



ONE OF THE SMUGGLERS' GANG

By ROBIN WINSTANLEY

(By W. G. Chapman.)

A RUSTIC bridge with a trail railing, a charming young lady resting upon it, a creek, a splash and Minna Graves uttered a shriek and sank beneath the surface of the brook.

A lithe, carelessly-dressed figure, that of a young man coming up the bridge approach, a shout of interest and alarm and as he plunged boldly into the swirling current, Minna came up choked, blinded and frantic.

"Don't struggle," spoke gentle but resolute tones in her ear, so confidence-inspiring that Minna obeyed orders and came ashore dripping, flushing at the ridiculous figure she made. Her rescuer warded off her expressions of fervent gratitude with a light laugh over their mutual predicament, and she grew coherent enough to indicate that a park-like place in the near distance was her home.

Rolfe Ditson conducted her to his open gateway, solicitously made sure that she was able to get to the house unaided, derided the idea that he might catch cold from his wet garments and went his way after an invitation to call and meet her people.

Rolfe Ditson swung on his way with brightened eye, for he worshipped beauty and goodness. As to Minna, she could not get that strong intellectual face out of her mind readily. His first call led to a second. These two were fast approaching a state of mutual love.

Minna saw in him a handsome, well-bred gentleman. Her father and mother rather liked his direct, yet unobtrusive ways. Not so Harold Graves. This son and brother had a chum he had tried to thrust upon the attentions of Minna. His sister disliked him intensely. When Rolfe appeared upon the scene she rejected the suitor seated a rival. Thenceforward the two chums aimed to dislodge and discredit Rolfe, if possible.

"I'm on a still hunt," Harold Graves told his crotch one day. "Ditson is mighty mysterious and secretive. He lives at the next town hotel, he says, but he does not appear there more than once a week. He disappears regularly. I'm shadowing him, I'll have some news soon that will oust the fellow, trust me."

And, sure enough, one afternoon in a great state of excitement young Graves sought his sister in the garden. She was seated in a hammock, dreaming tenderly of the absent Rolfe. She was trustful and proud of his attentions, and although he had been very reserved as to his business in the town and its vicinity, she felt that he had some good reason for that policy.

"I've found out!" proclaimed Harold in a tone of exultation.

"Found out what?" inquired Minna. "About Ditson. I never liked his evasive ways. Neither did my chum. Humph! I fancy after this you'll value tried and true friends like him, instead of picking up with a smuggler."

"A smuggler?" repeated Minna, vaguely.

"That's just what Ditson is. A regular member of the Black Ribbon gang, down at Bottle Point."

For a moment Minna's face whitened, then confidence and loyalty came back into her eyes.

"Nonsense!" she said simply.

"Is it?" retorted Harold, viciously. "I'll show you. I'll have him arrested the next time he sets his foot on these grounds."

"You dare?" flared up his sister. "Do you think I would believe such a thing as you intimate against a true gentleman who saved my life, and who has the confidence and respect of our father and mother? You have never liked Mr. Ditson, and this is some plot of yours, because of your preference for that chum of yours."

"It's true, just the same," persisted Harold, angrily. "I tracked him down. I saw him meet a regular ruffian crew of the fellows who are making the revenue service people so much trouble, smuggling goods over here across the Canadian border. He acted cheek by jowl with them. Went off with them in their boat. I've told the revenue people about it. They're going off after the gang tomorrow."

"You will have to prove more than you tell before you make me believe that Mr. Ditson is anything but a true, honorable gentleman," said Minna, stubbornly.

"All right. Wait a day or two and see!" vaunted Harold.

Minna tried to be steadfast in her faith in young Ditson, but the intelligence she had received made her uneasy. Perhaps there was some dark plot against Ditson, she reflected. Her brother and his chum, she felt assured, were equal to that. She wrote a brief note to Rolfe, addressed to his hotel in the next town, warning him that enemies were seeking to get him into trouble.

