

A SIERRA FANTASY

By ROBERT MACKAY

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AS soon as I was absolutely certain that my friend could breathe no more—that the keen blade of the bowie which I had thrust into his heart had done its work—I laid the body at full length on the table in our cabin, and, placing a chair beside it, I sat down and took the dead man's hand in mine.

He had been a good and honest partner. He and I had struggled against adverse hopes, until fortune finally condescended to smile on us with unexpected favor. He, a man of twelve lunatics, I, a man of six—we had delved and picked, and blasted our way into the mountains for years, until we had brought forth so much gold that we were unable to estimate its value. In all the vast domain of the sierras, known as Grinnell's, no other miners could show as much good luck as Dick Moltry, the man whom I had just killed, and myself.

Dick Moltry had the courage of a lion, and the heart of a child. His virtues were honesty, intuitive perception, religious fervor, and great courage. His vices were a greed for gold and a latent feeling against mankind, the latter being the reason why he had sought the solitude of the mountains. My love for adventure had induced me to form a partnership with him, its most attractive feature in the beginning being that we were to end our days in the wilds of the mountains—that one should not leave the other until death.

This and other compacts were sealed with the immutable stamp of honor. Time finally revealed to me the expediency and folly of such a partnership, and often at night, when Moltry and I sat in our cabin, I would ask him to tell me what he intended to do with the box of gold that occupied a corner of the room. He told me that when he died it would all be mine—that all the great alps wealth, for which we had labored so incessantly, would be mine—all mine.

When he died, lo, how I had wept and prayed and even sung for the time to come. How I had wept over my morning for years, knowing that if I would have seen

his dead form in the blankets beside me, the sunshine would have pale before my happiness, and the glory of my life would have been supreme. Day followed day, and year followed year, and although ailments which seemed of a nature to hasten his end overcame him at regular intervals, death always stood aside to let him pass. Indeed, during the past few years of his life, he had enjoyed almost perfect health, and the day before I killed him, it appeared to me that his step had never been lighter, his cheek never ruddier, his appetite never better, nor was there any dimission in his strength to swing a pick. He seemed to be the allegory of eternal life.

I had become tired of the mountains—tired of that immense, trackless domain of solitude, where the memory of time was living in the glory of nature. I had conquered the god of Mammon—his wealth was at my feet—with it I could gratify ambition, buy pleasures and all else that I might crave. But no argument, however beguiling, would lure him to break the bond of our seemingly relentless compact, and I could not leave him there alone.

One morning, when he had gone to cut wood for our fire, I timidly made up my mind that he should die. Vividly I recall that day in autumn. Leaves in myriad colors fell and scurried hither and yon at the will of the wind. How many times before had I watched the leaves fall and drift away, until the naked branches that had borne them seemed to point to a thousand mockeries.

Our cabin was built on a mighty pillar of rock, from which we could see twenty miles up and down a great canyon. Our rich claims, marked by gray piles of earth, lay all around us. Above us, and stretching a great distance beyond, were the high peaks of the Sierras, some brown, some snow-capped, some so brown and obscure as to become lost in the clear sky. From the dim recesses beyond the mountains there flowed a deep and narrow river, which, in its winding course, received the waters of other streams until its current passed through a gorge below us with such mighty force, so grandly and so musically, that it often seemed to be consonant to the

song of the angels. From its margins, in a seeming wildness of mysticism, sprang, straight and rigid, the trees that were my guides and companions. From our cabin door we could look on tree tops beneath us, and at the tremulous lines of the trunks of trees above us, which seemed to point mutely and silently the way to God. No other vegetation could be found—no flowers, no weeds, no chaparral. Moltry and I called it "The Valley of the Dismal Wall," because of the sighing of the wind through the trees, which resembled the mournful strain of a lone spirit in the grasp of death.

"A long unmeasured tone
To mortal minstrelry unknown."

When Moltry returned with the wood, I was sitting on the stone steps of the cabin. As I looked at the old man, between whom and myself there had always existed the warmest sympathy, I realized that it was not an easy matter to adhere to my plan for murder. He threw the wood to the ground by the side of the cabin, and, whistling a merry tune, came and sat beside me.

