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RALPH CONNOR Author of

The Man From Glengarry "Clengary School Days" and "Black Rock"

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CHAPTER I. THE FOOTHILLS COUNTRY.

EYOND the great prairies and in the shadow of the Rockies He the foothills. For 900 miles the prairies spread themselves out in vast level reaches, and then begin to climb over softly rounded mounds that ever grow higher- and sharper till, here and there, they break Into jugged points and at last rest upon the great bases of the mighty mountains. These rounded hills that Jofn the prairies to the mountains form the foothill country They extend for ribut a 1 indred miles only, but no other hundred miles of the great west are so full of interest and romance. The natural features of the country combine the beauties of prairie and of mountain scenery. There are vaileys so wide that the farther side melts into the horizon, and uplands so vast as to suggest the unbroken prairie. Nearer the mountains the valleys dip deep and

ever deeper till they narrow into can-

yous through which mountain torrents

pour their blue gray waters from

glaciers that lie glistening between the

white peaks far away. Here are the great ranges on which feed herds of cattle and horses. Here are the homes of the ranchmen, in whose wild, free, lonely existence there mingles much of the tragedy and comedy, the humor and pathos, that go to make up the romance of life. Among them are to be found the most enterprising, the most during, of the peoples of the old lands. The broken, the outeast, the disappointed-these too have found their way to the ranches among the foothills. A country it is whose sunlit hills and shaded valleys reflect themselves in the lives of its people. for nowhere are the contrasts of light and shade more vividly seen than in the homes of the ranchmen of the Al-

The experiences of my life have confirmed in me the orthodox conviction that Providence sends his rain upon the evil as upon the good; else I should never have set my eyes upon the foothill country, nor touched its fascinating life, nor come to know and love the most striking man of all that group of striking men of the foothill countrythe dear old Pilot, as we came to call him long afterward. My first year in college closed in gloom. My guardian was in despair. From this distance of years I pity him. Then I considered him unnecessarily concerned about me -"a fussy old hen," as one of the boys suggested. The invitation from Jack Dale, a distant cousin, to spend a summer with him on his ranch in south Alberta came in the nick of time. I was wild to go. My guardian hesitated Leave Aberdeen, 8.30 a. m. leave Leavitts, 8.45 a. m.; leave J netion, 8.30 a. m.; leave Montrose, 9.40 a. m.; leave Timberland, 9.15 a. m. leave Raeford 8.35 a. m. leave Dundarrosh, 9.50 a. m. leave Arabia, 1.00 a. m.; leave Rockfish, 10.15 a. m. leave Arabia, 1.00 a. m.; leave Rockfish, 10.15 a. m. leave Treefall, 10.45 a. m. more trouble by going than by staying. m; arrive Hope Mills, 11.15 a. m. Hence it was that, in the early sum-Hence it was that, in the early sum-Daily except Sunday Mail and Excress, No. 9. mer of one of the eighties, I found myself attached to a Hudson Bay comn. | pany freight train, making our way from a little railway town in Montana

Our train consisted of six wagons All trains coming over Bethesda Hill must and fourteen yoke of oxen, with three a under perfect control. C. N. BLUE. cayuses, in charge of a French half breed and his son, a lad of about sixteen. We made slow enough progress, but every hour of the long day, from the dim, gray, misty light of dawn to the soft glow of shadowy evening, was for two more large rooms. T. A. Nor. full of new delights to me. On the evening of the third day we reached the line Stopping Place, where Jack Dale met us. I remember well how my heart beat with admiration of the easy grace with which he sailed down upon us in the loose jointed cowboy style, swinging his own bronco and the little caynse he was leading for me into the circle of the wagons, careless of ropes and freight and other impedimenta. He flung himself off before his bronco had come to a stop and gave me a grip that made me sure of my welcome. It was years since he had seen a man from home, and the eager joy in his eyes told of long days and nights of lonely yearning for the old