Rolfe did not get the note for he was away—with the smugglers, in truth and verity! If Minna could have seen him the next evening shortly after dark at a cave on the lake that was a headquarters for the smugglers, she would have shuddered. He seemed to be one of the grizzled rough looking crew who were awaiting the arrival of a skiff carrying contraband goods from the Canadian shore.

Rolfe sat on an upturned keg just within the cave, when he was intensely startled. One of the band came into view, forcing before him a prisoner.

"I found him spying on us," the smuggler explained. "In his pocket I found a note showing that he has put the revenue officers on to our den here."

"Settle him!" hoarsely commanded the leader of the crowd. "Here, you"—to the captor and to Rolfe—"take him over beyond the rocks yonder and settle him."

"Her brother!" breathed Rolfe, as he recognized Harold Graves.

Harold was the worse for a severe struggle and did not notice Rolfe, who with his captor started to obey the orders of the smuggler chief.

"This will do," said Rolfe's smuggler companion, as they got out of sight of the cave. "Join in, mate, and help finish him," and he drew his revolver.

"Run for your life!" whispered Rolfe quickly in the ear of the startled Harold Graves.

In that flashing second the latter recognized Rolfe. He uttered a cry of profound amazement, but was quick to avail himself of the offered opportunity for escape.

He saw Rolfe strike the leveled weapon from the hand of the smuggler. He saw the latter grapple with Rolfe. There were loud cries for help, and Rolfe, denounced as a traitor to the band, was borne by some of its members back to the cave.

It was an excited, pitiful story that Harold told to his sister when he reached home. Even to his crude mind the indication was irresistible that Rolfe could not be one of the smugglers in reality, and oppose their counsels at the forfeit of his life.

"He saved me, that's all I know, and I'm sorry for him," said the subdued Harold.

"And your work has brought him to his doom!" sobbed his sister, bitterly.

Then came news that the revenue officers whom Harold had led to the den of the smugglers, but had got separated from, had made an onslaught in time to save Rolfe from the vengeance of the band. All had been captured.

With a great cry, the next morning Minna sprang from the porch to greet a brisk, smiling visitor, Rolfe Ditson. Soon he explained to her the complete situation.

"I was employed as a government agent to get at the inside affairs of the smugglers," Rolfe told Minna. "The action of the revenue officers has finished my work. I have come to say good-by, for I must return to Washington."

"But—you will come back, some time?" faltered Minna.

"Is that your wish?" asked Rolfe, quickly.

Her two trembling hands, rested in his own, made answer, and when Rolfe Ditson left her, Minna Graves was his promised wife.

Creatures of Wild Seldom Travel Far

The wild animals of the country do not roam around aimlessly, but each creature has a definite spot regarded as home, and makes temporary homes, or stopping places, in irregular lines away from the home center. Its range is not great unless hard-pressed for food. As a rule they keep the lines of their own choosing except that when pursued they generally circle about their home. The English hares appear to live month after month within a mile or two of the home center. During winter scarcity, however, they wander farther and faster, and have been known to continue 30 miles in a single night. A hare kept under observation for a considerable time showed a winter range of 18 miles along a stream, and a summer range less than half as great. Rabbits are even less inclined to roam, 90 per cent spending their lives within two or three miles of their burrow. The fox probably has a normal range of 20 miles—10 miles each way from the center—but mountain foxes have been known to hunt pheasants 17 miles from the cairn containing their cubs and to carry their kill that distance home.

Cures "Cat-Killing" Dog

Dogs can be cured of chasing cats, for the cat-killing dog usually becomes the cat-killing dog, if he catches the cat, says Our Four-Footed Friends. A man owned a dog that was addicted to slaughtering every cat it could grab. He had whipped it and scolded it, but to no purpose. A friend offered to cure it, and did. The cure was very simple. A dead cat was tied around the dog's neck, firmly strapped on. He was unmade to wear it twenty-four hours. When it was removed he was taken for a walk. A cat ran across the street. Instead of darting in pursuit, as formerly, he tucked in his tail and fled for home. He never killed another cat.