He was the first to speak.

"Harton," he said, "will you work that claim back of the house today?"

I did not answer the question. I had no intention of working that or any other claim. Had I said so, he would have become suspicious and wanted to know the reason why. Had I said yes, he would have been none the wiser. But we had agreed not to lie to each other, and I did not intend to break even that part of our compact on the last day of his life.

"What the man, old man?" he said, as gently as a child, when I had not answered his question.

"Moltry," I replied, "how long do you intend to stay in these mountains?"

"How long? Why, lad, so long as the Almighty will let me; until health and strength shall have gone."

"I am growing weary of it," I said.

"We must have a very large sum in dust and nuggets now, why not go to some of the great cities of the world and spend it where there is life—real life?"

"Life?" he answered, somewhat startled. "Life is never found in great cities. Life is lost in great

cities. Man exists only in great cities; yes, exists in hybrid environments, hugging hope's delusive phantoms! Here in the mountains it is all life; awe, freedom, liberty and life! The pleasing and alluring accounts which writers give of the great cities are all impositions, deceitful and devoid of truth. They are as inconsistent as the assertion of the pastoral writers who claim that shepherds pass their time on dustless, flower-bedecked fields, singing and playing the flageolet. It is all untrue. Did you ever hear of a shepherd of this age named Thibis, or Corydon, or Romulus, or a shepherdess named Diana or Phyllis, or Amaryllis? True, the shepherds of this age sometimes sing, but their songs are mere trifling tunes devoid of wit, and their voices are hoarse and rough and at variance with the science of music. The shepherd of reality, when he is watching his sheep, is a gambler; and when he is not, he is a drunkard. The enviable shepherdess is nothing but an agreeable fiction; a well-written deception, calculated for the amusement of weak minds and persons of indolent habits, for whom it is kind and liberal to think because they are unable to think for themselves. In the great cities there are shepherds, too. Perhaps you will see the full inference of my remark, when I tell you that of such, one shepherd and one dog can lead a great many sheep, but one sheep cannot lead a great many shepherds and a great many dogs. My boy, you are only a sheep."

"Partner," I said, "I like your philosophy. You speak in the straight line of wisdom and avoid the crooked circuit that leads to incomprehensibility. But what does it have to do with the matter in question?"

"Just this. You long for what you call the great cities, with their glimmers and pleasures, that are false. Jim, I take a great interest in you; I want you to stay in these mountains, to live among them with me, to bury me here, and to continue as my successor. I want you to die here, too. Then we two men will have known the glory, the peace, the contentment, the riches of life. The great cities, which you so vehemently, who could darken the sun at their will, were no

The Wheat Yield Tells the Story

The western Canada's rapid progress of heavy crops in western Canada have caused new records to be made in the handling of grains by railroads. For while the movement of these heavy shipments has been wonderfully rapid, the restriction of the railroads, despite enlarged equipment and increased facilities, have been strained as never before, and previous records have been broken in all directions.

The largest Canadian wheat shipments through New York ever known are reported for the period up to October 31st, and this was but the overflow of shipments to Montreal, through which point shipments were made larger than to New York.

Yields as high as 40 bushels of wheat per acre are reported from all parts of the country, while yields of 45 bushels per acre are common.

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The People and the Railroads
By FREDERICK CYRUS LENBUSCHER

The railroads of the country are over-capitalized by at least six billion dollars. The increase in the value of land owned by the railroads. The railroads are trying to have the Interstate Commerce Commission audit eight billion six hundred million dollars for their present capitalization.

The present over-capitalization—if the railroads were permitted to net return of 6 per cent—would require an annual net charge of three hundred and sixty million dollars upon farmers, small business men and the consumers of the country—nearly half the total national budget, exclusive of the postoffice department, which is practically self-sustaining. The additional capitalization sought by the railroads would add a much greater burden than the present over-capitalization. It is, therefore, of the greatest importance to every consumer in the country that a president should be elected who recognizes the rights of the consumers, and not merely the vested rights and wrongs of the railroads, since he has the appointment of the Interstate Commerce Commission and of the Justices of the Supreme Court.

