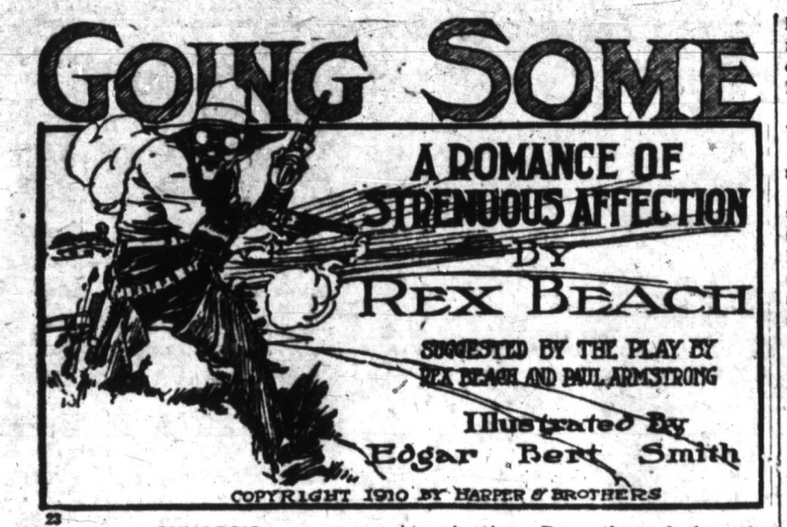

23

SYNOPSIS.

Cowboys of the Flying Heart ranch are heartbroken over the loss of their much-prized phonograph by the defeat of their champion in a foot-race with the cook of the Centipede ranch. A house party is on at the Flying Heart. J. Wallingford Speed, cheer leader at Yale, and Culver Covington, inter-collegiate champion runner, are expected. Helen Blake, Speed's sweetheart, suggests to Jean Chapin, sister of the owner of the ranch, that she induce Covington, her lover, to win back the phonograph. Helen declares that if Covington won't run, Speed will. The cowboys are hilarious over the prospect. Speed and his valet, Larry Glass, trainer at Yale, arrive. Helen Blake asks Speed, who has posed to her as an athlete, to race against the Centipede man. The cowboys join in the appeal to Wally, and fearing that Helen will find him out, he consents. He insist, however, that he shall be entered as an unknown, figuring that Covington will arrive in time to take his place. Fresno, glee club singer from Stanford university and in love with Helen, tries to discredit Speed with the ladies and the cowboys. Speed and Glass put in the time they are supposed to be training playing cards in a secluded spot. The cowboys tell Glass it is up to him to see that Speed wins the race. Willie, the gunman, declares the trainer will go back east packed in ice, if Speed fails. A telegram comes from Covington saying he is in jail at Omaha for ten days. Glass in a panic forces Speed to begin training in earnest. The cowboys force Speed to eat in the training quarters and prepare him a diet of very rare meat. Miss Blake bakes a cake for Speed and is offended when Larry refuses to allow him to eat it. Covington arrives on crutches. He says he broke his toe in Omaha. Mrs. Keap, engaged to Covington and in love with Jack Chapin, exposes Speed to Helen, because Speed had failed to prevent Covington from joining the party. Speed decides to cripple himself, but Skinner, the Centipede runner, appears with a proposition to throw the race. Glass attempts to escape at night, but is captured. Fresno gives Gallagher, the Centipede foreman, $500 to bet against Speed for him. Helen Blake hears of it and bets $500 on Speed. Glass recognizes Skinner as a professional runner.

CHAPTER XVII.—Continued.

Instantly a full-lunged roar went up that rolled away to the foot-hills, and the runners sped out of the pandemonium, their legs twinkling against the dust-colored prairie. Down to the turn they raced. Speed was leading. Fright had acted upon him as an electric charge; his terror lent him wings; he was obsessed by a propelling force outside of himself. Naturally strong, lithe, and active, he likewise possessed within him the white-hot flame of youth, and now, with a nameless fear to spur him on, he ran as any healthy, frightened young animal would run. At the second turn Skinner had not passed him, but the thud of his feet was close behind.

