



Illustrations  
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edwin legrand sabin

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

It is 1868 and the Pacific Railroad has reached its newest "farthest west"—Benton, Wyoming, a town described as "roaring", as each new terminus, temporarily, was.

Frank Beeson, a young man from Albany, New York, comes here because he is in search of health and Benton is considered "high and dry."

Edna Montoyo, a fellow passenger on the train from Omaha, impresses Beeson with the beauty of her blue eyes and the style of her apparel. Equally she astonished him by taking a "smile" of brandy before breakfast. A brakeman tells Beeson she has "followed her man" to Benton.

Jim, a typical western ruffian whom she knows apparently well insults and is floored by Frank whose prowess impresses the passengers.

DESERT DUST

What shall I say of a young man like myself, fresh from the green East of New York and the Hudson River, landed expectant as just aroused from a dream of rare beauty, at this Benton City, Wyoming Territory? The dust, as fine as powder and as white, but shot through with the crimson of sunset, hung like a fog, amidst which swelled a deafening clamor from figures rushing hither and thither about the platform like half-world shades. Two score hands grabbed at my valise and shoved me and dragged me.

"The Desert Hotel. Best in the West. This way, Sir."

"Buffalo Hump Corral! Free drinks at the Buffalo Hump."

A deep voice boomed, stunning me.

"The Queen, the Queen! Bath for every room. Individual towels. The Queen, the Queen, she's clean, she's clean."

The promise of "individual towels" won me over.

We left the station platform and went ploughing up a street over shootops with the impalpable dust. The noises as from a great city swelled strident. But although pedestrians streamed to and fro, the men in motley of complexions and costumes, the women, some of them fashionably dressed, with skirts edging furiously; and wagons rolled horses cantered, and from right and left merchants and hawksters seemed to be calling their wares, of city itself I could see only the veriest hulk.

The majority of the buildings were mere canvas—faced up for a few feet, perhaps, with sheet iron or flimsy boards; interspersed there were a few wooden structures, rough and unpainted.

I was ushered into a widely-open tent-building whose canvass sign depending above a narrow veranda declared: "The Queen Hotel. Beds \$3. Meals \$1 each."

Now as whitely powdered as any of the natives I stumbled across a single large room bordered at one side by a bar and a number of small tables (all well patronized), and was brought up at the counter under the alert eyes of a clerk coatless, silk-shirted, diamond-scarfed, pomaded and slick-haired, waiting with register turned and pen extended.

"Quite right, sir," the clerk assented "So there is. A bath for every room and the best bath in town. Entirely private; fresh towel supplied. Only one dollar and four bits. That, with lodging, makes four dollars and a half. If you please, sir."

A bitter wave of homesickness welled into my throat as, conscious of the enveloping dust, the utter shams, the alien unsympathetic on-lookers, the sense of having been "done" and through my own fault, I peeled a greenback from the folded packet in my purse and handed it over. Rather foolishly I intended that this display of funds should rebuke this finicky clerk; but he accepted without comment and sought for the change from the twenty.

"And how is old New York, suh?"

A hearty, florid, heavy-faced man, on," prompted the Colonel (whose accents did not smack of New York at all.)

I gazed about, sickened. "There are no private rooms?" I asked.

"You are perfectly private right here, suh," assured the Colonel. "You may strip the hide or you may sleep with your boots on, and no questions asked. Gener'ly speaking, gentlemen prefer to retain a lawyer of artificial covering—but you ain't troubled much with the bugs, are you, Bill?"

I grasped the hand wonderingly. It enclosed mine with a soft pulpy squeeze; and lingered.

"As usual, when I last saw it, sir," I responded. "But I am from Albany."

"Of course. Albany, the capital, a city to be proud of, suh. I wel-



"I wish a room and bath," I said, as I signed.

"Bath is occupied. Show the gentleman to Number Six Shorty."

"Your runner distinctly said 'A bath for every room'."

Bystanders laughed—nudged one another.

come you, suh, to our West, as a fellow-citizen."

"You are from Albany?" I exclaimed.

"Bohn and raised right near there; been there many a time. Yes, suh. From the grand old Empire State, like yourself, suh, and without apologies. Whenever I meet with a New York State man I cotton to him."

"Have I your name, sir?" I inquired. "You know of my family, perhaps."

"Colonel Jacob B. Sunderson, suh, at your service. Your family name is familiar to me, suh. I hark back to it and the grand old State with pleasure. Doubtless I have seen you before, suh. Doubtless in the City—at Johnny Chamberlain's? Yes?" His fishy eyes beamed upon me, and his breath smelled strongly of liquor. "Or the Astor? I shall remember. Meanwhile, suh, permit me to do the honors. First, will you have a drink? This way, suh. I am partial to a brand particularly to be recommended for clearing this damnable dust from one's throat."

"Thank you, sir, but I prefer to tidy my person, first," I suggested.

"Number six for the gentleman," announced the clerk, returning to me my change from the bill. I stuffed it into my pocket—the Colonel's singular eyes followed it with uncomfortable interest. The runner picked up my bag, but was interrupted by my new friend.

"The privilege of showing the gentleman to his quarters shall be mine."

"All right, Colonel," the clerk carelessly consented. "Number Six."

"And my bath?" I pursued.

"You will be notified, sir. There are only five ahead of you, and one gentleman now in. Your turn will come in about two hours."

In No. 6, there were three double beds: one well rumbled as if just vacated; one (the middle) tenanted by a frowsy headed, whiskered man asleep in shirt-sleeves and revolver and boots; the third, at the other end, recently made up by having its blanket covering hastily thrown against a distinctly dirty pillow.

