



WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

Frank Beeson, from Albany, N. Y. reaches Benton, Wyoming, then—1868—western terminus of the Pacific Railroad. He had been ordered by physicians to seek a climate "high and dry." He is robbed of most of his money in his hotel and loses his last twenty dollars at monte in "The Big Tent," a dance hall and gambling resort in the "roaring" town of Benton.

Edna Montoyo, companion of a gambler, is believed by Frank to have cajoled him purposely into the game. Broke, disconsolate over his discovery that "the lady of the blue eyes," as he calls her, is what she is, and finally humiliated over his glaring "greenness," Frank repulses Edna when she begs him to go away with her, sobbingly telling him that she had made a mistake in letting him lose his money. He goes to take a job with

George Jenks, a teamster in a wagon train about to leave for Salt Lake City.

Capt. Adams, a mormon, is in charge of the wagon train.

Rachel Adams, an attractive young woman, one of his wives, is in the train, as is

Daniel Adams, his loutish son. When Edna, who has shot, but not killed the gambler, Montoyo, comes a fugitive in "britches" to join the train, Daniel tells his father that she is seeking Jenks and Beeson. Capt. Adams shouts, "No hussy in men's garments shall go with the train."

Daniel, by a spectacular gun play foils Montoyo's attempt to take Edna back with him.

CHAPTER IX

I Don't Want to Kill Him

One night after we had gone on some time, the sound of revolver shots burst flatly from a mess beyond us, but the shots were accompanied by laughter.

"They're only tryin' to spile a can," Jenks reassured. "By golly, we'll go over and l'arn 'em a lesson." He glanced at me. "Time you loosened up that weepin' o' yourn, anyhow. Purty soon it'll stick fast."

I went with him, glad of diversion. The men were banging, by turn, at a sardine can up on the sand about twenty paces out. The heavy balls sent the loose soil flying but amidst the furrows the tin can sat untouched.

"What you thinkin' to do," Jenks smiled. "Hit that can or plant a lead mine?"

"Give him room! He's made his brag," they cried. "And if he don't plug it that pilgrim sure will."

Mr. Jenks drew and took his stand banged with small preparation and missed by six inches—a fact that brought him up wide awake.

"Gimme another try, boys," he growled, but they shoved him aside.

"No, no. Pilgrim's turn"

Willy-nilly I had to demonstrate my greenness so I drew, and stood, and cocked, and aimed. The Colt's exploded with prodigious blast and wrench—jerking, in fact, almost above my head; and where the bullet went I did not see, nor, I judged, did anybody else.

"He missed the 'arth!" they clamored.

"No; I reckon he hit Montoya 'bout the middle. That's whar he scored center!"

"Hold down on it, hold down, lad," Jenks urged. "To hit him in the heart aim at his feet! Here! Like this—" and taking my revolver he threw it forward, fired. The can plinked and somersaulted, lashed into action.

"By George," he proclaimed, "when I move like it had a gun in its fist, I can snap it! But when I think on it as a can, I lack guts!"

Now somebody else shot, and somebody else, and another, and the can gyrated, spurring us to haste as it constantly changed the range. Presently it was merely a twist of ragged tin.

Then in the little silence, as we paused, a voice spoke irritably.

"I 'laow yu fellers ain't no great shucks at throwin' lead."

Daniel stood by, with arms akimbo, and beside stood My Lady. He towered over her in a maddening atmosphere of proprietorship.

She smiled at me—at all of us; at me, swiftly; at the rest, frankly. And I knew that she was afraid!

Daniel laughed boisterously, his mouth widely open.

"Set me up a can! That thar one wouldn't jump to a bullet."

A can was produced.

"How fur?"

"Fur as you like."

It was tossed contemptuously out; and watching it I heard Daniel gleefully yelp, "Out o' my way, yu-all!"—half saw his hand dart down and up again, felt the jar of a shot, witnessed the can jump like a live thing; and away it went, with spasm after spasm, to explosion after explosion, tortured by him into fruitless caper until with the final bail peace came an.

"I'm afraid, too," she breathed. "I never have been afraid before, I didn't fear Montoyo. I've always been able to take care of myself."

"You have your revolver?" I suggested.

"No, I haven't. It's disappeared. Mormon women don't carry revolvers."

"But you're not a Mormon Woman."

"I'll walk over with you."
"Do," she responded readily.
"We're going to have singing."



to it, and it lay dead, afar across the twilight sand.

Verily, by his cries and utter savagery and malevolence of his bombardment, one would have thought that he took actual lust in fancied cruelty.

"I 'laow thar's not another man hyar kin do that," he vaunted.

There was not, judging by the silence again ensuing. Only—

"A can's different from a man," Jenks coolly remarked. "A can don't shoot back."