This unparalleled phenomenon surprised Lawrence Glass perhaps most of all. Was this a miracle? He turned to Covington, to find him dancing madly, his crutches waving over his head, in his eyes the stare of a maniac. His mouth was distended, and Glass reasoned that he must be shouting violently, but could not be sure. Suddenly Covington dashed to the turn whence the runners would be revealed as they covered the last half lap, for nothing was distinguishable through the fence, burdened by human forms, and Larry lumbered after him, ploughing his way through the crowd and colliding with the box upon which stood the Echo Phonograph, of New York and Paris. He hurled Mariedetta out of his path with brutal disregard, but even before he could

Skinner Had Fallen!

reach his point of vantage the sprinters burst into the homestretch. Larry Glass saw it all at a glance—Speed was weakening, while Skinner was running easily. Nature had done her utmost; she could not work the impossible. As they tore past, Skinner was ahead.

The air above the corral became blackened with hats as if a flock of vultures had wheeled suddenly; the shriek of triumph that rose from the Centipede ranks warned the trainer that he had tarried too long. Heavily he set off across the prairie for New York.

The memory of that race awakened Speed from his slumbers many times in later years. When he found the brown shoulder of his rival drawing past he realized that for him the end of all things was at hand. And yet, be it said to his credit, he held doggedly to his task, and began to fight his waning strength with renewed determination. Down through the noisy crowd he pounded at the heels of his antagonist, then out upon the second lap. But now his fatigue increased rapidly, and as it increased, so did Skinner's lead. At the second turn Wally was hopelessly outdistanced, and began to sob with fury, in anticipation of the last, long, terrible stretch. Back toward the final turn they came, the college man desperately laboring, the cook striding on like a machine. Wally saw the rows of forms standing upon the fence, but of the shouting he heard nothing. Skinner was twenty yards ahead now, and flung a look back over his shoulder. As he turned into the last straightaway he looked back again and grinned triumphantly.

Then—J. Wallingford Speed gasped, and calling upon his uttermost atom of strength, quickened the strides of his leaden legs. Skinner had fallen!

A shriek of exultation came from the Flying Heart followers; it died as the unfortunate man struggled to his feet, and was off again before his opponent had overtaken him. Down the alley of human forms the two came; then as their man drew ahead for an instant or two, such a bedlam broke forth from Gallagher's crew that Lawrence Glass, well started on his overland trip, judged that the end had come.

But Skinner wavered. His ankle turned for a second time; he seemed about to fall once more. Then he righted himself, but he came on hobbling.

The last thirty yards contained the tortures of a lifetime to Wally Speed. His lungs were bursting, his head was rolling, every step required a separate and concentrated effort of will. He knew he was wobbling, and felt his knees ready to buckle beneath him, but he saw the blue tight-stretched ribbon just ahead, and continued to lessen the gap between himself and Skinner until he felt he must reach out wildly and grasp at the other man's clothing. Helen's face stood out from the blur, and her lips cried to him. He plunged forward, his outflung arm tore the ribbon from its fastening, and he fell. But Skinner was behind him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE only thing in the world that the victorious Speed wanted was to lie down and stretch out and allow those glowing coals in his chest to cool off. But rough hands seized him, and he found himself astride of Stover's shoulders and gyrating about the Echo Phonograph in the midst of a war-dance. He kicked violently with his spiked shoes, whereat the foreman bucked like a wild horse under the spur and dropped him, and he staggered out of the crowd, where a girl flew to him.

"Oh, Wally," she cried, "I knew you could!" He sank to the ground, and she knelt beside him.

Skinner was propped against the corral fence opposite, his face distorted with suffering, and Gallagher was rubbing his ankle.

"'Taint broke, I reckon," said Gallagher, rising. "I wish to hell it was!" He stared disgustedly at his fallen champion, and added: "We don't want y'all for a cook no more, Skinner. You never was no good nohow. He turned to Helen and handed her a double handful of bank-notes, as Berkeley Fresno buried his hands in his pockets and walked away. "Here's your coin, miss. If ever you get another hunch, let me know. An' here's yours, Mr. Speed; it's a weddin'-present from the Centipede." He fetched a deep sigh. "Thank the Lord we'll git somethin' fit to eat from now on!"