The most important cases in which the right of the railroads to capitalize increases in land values and charge rates thereon was involved were the Minnesota rate cases. The legislature reduced the rates in the state, claiming that the railroads were not entitled to predicate rates on increased land values. The case was appealed to the United States supreme court, Mr. Hughes writing the decision held:

"It is clear that in ascertaining the present value, we are not limited to the consideration of the amount of the original investment. The property rights are held in private ownership, and it is that property, and not the original cost of it, of which the owner may not be deprived without due process of law."

What This Decision Means.

The railroads of the country received land grants of 153,000,000 acres—many of these lands have been given to cities, now immensely valuable; and have received subsidies of about three-quarters of a billion dollars. As population increases the value of their lands is constantly increasing. That value will, in a few years, be doubled.

On this value, created by all the people, the Supreme Court decided the railroads are entitled to earn the same profit as on money they have legitimately invested. This unearned income will shortly amount to a billion dollars a year. Mr. Hughes held that the values created by the people entitled railroads to charge the people higher rates.

Position of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

In the case of Spokane vs. Northern Pacific railroad company the Interstate

PRESIDENT WILSON IS GIVEN STRONG BOOST BY CHICAGO HERALD

Great Independent Paper Tells Why It Supports President Wilson

The Chicago Herald last Friday editorially recommended the re-election of President Wilson. The Herald, which is among the great independent dailies of the country, is edited by James Keelley, who ranks with the foremost newspaper men of the country.

Since the opening of the presidential campaign the Herald has been devoting two columns of space on its editorial page to letters from its subscribers toning the qualifications of President Wilson and Mr. Hughes. In announcing its preference for Wilson, the Herald frankly admits that its course has been dictated by the majority of the big "Herald family", as the paper's readers are called. The editorial in part is as follows:

"There is a strong and reasonable sentiment in this country in favor of rewarding the efforts of tried and acceptable public servants by re-election. We see this principle invoked in every contest from the smallest local political fight to the greatest national struggle. Within the parties a president who has done well is considered to have right to re-nomination. There is no reason why this test should not be applied at this time to President Wilson himself on the record as a whole of the things done, on the prospect of things to be done, is there real reason for the American people at this time to repudiate the president?"

Herald Sees Good Reasons.

"There are to the Herald good reasons why they should not do so."

"Out of the disquietude of recent events the nation has sailed into the calmest seas of the present. But what American can or should forget in so short a time the manifold difficulties which confronted President Wilson during the first two years of the war? What American can or should forget that he was called on almost at every moment to act on matters big with the fate of the nation? What just man can overlook how anxiously he studied the public opinion of the country that he might put the decision of the government in accordance therewith?"

"Above all, who can forget that he acted not in the light of subsequent events, but under the direct menace of the event itself?"

From the standpoint of foreign affairs the question which presents itself to the American people is whether it would not be unwise "To Swap Horses in the Middle of the Stream." The president has all the ends of the tangled

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HEAVY FROST IN THE EAST

"Why did you stop the ice, mother, The ice-man left each day,
'Twas not a heavy price, mother, The ice-man made us pay."
"Why, child, no cake 'Fore needed to be made,
For Hughes is bound this way!"

"Why do you light the fire, mother, So early in the fall?
The heat you so desire, mother, May melt our furnace wall."
"The fire I build To keep unchilled,
When Hughes is in our hall!"

"Forecasts of 'heavy frost,' mother, I read within the news,
Oh, will our crops be lost, mother, To such frigorific dews?"
"The weather say,
But means, my dear,
The coming here of Hughes!"

"Why does the waiting crowd, mother, His various cars enfold,
(Or I may say enshroud, mother) With earmuffs, new or old?
'Since they must hear A Hughes speech, dear,
They guard against the cold!"

"I'll fill the stove with stacks, mother, Of coal extremely hard,
And stuff the window cracks, mother, So that the air is barred.
Here comes the sure Hughes temperature, And we must be on guard!"
—John O'Keefe, in New York World.

VOTERS ASKED TO SCAN BALLOTS CAREFULLY.