> days and the old faces. I came to understand this better after my two years' stay among these hills that have a strange power on some days to waken in a man longings that make his heart grow sick. When supper was over we gathered about the little fire while Jack and the half breed smoked and talked. I lay on my back looking up at the pale, steady stars in the deep blue of the cloudless sky and listened in fullness of contented delight to the chat between Jack and the driver. Now and then I asked a question, but not too often. It is a listening silence that draws tales from a western man, not vexing questions. This much I had learned already from my three days' travel. So I law and listened, and the tales of that night are mingled with the warm evening lights of laughter, "worth \$5 any day." and the pale stars and the thoughts of home that Jack's coming seemed to

Next morning before sunup we had somewhat upon the point of view, but broken camp and were ready for our I merely agreed with him, only too sophy. fifty mile ride. There was a slight drixzle of rain and, though rain and shine were alike to him, Jack insisted that I should wear my mackintosh. This garment was quite new and had a loose cape which rustled as I moved toward

little animal with more white in his eye than I cared to see. Altogether, I did not draw toward him. Nor did be to me, apparently. For se I took him by the bridle be sported and sidled about with great swiftness and stood facing me with his feet planted firmly in front of him as if prepared to reject overtures of any kind seever. 1 tried to approach him with soothing words, but he persistently backed away until we stood looking at each other at the utmost distance of his outstretched neck and my outstretched

At this point Jack came to my assist nnce, got the pony by the other side of the bridle and held him fast till I got into position to mount. Taking a firm grip of the horn of the Mexican saddle, I threw my leg over his back. The next instant I was flying over his head My only emotion was one of surprise. the thing was so unexpected. I had fancied myself a fair rider, having had experience of farmers' colts of divers kinds, but this was something quite new. The half breed stood looking on, mildly interested, Jack was smiling. but the boy was grinning with delight "I'll take the little beast," said Jack But the grinning boy braced me up and I replied as carelessly as my shaking voice would allow

"Oh, I guess I'll manage him," and once more got into position. But no sooner had I got into the saddle than the pony sprang straight up into the air and lit with his back curved into a bow, his four legs gathered together and so absolutely rigid that the shock made my teeth rattle. It was my first experience of "bucking." Then the little brute went seriously to work to get rid of the rustling, flapping thing on his back. He would back steadily for some seconds, then, with two or three forward plunges, he would stop as if shot and spring straight into the upper nir, lighting with back curved and legs rigid as iron. Then he would walk on his hind legs for a few steps, then throw himself with amazing rapidity to one side and again proceed to buck with victous diligence.

"Stick to him!" yelled Jack through shouts of laughter. "You'll make him sick before long!"

I remember thinking that unless his insides were somewhat more delicately organized than his external appearance would lead one to suppose the chances were that the little brute would be the last to succumb to sickness. To make matters worse, a wilder jump than ordinary threw my cape up over my head, so that I was in complete dark ness. And now he had me at his mercy, and he knew no pity. He kicked and plunged and reared and bucked, now on his front legs, now on his hind legs, often on his knees, while I in darkness could only cling to the horn of the sad-

At last, in one of the gleams of light that penetrated the folds of my enveloping cape. I found that the horn had slipped to his side, so the next time he came to his knees I threw myself off. I am anxious to make this pint clear, for from the expression of trumph on encomiums of the pony I gathered that for 3. etc. he scored a win for the cayuse. Without pause that little brute continued even after my dismounting as if he were some piece of mechanism that must run down before it could stop.

By this time I was sick enough and badly shaken in my nerve, but the tri-



"Stick to him!" yelled Jack.

umphant shouts and laughter of the boy and the complacent smiles on the faces of Jack and the half breed stirred my wrath. I tore off the cape and, having got the saddle put right, seized & Co. and Dr. R. G. Rozier. Jack's riding whip, and, disregarding his remonstrances, sprang on my steed once more, and before he could make us his mind as to his line of action plied him so vigorously with the rawhide that he set off over the prairie at full gallop and in a few minutes came round to the camp quite subdued, to the boy's great disappointment and to along together they don't have to my own great surprise. Jack was high- keep telling every body so. ly pleased, and even the stol'd face of the half breed showed satisfaction.