Speed staggered to Skinner, who was still nursing his injury, and held out his hand, whereat the cook winked his left eye gravely.

"The best man won," said Skinner, "and say—there's a parson at Albuquerque." Then he groaned loudly, and fell to massaging his foot.

There came a fluttering by his side, and Miss Blake's voice said to him, with sweetness and with pity:

"I'm so sorry you lost your position, Mr. Skinner. You're a splendid runner!"

"Never mind the job, miss, I've got something to remember it by." He pointed to a sash which lay beside him. "The loser gets the ribbon, miss," he explained gallantly.

Off to the right there came a new outcry, and far across the level prairie a strange sight was revealed to the beholders. A fat man in white flannels was doubling and dodging ahead of two horsemen, and even from a considerable distance it could plainly be seen that he was behaving with remarkable agility for one so heavy. Repeatedly his pursuers headed him off, but he rushed past them, seemingly possessed by the blind sense of direction that guides the homing pigeon or the salmon in its springtime run. He was headed toward the east.

"Why, it's Larry!" ejaculated Speed. "And Cloudy and Carara."

"Wally, your man has lost his reason!" Chapin called.

At that instant the watchers saw the Mexican thunder down upon Glass, his lariat swinging about his head. Lazily the rope uncoiled and settled over the fleeing figure, then, amid a cloud of dust, Carara's horse set itself upon its haunches and the white-clad figure came to the end of its flight. There was a violent struggle, as if the cowbody had hooked a leaping tuna, cactus plants and sagebrush were uprooted, then the pony began to back away, always keeping the lariat taut. But Glass was no easy captive, as his threshing arms and legs betrayed, and even when he was dragged back to the scene of the race, panting, grimy, dishevelled, the rope still about his waist, he seemed obsessed by that wild insanity for flight. He was drenched with perspiration, his collar was dangling, one end of a suspender trailed behind him.

At sight of Speed he uttered a cry, then plunged through the crowd like a bull, but the lariat loop slipped to the neck and tightened like a hangman's noose.

"Larry," cried his employer, sharply, "have you lost your head?"

"Ain't they g-g-got you yet?" queried the trainer in a strangling voice.

"You idiot, I won!"

"What!"

"I won—easy."

"You won!" Larry's eyes were starting from his head.

"He sure did," said Stover. Didn't you think he could?"

Glass apprehended that look of suspicion. "Certainly!" said he. "Didn't I say so, all along? Now take that clothes line off of me; I've got to run some more."

"I'm So Sorry You Lost Your Position, Mr. Skinner."

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That evening J. Wallingford Speed and Helen Blake sat together in the hammock, and much of the time her hand was in his. From the bunkhouse across the court-yard floated the voice of the beloved Echo Phonograph, now sad, now gay; now shrilling the peaceful air with Mme. Melba's "Holy City," now waking the echoes with the rasping reflections of "Silas on Fifth Avenue." To the spellbound audience gathered close beside it, it was divine; but deep as was their satisfaction, it could not compare with that of the tired young son of Eli. Ineffable peace and contentment were his; the whole wide world was full of melody.

"And now that I've told you what a miserable fraud I am, you won't stop loving me?" he questioned.

Helen nestled closer and shook her head. There was no need for words.

Jack Chapin came out upon the porch with the chaperon. "Well, Fresno caught his train," he told them.

"And we have had such a glorious drive coming back! The night is splendid!"

"Yes, so nice and moonlight!" Wally agreed pleasantly, whereat Jack Chapin laughed.

"It's as black at pitch."

"Why, so it is!" Then as a fresh song burst forth from the very heart of the machine, he murmured affectionately: "By Jove! there goes 'The Baggage Coach Ahead' once more! That makes ten times."

"It's a beautiful thing, isn't it?" Miss Blake sighed dreamily.

"I—I believe I'm learning to like it myself," her lover agreed. "Poor Frez!"

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The bridesmaids wore white organdie and carried violets.

THE END.

Down the Scale.

A certain bride is very much in love with her husband and very willing to admit it. She likes to sound his praises to her mother and to her girl friends. She has a number of original expressions. When her husband is good she says he is "chocolate cake, three layers deep." When he is very good he is "chocolate cake, four layers deep," and so on up the scale. Occasionally, however, things take a turn.