"Owing to the order in which the initiative measures will appear on the ballot, I hope that every farmer in Oregon will scan his ballot carefully before voting on these measures," said J. D. Brown, president of the Farmers' Union of Oregon and Southern Idaho, in a recent statement.

"The phrase, 'Homesteaders' Loan Amendment' in the title of the first measure under the heading 'Proposed by Initiative Petition' may lead some to think it is the state rural credits bill. That is not the case; as the rural credits' bill is the next to the last; the title on the ballot is 'Rural Credits' Amendment."

"This first initiative measure is the single tax bill, named on the ballot the 'Full Rental Value Land Tax and Homesteaders' Loan Fund Amendment.' It is commonly known as the 'people's land and loan measure,' and went by that name when signatures for the petition were being solicited. It is an entirely different measure from the rural credits bill."

"I find that not only among the farming population but more especially in the cities and towns the voters are somewhat confused by these two measures. The voting numbers for the Single Tax bill, the 'Full Rental Value Land Tax and Homesteaders' Loan Fund Amendment' are 306 yes and 307 no. The voting numbers of the rural credits bill are 315 and 319. Farmers and all

OTHERS INTERESTED IN THE RURAL CREDITS MEASURE should be careful to discriminate between these measures.

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SINGLE TAX REPEATEDLY DEFEATED.

The first initiative measure on this year's ballot was named the "Full Rental Value Land Tax and Homesteaders' Loan Fund Amendment." It is the same single tax scheme that has adorned the ballot year after year, this time wearing a new dress and bearing a new title. A new bait to catch votes has also been added. Following is the history of attempted single tax legislation in Oregon during the past eight years.

In 1908 an amendment proposed by "The Oregon Tax Reform Association" (single taxers) exempting personal property and improvements was defeated by a vote of 69,871 no's to 32,068 yes's. It was admitted to be a first step toward single tax.

In 1910 an amendment abolishing the poll tax carried by a vote of 44,171 yes's to 42,127 no's. Only after its passage was the following "joker" discovered: "Providing for the people of each county to regulate taxation and exemptions within the county, regardless of constitutional restrictions or state statutes, and abolishing poll tax or head tax."

In 1912, single tax measures were submitted in Multnomah, Clackamas and Clatsop counties, and were defeated in each county by more than a 2 to 1 vote.

At the same election, an amendment proposing "state-wide single tax with a graduated tax provision" was defeated by 82,015 no's to 31,534 yes's. At this election the "joker" referred to above was repealed.

In 1914, two amendments were submitted: One, providing for a \$1500 exemption, was defeated 126,193 to 65,481; the other, providing for a specific personal graduation extra tax, was defeated 124,943 to 59,186. By voting 207 NO the voters of Oregon will again show what they think of single tax.

Should the confusion now existing in the minds of many voters between the Single Tax and the rural credits measures result in the adoption of the U'Ren

bill at the coming election, a peculiar condition will result.

Attorneys declare the Single Tax bill, which appears on the ballot under the name of "Full Rental Value Land Tax and Homesteaders' Loan Fund Amendment," can never withstand the scrutiny of the courts and that it will be declared unconstitutional.

But it is evident that lovers of land will await the decision of the court before investing in real estate in Oregon. That hesitancy will be apparent as soon as the newspapers carry the news that the U'Ren amendment to the state constitution has been adopted by the people. Weeks and possibly months will elapse before the dangers of commercial revolution such as the provisions of this measure will bring have passed. In the meantime much development work in Oregon must stand still.

The Single Tax bill is the first initiative measure on the ballot. Its voting numbers are 306 yes, and 307 no. The rural credits is the seventh initiative measure.

ANOTHER TRIUMPH FOR WESTERN AUTO OIL

It is reported that one of the biggest auto stage companies on the coast, operating lines over various parts of the central and southern sections of the state of California, has finally decided to hereafter use only western lubricating oil made from California asphalt base crude.

The decision comes, it is said, after many and varied experiences with different oils. The company's practical road tests proved the western oil to be not only the most efficient lubricant, but also the one to leave the least carbon.

This company's report states, operates about 80 automobiles in all, including Packard twin sixes, Cadillac eights, Whites and other high grade cars.

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