

# Ellen gets Her Man

THIRD INSTALLMENT

With axe and hammer and a handful of spikes, Benham went silently to work at the prow of the scow. With the poles spiked upright a length of tarpaulin

spread from the cargo, he fashioned a small enclosure. To finish it off he brought out the blankets Pierre Buschard had provided for her and placed them in the new-built cubby.

"When we tie up for the night the men shall gather you enough spruce tips for a comfortable couch," he announced. "This will afford you reasonable privacy."

Then, without another word or look he stowed the axe away, strode among his men and stood there, bringing out a short black briar pipe which he clenched affectionately in his teeth, to smoke calmly and disinterestedly.

The next halt was made at sundown. The scows were tied up, fires lit and the evening meal prepared. Benham himself did not come near her, but sent Pierre Buschard to her with several heaped dishes of savory, steaming food and a pannikin of scalding hot tea.

By the time she had finished her supper the Indians had brought numerous armfuls of fragrant spruce tips for her bed.

Ellen arranged her own couch, then, with sudden determination, went ashore. Benham faced her. "I'm going for a little exercise," she defiantly. "Or am I a prisoner?"

"Not in the least," was the quiet answer. "Only do not go too far. It is nearly dark and these woods are uncharted."

Unconsciously, Ellen stayed longer than she had intended. When she finally threaded her way back to the fire but a single figure remained seated before the fading flames. It was Benham. He looked at her without speaking.

A stir of response gripped Ellen. She knew he had been awaiting her return. "I'm sorry," she said, quietly. "Sorry if I've kept you from your rest. But something it seemed that I had at last come home, after being away too long. I won't offend this way again. I realize I am very much in your debt."

Benham nodded. "I understand," he said, softly. "I too have been away—and come home. And I often sit late like this. It is at night that all this speaks. A brief gesture encompassed the wilderness about them."

Ellen was startled. Most men she had known in the north country became hardened to its beauties. But there was something almost poetic in John Benham's simple words and tone. In some intangible way it seemed that a bond of friendship of common understanding between them was born there at that moment.

For a long time Ellen stood there, across the flames from this strange, still, elemental man. Her mind seethed with tranquil thoughts, and words that frightened her lay close to her lips. Then one of the sleeping Indians stirred in his blankets. The spot

was broken. Ellen moved away. "Good-night," she called softly. "Good-night—John Benham."

The low, sturdy log buildings which comprised the Hudson Bay Post at Fort Edson, were spread out against the rising slope of a low, thickly-wooded ridge which mounted from a short beach of shingle on the west shore of the Mackenzie River. The last and mother river of those three great streams which carried the brigades of the fur traders into the vast bosom of the north.

Down the Athabasca River to Lake Athabasca, from there along the broad, smooth reaches of the Slave River to Great Slave Lake, then at last into the twisting flood of the Mackenzie, John Benham's brigade had found its way. Long, dreamy days and still, mysterious night had passed in number since the day of the start, and now, at the death of still another day, the brigade tied up there on the beach below Fort Edson.

Side by side on the leading scow, Ellen Mackay and John Benham stood in silence and watched the end of the journey materialize out of the gathering river mists. A strange camaraderie had grown between these two. Time, enforced companionship and youth, had worked slowly but surely upon them. They were not lovers in any sense of the word. If such fires burned within them, then such fires were smoldering ones, hidden, banked fires which would need to know the ache of absence before thoroughly and consciously realized. Yet each recognized in the other a kindred spirit, an understanding heart.

The parting was commonplace enough. Ellen stepped to the shore and her baggage was placed beside her. At the head of the scow by the fort buildings a group of Indians were gathering. Benham gestured towards this group.

"They will take care of your baggage," he said slowly. "It is best that I leave immediately."

Ellen hesitated. "That first day, below Cascade Rapids—the morning you discovered that I had stowed away—you spoke of exacting payment. I—what is that payment, John Benham?"

The look he bent upon her was fathomless. "I would save you from that payment if I could now. But I am afraid that you must pay, just the same. Not to me—but to others."

"I don't understand."

"You will," he held out his hand. "Good-bye, Ellen Mackay."

For a moment her hand trembled in his. Then he had stepped back on to the scow. His deep voice called orders. The Cree bent to the sweeps and a moment later the hungry river current was waiting him off into the mists.

Something gathered in Ellen's throat. She looked away and started feverishly up the slope. And now, coming towards her from the buildings was a little group of Indians, led by a stooped, shuffling, white-haired man.

Ellen looked aghast. "Father!" she cried. "Father!"

She flew to him, to this stooped and gnarled patriarch. What had happened? When she had left, four years before, this father of hers had been tall, ruddy and smart, almost as tall and stalwart as John Benham. And now—

How thin were his hunched shoulders! How feeble his step! He began to sob.

It seemed that neither could speak intelligently now. Slowly they climbed the slope together and entered the factor's cabin.