Like Father

Junior had been permitted to accompany his father to the office for the first time. As he left the maternal doorstep his mother said, "Now, Junior, you watch daddy, and try to do things the way he does; then when you grow up you will be a big smart man like him."

That night Junior strode up to his little bed with a new determination. As he knelt down at his mother's feet for the evening prayer, he piped up: "Take dictation, Dear Lord, God bless mamma, God bless papa, God bless the cook, and, darn it, God, if we don't get action on this, I'll sue you."

FARM STOCK

BRIGHT PROSPECTS FOR BEEF CATTLE

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Higher prices for beef cattle are in prospect within the next 15 months for both the feeders and range producers, according to the report on the outlook for beef cattle made by the Department of Agriculture. An upward trend is probable over the next two or three years, the department says. The numbers of breeding stock, of cattle on feed, and of young stock seem to be materially lower than for several years so that reduction in the market movement is expected.

While no considerable reduction in the number of stock held by range men was made for some time after the break of 1920, the number of steers has been reduced during the last three or four years accompanied by a less rapid reduction in the number of cows. The increasing number of cows and heifers now being slaughtered indicates further reductions in breeding stock still being made. It does not appear, therefore, that the number of cows is sufficient to long maintain the present high rate of slaughter, the report shows.

All indications are for smaller supplies of cattle on the markets during the next few months also, the department states. The movement of all cattle so far during 1926 has been less than for the same periods last year, and the best information from the range states indicates a considerably lighter run of grass cattle during the next three months than a year ago.

In the Southwest there are lighter supplies of cattle available than a year ago. As the 1926 calf crop was good, the number of calves to be offered from the Southwest this fall will compare favorably with the past three years, however. Good range conditions and an improved situation have placed the Southwestern cattlemen in a position so they would not be forced to sell on an unfavorable market.

The number of cattle in certain areas of the northern Great Plains region, which have recently suffered from drought, has been so reduced already that light movement may be expected next year, the report states, and there is a possibility of the cattlemen in that area becoming active buyers with changing conditions. The full extent of the reductions which have taken place should be apparent by the autumn of 1927 and by that time improved conditions might prompt restocking of the ranges which would still further reduce market supplies.

No competition from foreign supplies of beef or cattle which would affect the situation are seen. Present indications are that consumptive demand for beef during the next 12 months will continue good, although no better and possibly somewhat below that of the past year. Increasing competition from hogs, especially during 1927, will also have some influence on beef prices.

The situation in regard to the probable demand for feeder cattle this fall is uncertain. The margin between the present price of fed cattle and feeder cattle is exceptionally narrow, and the present prospects are for a corn crop considerably smaller than last year, but there will be a heavy carry-over of old corn and the number of hogs is still low.

Prospects for a fair supply of corn, only a slight increase in the number of hogs to be fed, and a decrease in cattle available for feeding will tend to maintain the price of feeders on a level slightly higher than that which prevailed in the fall of 1926, according to the report. Lighter-weight cattle in the feedlots will enable feeders to distribute market supplies over a longer period and in accordance with the movement of prices. Together with the reduced supplies, this may result in higher prices of fed cattle during the winter and spring of 1927 than a year earlier. Heavy-fed cattle will top the market next year if feeders swing too heavily to light cattle this fall and winter. On the fall of 1927 range cattle prices probably will show a marked effect of the impending shortage and average higher than for several years past.

Live Stock Notes

A plentiful water supply is as necessary as any other item of food in the ration of either cow or pig.

Failure to dock and castrate ram lambs costs sheep raisers millions of dollars every year.

Many cattle feeders value silage for fattening older cattle, but have doubted its value for calves.

Red clover and alfalfa are the very best of pasture for hogs and they are ready for very early use. Rye is still earlier, but has less grazing value.

If one wishes to grow hogs of the best size and quality, some special preparation must be made for doing the work.

With well-bred sows to farrow next spring, if large and well developed pigs are expected, the sows must be fed on such foods as will make a well balanced ration.

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Barking Dogs Outlawed.