"Your bed younduh, suh. I reck-

handy. That's why I likes to double up."

The Colonel turned to me. "Shake hands with my friend Mr. Bill Brady."

The frowsy man extended his hand.

"Proud to make yore acquaintance, sir."

"The bath-room? Where is it, gentlemen?" I ventured.

"If you will step outside the door, suh, you can hear the splashing down the hall. It is the custom, however, foh gentlemen at tub to keep the bath room door closed, in case the ladies promenading. I judge, with five ahead of you and one in, the clerk was mighty near right when he said about two hours. That allows twenty minutes to each gentleman, which is the limit."

"What is your line of business?" Bill invited.

"I am out here for my health, at present," said I. "I have been advised by my physician to seek a place in the Far West that is high and dry, Benton—I laughed miserably, "certainly is dry. And high, judging by the rates."

"Healthily dry, suh, in the matter of water," the Colonel approved. "We are not cursed by the humidity of New York State, grand old State that she is. Foh those who require water, there is the Platte only three miles distant. The nearer proximity of water we consider a detriment to the robustness of a community."

I made a meagre toilet.

"Now I am at your service during a short period, gentlemen," I announced. "Later I have an engagement, and I shall ask to be excused."

"A little liquid refreshment is in order fust, I reckon," quoth the Colonel. And after that—you have sporting blood, suh? You will desire to take a turn or two foh the honor of the Empire State?"

"If you are referring to card gambling, sir," I answered, "you have chosen a poor companion. But I do not intend to be a spoil sport, and I shall be glad to have you show me whatever you think worth while in the city, so far as I have the leisure."

"That's it, that's it, suh," The Col-

onel appeared delighted. "Let us libate to the gods of chance, gentlemen; and then take a stroll."

After a round of drinks—I took lemonade—we issued into the street.

Surely such an hotch-potch never before populated an American town: Men flannel shirted, high booted, bearded, with formidable revolvers, balanced, not infrequently, by sheathed butcher-knives—men whom I took to be teamsters, miners, railroad graders and the like.

Of the women I saw several in amazing costumes of tightly fitting black like ballet girls, low necked, short skirted, around the smooth waists snake-skin belts supporting handsome little pistols and dainty poignards. Contrasted, there were women in gowns and bonnets that would do them credit anywhere in New York, and some, of course, more commonly attired in calico and gingham as proper to the humbler station of laundresses, cooks, and so forth.

"How are you on the goose, sir?" Bill demanded of me.

"The goose?" I uttered.

"Yes. Keno."

"I am a stranger to the goose," said I.

He grunted.

"It gives a quick turn for a small stake. So do the three-card and rondo."

Of passageway there was not much choice between the middle of the street and the borders.

Seemed to me as we weaved along through groups of idlers and among busily stepping people that every other shop was a saloon with door widely open and bar and gambling tables well attended.

My guides nodded right and left with "Hello, Frank," "How are you Dan?" "Evening, Charley," and so on.

Occasionally the Colonel swept off his hat, with elaborate deference, to a woman, but I looked in vain for My lady of the Blue Eyes. I did not see her—nor did I see her peer, despite the fact that now and then I observed a face and figure of apparent attractiveness.

(Copyright Edwin L. Sabin)  
Does our hero find the Lady of the

Blue Eyes? Don't miss next week's installment.



Nearly 3 BILLION DOLLARS

Saved the Public

by Freight Rate

Reductions Since 1921

If the shippers of freight over American railroads had been obliged to pay, during the years 1922 to 1926 inclusive, the same rate for moving freight, measured by the cost per ton mile, that was paid in 1921 (under order of the Interstate Commerce Commission), the aggregate cost would have been approximately \$3,000,000,000 greater.

The saving, in round numbers, has been as follows:

1922 compared with 1921	\$319,000,000
1923 compared with 1921	639,000,000
1924 compared with 1921	606,000,000
1925 compared with 1921	828,000,000
1926 compared with 1921	874,000,000
Total saved in 5 years	\$2,066,000,000

The aggregate freight rates have been reduced about 15% since 1921. In addition, the railroads have handled nearly 46% more traffic; and the public has received more prompt and efficient service.

Savings to L. & N. Patrons More than \$72,000,000

During this five-year period, Louisville & Nashville Railroad freight rates, as measured by the revenue ton miles, have decreased 17.2%; and the aggregate savings in freight bills to the patrons of the Road have been more than \$72,000,000.

These facts and figures are published because it is believed that they will be of sufficient interest to the public to justify their being made known.



Suffered weak, nervous

"I WAS in a very weakened, run-down condition, surely in need of a tonic and builder," says Mrs. J. R. Wrenn, of Anna, Texas. "I was so weak I had to go to bed, and kept getting weaker."

"I suffered with my back so much. I was very nervous, couldn't rest good at night. I couldn't eat anything—I just wasn't hungry."

"I had read so much of Cardui, I thought best to use it. I took seven or eight bottles, and by the time I had taken them I was stronger than I had been in several years. I can highly recommend Cardui."

Thousands of other women have found that the tonic effects of the purely vegetable ingredients of Cardui were just what they needed to help restore their appetites, to help bring them easily and naturally back to normal health and strength. Its action has been found to be of great benefit in many common female ailments.

Buy it at your druggist's.

CARDUI For Female Troubles

SAFE FOR ALL

It used to be that the only fellow who could safely buy used cars was the expert who could tell what he was getting and the junk dealer who didn't care. Personally, we have found it profitable to make the world safe for used car buyers—amateurs as well as experts.

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