It was dusky in the cabin. The door closed behind them and the old man sank into a chair with a deep, quivering sigh. "So you have come at last, lass," he said, and his voice was thin and high. "I was afraid—afraid ye had forgotten me, when Do Soto passed without ye."

Ellen looked at him wide-eyed.

"Father—could you believe that? There was hurt reproach in her voice. "I came immediately. I am a Mackay," she finished proudly. "Thank God for that, lass. And who was it that brought ye?"

Before she thought the name slipped out. "John Benham."

The old factor seemed to reel in his chair. His sagging head came up. His hands gripped the arms of the chair in bloodless intensity. He stared at her like a man glimpsing some fearsome ghost. His tongue flickered over his lips.

"Ye came with—who?"

Something icy closed about Ellen's heart. Yet she had to answer. "With John Benham, father. He—he was very kind to me, where he had reason, perhaps, to be otherwise."

The old man started to his feet and began to laugh, in high, shrill, senile cacklings. He stumbled to and fro across the confines of the room. Suddenly the laughter ceased and he began to curse—curse with a venom that was ghastly.

"Damn him!" he shrieked. "Damn him! He's taken everything from me now. All he had left to me was a woe bit of pride—and now he has taken that. You—the daughter of Angus Mackay—travelled from yon distant land to this fort with that squaw's whelp, that thieving free-trader. And mark ye, little fool, he'll boast of it. Great God! Why did not the sickness of last winter take me off? I would have been spared this—spared this!"

Ellen was both sickened and frightened. There was something ghastly about this old man's walling rage and his imprecations. And this father of hers, who had wasted away to such a shell, seemed almost like another person to her. But she drew upon her young strength and went to him. Quietly but remorselessly she forced him back into his seat and dropped upon her knees beside him. She attempted to soothe him with words such as she would have used on a child.

"You must rest, father. You are not well. You have been too long alone. I am young and strong. You must let me take most of the load from your shoulders. I have not forgotten how to handle the Indians or to grade a fur."

Again the old factor laughed and it seemed to Ellen that all the elements of despair were in that laugh. He was shaking; a man palsied by the scalding outpourings of rage and hate. Over and over again he muttered the name of John Benham, cursing and reviling. It was long before he quieted, and the reaction left him weak and shrunken. His eyes, staring out beneath shaggy brows were glazed and bloodshot. He panted weakly for breath.

At that moment all the murky shadows in the world seemed to close in on Ellen Mackay. During those thoughtless, carefree years which she had spent at school, some great tragedy had been enacted here in the fastnesses of the north. Alone and in silence this father of hers had fought some great, overwhelming misfortune, to be slowly beaten down and shattered until it seemed that even his reason was tottering. And the cause of his misfortune had been John Benham. John Benham.

Something stirred and surged through her veins. Behind her was a long line of fighting ancestors, a lineage reaching to the far, gorse covered highlands of Scotland. Here before her lay battle of another sort, yet battle none the less. With a click of her white teeth she caught up the gage. Gone in an instant were all memories of that thousand-mile trip from the north. In a flicker of an eyelash she placed John Benham in new status. An enemy now—an enemy who had shattered and brought near to death—her father.

At last the insanity of rage left Angus Mackay. One thin hand came out and rested on Ellen's dark head caressingly. "Forgive me, lass," he murmured. "But only the great God knows what I have been through. It is hard, at my age, to see defeat and disgrace looming just before the grave."

It was late when she kissed her father good-night and went to her room, the cozy little cubby that had been hers since a babe in swaddling clothes. A shaded lamp suffused it with a gentle, homely glow. It was carpeted with deep, rich furs, even to the enormous hide of a polar bear, in the gleaming pelage of which she sank to her slender ankles.

Prepared by the loving hands of Gitcheo, her bed lured her beneath a spotless counterpane. On a little table in one corner was a



## ROGER BABSON CALLS MOTOR STRIKE 'DRAW'

Tampa, Fla., Feb. 11.—Roger W. Babson, statistician and former assistant secretary of labor, today called settlement of the General Motors strike "a draw" with victory for both sides and an indication of improving business and general prosperity.

At the same time he predicted more strikes, but said they should not disturb business because they would serve as a balance wheel to check too rapid advancement.

"Incidentally," he said, "I know the administration at Washington does not object to having a little sand thrown into the machinery at this time. The stock market has been going up too fast and the President has claimed credit for returning prosperity. He must hold business back to prevent it from reaching a peak and starting to fall off before the next election."

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question: Should eggs be candied after they are placed in the incubator?

Answer: Yes. All eggs should be candied on the seventh day and the dead germs and infertiles removed. A home-made candler may be made by placing a lamp in a box that has a four inch opening at the top. A one and one-half inch hole should be cut in the side of the box and on a level with the flame. In candling place the large end of the egg in the side opening and remove all those showing clear with the yolk slightly visible. Candling should be done in a dark room or at night.

