with your personal check on the Bank. Then you will be sure at all times. Your checks will provide an accurate, reliable record of disbursements.



First National Bank Heppner Ore.

Good Words About COFFEE

The conclusions of a three-years investigation by Professor Prescott, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, are summed up as follows:

Coffee is an efficient, harmless stimulant

Its quality depends on how it is made

The professor says: "Coffee promotes heart action mildly, increases the power of concentration in mental effort and increases the power to do muscular work and is therefore an aid to sustained brain work. It has no depressive after effects and is not habit forming."

How's that for a "clean bill" for coffee?

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