The bride's mother dropped in the other day. The bride was a trifle peevish, but her mother pretended not to notice this.

"And how was John today?" was her inquiry. "Chocolate, four layers deep?"

"No."

"Three layers deep?"

"No."

"Two layers deep?"

"No." This with a pout.

"Then what is he?"

"Dog biscuit!"—National Monthly.

IMMIGRATE SOUTH

SEVERAL HUNDRED FOREIGNERS ARE IMPORTED INTO EAST CAROLINA.

DEVELOPED EAST CAROLINA

Judging from the Arival of Hundreds of Italians, Poles and Southern Europeans The Tide of Immigration is Turning Southward.

Kinston.—The arrival in this section during the past fortnight of several hundred foreigners confirms the belief of a middle western capitalist who three months ago expressed the opinion that son the tide of immigration wuold be turned southward in reality and that it would be a sign of the material development of Sast Carolina by outside capital.

Fifteen Italians have arrived at Ayden, a few miles from here. A score of Italians and Poles are at Pink Hill, 20 miles from Kinston. A number of Austrians were recently taken to Beaufort county. From 100 to 150 southern Europeans are to be employed in a development scheme near Jacksonville, in Onslow county.

Nearly all of the men brought to this section are to labor on railroads in the logging camps and on drainage work. Their introduction here is necessitated, say promoters, by the scarcity of labor, and the shiftlessness of the negroes. H. Tull, chairman of the Lenoir county commissioners say that men cannot be secured to work the roads of the county for hardly any price, and planters have been incommoded in the past two seasons by the lack of farm labor. In the tobacco towns the employment of a large percentage of the black population in the stemmeries and other plants is partly responsible for the shortage of labor in other lines, but this does not apply to other localities.

Local circles are viewing the coming of Italians, Austrians and Poles with some apprehension, although the men brought so far are selected and of a superior type to those which have flooded the coal mining section of the country. They came, in nearly every instance, from the East Side of New York. Those in this immediate vicinity are large, intelligent men.

Experiments with them in the forests during the past 10 days are said to have been thoroughly satisfactory. They accomplish as much in a work day as the average negro, and are better morally.

Big Good Roads Era.

Hendersonville.—With approximately $100,000 available for good roads purposes, Henderson county is enjoying the greatest good-roads era in its history, as a result of which the principal highways of this community are receiving attention after neglect for many years.

The funds for road purposes are to be distributed in various sections of the county, $20,000 going to the Fletcher section in Hooper's Creek Township, and $25,000 for surfacing purposes in various sections of the county. In addition to this, the chain-gang force is doing splendid work on some of the thoroughfares.

Open Southern Branch.

Asheville.—That Asheville will be the Southern headquarters of the Woodbury-Foster Company, effective within a few weeks, is announced by W. H. Woodbury, secretary and treasurer of the concern, and one of Western North Carolina's leading lumbermen. The concern recently was chartered in the state of New York with an authorized capital of $50,000, of which amount $40,000 is paid in, it is stated. The president is E. H. Foster of New York city.

Another Hospital For Raleigh.

Raleigh.—A new hospital will be opened in Raleigh within a few weeks now, the building being about finished and the equipment, which is to be especially complete for medical, osteopathic and surgical treatment, being in process of installation. It will be known as the Mary Elizabeth Hospital. Drs. Harold Masscock and A. S. Tucker being in charge.

Lettuce Acreage Large.

Wilmington—Truckers in New Hanover County are especially active in getting their Spring crops planted and full advantage has been taken of the balmy weather of the past few days. The land has never been prepared for a crop better than this year and the outlook for a good yield is very promising, unless there should be very severe weather later. The acreage in lettuce this Spring will be unusually large and the growers are losing no time in setting out the lettuce plants.

For Cleaner Cities.

Asheville.—The Civic Betterment League of Asheville has started a movement looking to the holding of rallies throughout the state in the interest of cleaner cities and has written to the organizations of Charlotte, Raleigh, Greensboro, Winston-Salem and Wilmington asking their co-operation in the movement. It is planned to hold public meetings which will be featured by the addresses of prominent citizens who are interested in in the work of making cleaner cities and towns.