In Toulon, France, barking dogs may soon be answerable to the courts providing they have owners who can be located and their barking is done after ten o'clock at night. The courts have upheld the mayor's decree holding owners responsible.

Pins Always in Demand.

More than twenty million pins are used annually in the United States, or about 200 for each inhabitant, according to recent statistics, and the number is said to be ever increasing. Ten factories are engaged in their manufacture.

Maundy Money.

Maundy Thursday, the day before Good Friday, was, in olden times, a day of alms-giving, upon which the sovereigns of England gave money, food and clothing to as many poor persons as the kings were years old.

Conscience to Blame.

It is not because men's desires are strong that they act ill; it is because their consciences are weak. — John Stuart Mill.

Greatest Natural Bridge.

The Rainbow bridge in the Navajo mountains, on the border of Utah and Arizona, not far from the juncture of the Colorado and San Juan rivers, is the greatest of all known natural arches in the world.

Put "Gas" in Chemistry.

Jan Baptista Van Helmont, noted Flemish physician and chemist, a native of Brussels, who lived from 1577 to 1644, is said to have introduced the word "gas" in the terminology of the science of chemistry.

Claim to Superiority.

The Nordic theory is that the white race is biologically superior to all others and that a certain division of the white race, the Nordic, is the most nearly perfect of all.

Scotland's First Capital.

The old capital of Scotland was the city of Scone in Perthshire, said to have been founded by the Roman emperor Agricola about 79 A. D.

Fatigue.

There are occasions when the head of an ambitious household grows tired of writing his own name. — Dallas Journal.

Only a Hope.

That pretty women aren't bright isn't so much a conviction as a hope.

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From School Teacher To Great Eminence

A young man who was brought up on a farm in Western Pennsylvania studied diligently and qualified for district school teacher. Further pursuing his studies and teaching, he managed to save up enough money to put him thru medical college. He began the practice of medicine in the new oil section of Pa.

He was a student of nature, knew and could easily recognize most of the medicinal plants growing in the woods.

Later, he moved to Buffalo, N. Y., where he launched his favorite remedies, and in a short time, they were sold by every druggist in the land. Today, the name of this man, Dr. R. V. Pierce, is known throughout the world. His Golden Medical Discovery is the best known blood medicine and tonic. More than fifty million bottles have been sold in the U. S. If your druggist does not sell the Golden Medical Discovery, in liquid or tablets, you can obtain a trial pkg. of the tablets by sending 10c to the Dr. Pierce Clinic, in Buffalo, N. Y.

Contributed Poems.

A farmer had a seeder for sowing of his seed; 'twas a seeder made of cedar and I asked him: "Is there need of a seeder made of cedar?" and he answered: "Yes, indeed, I have never seed a seeder, sir, that I'd concede the seeder to exceed a cedar seeder for the seedin' of the seed."—Boston Transcript.

Whitman Given High Place.

John Bailey, the English critic, in his life of Walt Whitman credits him with being the "most original genius America has yet produced." Of the poet he says: "He is often a fine artist by a sort of divine accident, but he was equally pleased with himself when, as happened still oftener, he was not an artist or a poet at all."

Substances in Grindstones.

Grindstones are usually made of a siliceous sandstone, in which the grains are sharp and there is little cement to bind them together. Artificial grindstones are very uniform and perfect texture are made from emery. Grindstones are now also made of carborundum.

Blind Owa Him Much.

The first Braille was written in France in 1829. It was invented by Louise Braille, who became professor at the Paris School for the Blind in 1826. Louis Braille was born in Paris in 1809 and became blind at the age of three.

Acid Test of Suffering.

No character has been tested until it has known suffering. The trial under which one spirit grows strong, patient, courageous, evokes in another only bitterness and complaint. The metal is revealed by the acid.

Queer Place, the Pole.

None of the explorers has reported any taxpaying at the North pole. Seems incredible that there is such a place in the world.—Toledo Blade.

What Shakespeare Said.

Go, sir; to be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand.—Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 2.

Never Mind What.

In making a garden a man is apt to call a spade any number of things.

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