J. C. Byrd, of Harnett county, recently killed 23 hogs from which he secured 8,000 pounds of pork.

bowl of wood violets, which Moosae had gathered and which filled the air with fairy incense. Swiftly she disturbed, blew out the light and slipped between cool, caressing sheets. But as she relaxed the darkness brought many thousands and many images. Try as she would she could not keep a certain picture from drifting before her closed eyes. It was that of John Benham, as she had seen him many times. He stood before her again, clean, splendid, powerful, his strong, still face grim and purposeful; his brilliant eyes adream with the mystery of the wilderness.

(Continued next week)

## Poll Shows Split in Senate Ranks Against Roosevelt's Court Bill

(By COLE E. MORGAN in Washington Herald)

The senate is widely split on the President's plan to increase the Supreme Court membership, the first detailed poll revealed.

More Senators are outspokenly against the proposal to increase the court to 15 members, than approve it, the poll showed.

Approximately one-third of the membership, however, is noncommittal.

The poll, taken yesterday, showed: For the President's court proposal, 22; leaning, 5.

Against the President's proposal, 26; leaning, 6.

Noncommittal, 29.

Absent, 8.

In taking the poll Universal Service asked each Senator this question: "What is your sentiment in regard to President Roosevelt's demand for power to enlarge the Supreme Court?"

The answers came back thick and fast.

No Republican came out in favor of the proposal. But, on the contrary, 14 Democrats split away from the President and declared their opposition to his court plan.

Breakdown of the poll showed: Twenty Democrats, one Progressive and one Farmer-Laborite were definitely for the proposal, with five additional Democrats leaning in that direction.

Definitely against the project were 12 Democrats, and 14 Republicans and one Independent leaning that way.

Of the 29 who were either noncommittal or undecided, 28 were Democrats and one Republican.

Eight members were not interrogated, either because of illness or absence from the city or both. Of these, seven were Democrats and one a Farmer-Laborite.

## Motivist 'Tailed' By Driverless Car

Newark, N. J.—Izzy Milkofsky drove from Irvington to Newark, followed closely by another automobile. Every turn he made, the following car did likewise. Nerves on edge, Milkofsky finally stopped to challenge the driver. The rear car was driverless and locked with his rear bumper.

Ads get attention—and results

## SKILLED LABOR SHORTAGE SEEN

For all the unemployment there is a shortage of building labor throughout the country, according to the National Association of Building Trades Employers.

The association said yesterday 19 cities had complained of scarcity in bricklayers, iron workers or other building craft.

Representative Ellenbogen (D), of Pennsylvania, declared there was a housing shortage and the United States needed ten million new homes in the next decade.

## Sagas of the Lost Provinces

Song of the Branch  
I gurgle my uneven way along  
The rocks in spring. In summertime my voice  
Is stilled and thirst possesses me until  
A meager shower slakes my dusty course.

In autumntime I reach normality. When winter's rains pour down the mountainsides,  
I feel as if my sides would burst.

Oh, man!  
Why did you cut down all the pine that once  
Would hold the water and relieve my pain?

The slop that comes from yonder distant still  
Fills all my being with a giddy sense  
That deadens thought and desecrates my song.

Last year a man was shot and thrown into  
The boiling mash: I heard his cry of pain  
And anguish, felt his warm and brackish blood  
That mingled with my waters. Oh, the sin!

How can a human being drink that stuff  
That finds its origin in sugar, frogs and blood?

Away up in the hills a mountain spring  
So pure, so cool, so unadulterate,  
Pours forth his bounty to my eager mouth,  
But when, in turn, I give my larger store,  
To Yarkin's ready channel—it is warm,  
Impure, and filled with every-

thing from slop  
To empty shells and cigarette  
and oil.  
A dirty handkerchief, and empty  
cans,  
So that I am ashamed and hide  
my face.  
—William Dalsell Traders,  
Ferguson, N. C.

In Lenoir county, 371 farmers had the farm agent reclean 4143 quarts of tobacco seed during January.

Three 4-H club members of Cumberland county are growing Yellow Danvers onions as a new club project for the county.

## NEW SAFETY FOR BABIES

Mother, most hospitals now protect their babies against germs and skin-infection by rubbing Mennen Antiseptic Oil all over the baby's body—every day. This keeps the baby's skin smoother, softer, lovelier and SAFER. So, mother, do as hospitals do, as doctors recommend. Give your baby a safety-rub with Mennen Antiseptic Oil daily through his diapers. See your druggist.

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### Sentinels of Health

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Nature designed the kidneys to do a marvelous job. Their task is to keep the flowing blood stream free of an excess of toxic impurities. The act of living—(life itself)—is constantly producing waste matter the kidneys must remove from the blood if good health is to endure.

When the kidneys fail to function as Nature intended, there is retention of waste that may cause body-wide distress. One may suffer nagging backache, persistent headache, attacks of dizziness, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes—feet tired, nervous, all worn out.

Frequent, scanty or burning passages may be further evidence of kidney or bladder disturbance.

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