"Don't think I put this up on you," Jack said. "It was that cape. He ain't used to such frills. But it was a circus," he added, going off into a fit

make pretty beeg fun, eh?" It seemed to me that it depended glad to be so well out of the fight.

All day we followed the trail that wound along the shoulders of the round into the wide, grassy valleys. Here ously with the problem of making | ILLUSTRATED topped hills or down their long slopes and there the valleys were cut through a \$1 bill stretch far enough to covby coulees through which ran swift, blue gray rivers, clear and ley cold.

walle from the hilltops we caught glimpses of little lakes covered with wild fow! that shricked and squawked and splashed, careless of danger. Now and then we saw what made a black spot against the green of the prairie, and Jack told me it was a rancher's shack. How remote from the great world, find how lonely it seemed this little black shack among these multitudinous bills!

I shall never forget the summer evening when Jack and I rode into Swan Creek. I say into, but the village was almost entirely one of imagination, in that it consisted of the Stopping Place, a long log building, a story and a half high, with stables behind, and the store in which the post office was kept and over which the owner dwelt. But the situation was one of great beauty. On one side the prairie rambled down from the hills and then stretched away in tawny levels into the misty purple at the horizon; on the other it clambered over the round, sunny tops to the dim blue of the mountains beyond

In this world, where it is impossible to reach absolute values, we are forced to hold things relatively, and in contrast with the long, lonely miles of our ride during the day these two houses, with their outbuildings, seemed a center of life. Some borses were tied to the rail that ran along in front of the Stopping Place.

"Hello!" said Jack. "I guess the Noble Seven are in town."

"And who are they?" I asked. "Oh," he replied, with a shrug, "they are the clite of Swan Creek, and, by Jove," he added, "this must be a permit night."

"What does that mean?" I asked, as we rode up toward the tie rail.

"Well," said Jack in a low tone, for some men were standing about the door, "you see, this is a prohibition country, but when one of the boys feels as if he were going to have a spell of sickness he gets a permit to bring in a few gallons for medicinal purposes, and, of course, the other boys being similarly exposed, he invites them to assist him in taking preventive measures, and," added Jack, with a solemn wink, "it is remarkable, in a healthy country like this, how many epidemics come near catching us."

And with this mystifying explanation we joined the mysterious Company of the Noble Seven.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Puzzling Figures and a Joke.

Put down the year you were

Then add your age at your next birthday, provided it comes before Jan. 1; otherwise your last

Multiply the result by 1,000. From this subtract 694, 428.

Substitute for the resulting figures the corresponding letters of the face of the grinning boy and his the alphabet—A for 1, B for 2. C

The result will give the name for some seconds to buck and plunge by which you are probably known. This trick is given to suit the

For 1906 and for e ery year after that add an additional 1,000 to he amount to be subtracted-viz. for 190; make it 695,423, and so

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Reflections of a Bachelor.

A good way to respect people is not to get to intimate with them. You can put it down for a fact that when a busband and wife get

A girl can get so mad with you for mussing up her hair that she will forget to be mad with you for the reason you did it.

Women have extracted more val-"You bet!" said the half breed. "Dat's us and happiness from a cook book than from all the works that ever were written on mental philo-

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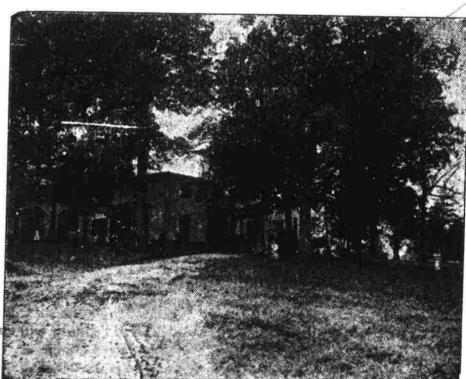
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