"I don't 'laow any man's goin' to, neither." Daniel faced me in turning away. "That's somethin' for yu to l'arn, young feller," he vouchsafed. His gaze shifted.

"Come along, Edna," he bade. "We'll be goin' back."

A devil—or was it he himself?—twittered me, incited me, and in a moment, with a gush of assertion, there I was, saying to her, my hat doffed:

"I'll walk over with you."

"Do," she responded readily.

"We're to have singing."

The men stared. Daniel whirled.

"I 'laow you ain't been invited Mister."

"If Mrs. Montoyo consents, that's enough," I informed. "I'm not walking with you, sir; I am walking with her. The only ground you control is just in front of your own wagon."

"Thar ain't no 'Mrs. Montoyo,'" he snarled. "And whilst yu're l'arnin' to shoot yu'd better be l'arnin' manners. Yu comin' with me, Edna?"

"As fast as I can, and with Mr. Beeson also, if he chooses," said she.

"I have my manners in mind too."

"By gosh, I don't walk with ye," he jawed. And he flounced about, vengefully striding on as though punishing her for a misdemeanor.

She dropped the men a little curtsy.

"The entertainment is concluded, gentlemen. I wish you goodnight!"

Yet underneath her railery there lay an appeal, the stronger because subtle and unvoiced. It seemed to me every man must appreciate that, as a woman, she invoked protection to

him against an impending something, of which she had given him a glimpse.

So we eft them somewhat subdued gazing after us, their rugged faces sobered reflectively.

Daniel was angrily shouldering for the Mormon wagons, his indignant figure black against the western glow. She laughed lightly.

"You're not afraid, after all, I see."

"Not of him, madam."

"And of me?"

"I think I'm more afraid for you."

I confessed. "That clown is getting insufferable. He sets out to bully you."

"I'm afraid, too," she breathed. "I never have been afraid before, I didn't fear Montoyo. I've always been able to take care of myself."

"You have your revolver?" I suggested.

"No, I haven't. It's disappeared. Mormon women don't carry revolvers."

"But you're not a Mormon Woman."

BE WISE

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"But now if I may lend you a little something to keep you from being shot like a dog, I'll feel as though I had wiped out your score against me. Take your gun." I took it. "There he is. Cover him!"

"Where?" I asked. "Who?"

"There, before you! Oh anybody! Think of his heart and cover him."

"See that little rock? Hit it!"

I fired. The sand obscured the rock. She clapped her hands, delighted.

"You would have killed him. No—he would have killed you. Quick Give it to me!"

And snatching the revolver she cocked, leveled and fired instantly. The rock split into fragments.

"I would have killed him," she murmured, gazing tense, seeing I knew not what. Wrenching from the vision she handed back the revolver to me. "I think you are going to do, Sir. Only, you must learn to draw. I mustn't stay longer. Shall we go to the fire now? I am cold."

We walked almost without speaking, to the Hyrum Adams fire. Daniel lifted his upper lip at me as we entered; his eyes never wandered from my face, I was distinctly unwelcome. Accordingly, I said a civil "Good-evening" to Hyrum and raising my hat to My Lady left for my own bailiwick.

Friend Jenks joined me.

(Continued next week.)

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NOTICE: SALE OF VALUABLE REAL ESTATE

Under and by virtue of a certain deed of trust made and entered into on the 24th day of May 1926, by P. C. Edwards et ux to D. H. Tillitt, Trustee, which trust is of record in the office of the Register of Deeds for Cherokee County, N. C., in book No. 93 page 455, 1, D. H. Tillitt, Trustee, will on the 18th day of April, 1927, at ten o'clock, A. M., (Murphy time) offer for sale to the highest bidder for cash at the courthouse door in Murphy, N. C., the fol-

lowing described real estate: Being a part of tract No. 31 and adjoining the South boundary line of the corporate limits of the Town of Andrews.

Beginning at a stake on the West bank of a road; and runs West 134 feet to a stake on the bank of a branch; thence East 129 feet to a stake on the West bank of said road; thence with said road 115 feet to the beginning.

Being all of that parcel of land conveyed to the said John Ellis and wife, Flora Ellis, by Sam R. Ammons and wife, Jane Ammons, by deed dated April 26th, 1922; and also conveyed by W. T. Forsyth and wife, Zena Forsyth, to the said parties of the first part, the same bearing date of November, 9th, 1922, in book No. 79 page 322 to which deed reference is hereby made.

Dated and posted this the 16th day of March, 1927.

D. H. TILLITT,
(33-4t—) Trustee.

Ye Snake Dance

There was a young flapper named May,

Who shook a mean bale of hay,
Though not a Hiawaian,
She was always trying
To out-wiggle our own Gilda Gray.

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