

The Red Road

A Romance of Braddock's Defeat

By

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SYNOPSIS

Impoverished by the open-handed generosity of his father, Virginia gentleman, young Webster Brond is serving as a scout and spy for the army under General Braddock preparing for the advance on Fort Duquesne. He has just returned to Alexandria from a visit to the fort, where, posing as a Frenchman, he has secured valuable information. Braddock, bred to European warfare, fails to realize the importance of the news. Brond is sent back to Fort Duquesne, also bearing a message to George Croghan, English emissary among the Indians. Brond joins his friend and fellow scout, Round Paw, Indian chief, and they set out.

CHAPTER II—Continued

In silent companionship we followed the valley of the Shenandoah and crossed the Potomac two miles west of the Conococheague and made camp in a grove of oaks. While the squirrels were broiling over the coals, Round Paw again renewed the white paint on his chest. It struck me as peculiar that he should be so persistent in making himself fit for war when for once the Western country was safe for the English and with but little likelihood of the French and their red allies ever being able to bring us the red hatchet.

The campaign against Crown Point and Niagara might fall for a time, but the conquest of Duquesne was assured. With that stronghold in our hands, we should be freed from fear from the hands of the Ohio to Lake Erie. Even those Indians in western Pennsylvania who were inclined to help the French dare not take the warpath until they knew the outcome of Braddock's expedition. So, if ever there was a time when the back-country settlers felt warranted in staying by their spring crops and leaving the blockhouses unoccupied it was now. Yet Round Paw kept his paint fresh and was most particular in dressing his hair.

At the risk of violating his sense of etiquette, I remarked on the uselessness of it all. Without ceasing his labors he told me:

"Onas and Onontio—the governor of Canada—are on a red path that is very long. More than one hunting-snow-and-October-will come before the hatchet is buried."

I did not believe it.

We were up at sunrise and soon had crossed the creek and turned north to make McDowell's place. We had covered a mile or so when we came upon a most interesting spectacle. Two men, with horse-bells around their necks and their arms tied behind them, were harnessed together with rawhide thongs, and were being driven like a team of horses by a tall ungainly youth. The driver held the lines in one hand and flourished a drover's long whip in the other. His light reddish hair escaped in all directions from his ragged fur hat and gave him the appearance of being hugely surprised.

"What have the men done?" I inquired, pausing and leaning on my rifle.

"Ding them most mortally! But they've done enough," he cried, with a side glance of curiosity at the Indian. "And I don't have to tell every wild man of the woods what I'm doing, or why I'm doing it."

"That's true," I agreed. "But we can see what you're doing. My friend here says they are Frenchmen and that he believes you will boll and eat them."

The poor devils set up a most dolorous howling. The redhead scowled with his eyes and laughed with his big mouth. He hardly knew whether to approve of us, or take offense. But the terror of his prisoners decided him, and with a loud guffaw he cried:

"That would be a fetching joke on the two of them! B'iled in a kettle! Lord's law! But they would look comical jammed in a kettle!"

Now that his temper was softened he explained further:

"These infernal scoundrels stole two bells from Ben the Great cove drover at the mill last night. I'm working for him. The fools could 'a' got away if they'd know'd enough to hide the bells somewhere while they kept hid. But they took 'em along with them and I follered the noise and caught them early this morning. Now they're taking the bells back. Whoa, his! Stand still there, you devil, or I'll tan your jacket nineteen to the dozen!" And to bind his promise he cracked the whip and elicited a rare yell.

"In God's great mercy, sit, help us!" pleaded the prisoner on the outside.

"We was about to follow the Carlisle road bound for Philadelphia. We'd have no need for bells after we'd reached Shippensburg or Carlisle. We did but borrow them. He would have

found them waiting for him when he came back."

"Not need my bells, you d-d rascals! What would Philadelphia folks think of me driving horses along their road without bells? How would I find them if they strayed while I was there?" And he punctuated each query with a clever slash apiece.

"If they stole your bells, you serve them right. Thieves should be well whipped, so their welts will burn when tempted to steal again. We'll keep you company to the mill."

He now took time to explain how he had hired out two days before to go with the drover, who was driving some cattle through the Eastern settlements.

"I'm Balsar Cromit," he added. "I live at the mill, or two miles below it, with Richard and John Craig. Made



"Told You Not to Do It, Ben"

It look bad when these rascals stole the bells right after I took service with Ben. It hurt my feelings most dingly.

Our presence proved to be a favor to the rogues, for Cromit became so interested in asking questions that he forgot to swing the whip.

That Cromit had great confidence in his physical powers was shown by his eager offer to wager three months' pay against my powder-horn that he could outshoot me, outrun me or pin me to the ground in wrestling.

"You should be with Braddock's army," I told him. "Three pounds if you enlist. A fine red coat and a fine new musket."

"A rifle's worth more'n all the muskets ever made," he said.

"A rifle then. The army needs men who know the woods. Or you could drive a wagon."

"If old Braddock can wait till I get back from Philadelphia, maybe I'll help him. But if he's one of them sass-an-pepper men, him and me won't pull together at all."

McDowell's settlement consisted of the mill and half a dozen cabins scattered along the horse-path that struck into the Shippensburg, Carlisle and Harris' Ferry road a short distance beyond the Craig place. Cromit halted his prisoners near the Widow Cox's house, close by the mill.

A man with a beard that reached to his waist was lounging under a tree. On our approach, he rose to his feet and stretched his long arms and lounged toward us, saying:

"So you've fetched 'em back, Balsar. You're going to be a likely helper."

"I went a-purpose to fetch 'em back," grinned Cromit as he untied the prisoners' hands and ordered them to replace the stolen bells.

The thieves did their work with all

the alacrity their benumbed fingers would permit; and, while they frantically bestirred themselves, the drover leisurely peeled off his "warmus," or sleeveless undercoat, and remarked:

"Too bad McDowell and his men ain't here to see the fun, but word was brought right after you left last night, Balsar, that there is to be some rare witch-hunting in Great cove and every one's gone over the mountains to see how the job's done."

Stretching his arms to lumber up his powerful muscles, he examined two long whips and tested them. Cromit grinned at me and nodded toward his employer. To the badly frightened rogues, he softly advised:

"Let's see how fast you can make your heels fly."

They were off the moment he finished, racing madly over their back-track. The drover heard the scuffling of their feeble feet and turned about just as the two turned one side and dived into a bush growth. Bawling wrathfully for them to halt, he started on a lumbering run but soon gave it up and came back to where we stood. Cromit was unable to conceal his glee.

"Why did you let them serpents run loose, Balsar?" demanded the drover.

"Lor, Ben! he've been licked and walloped almost every step of a good ten mile."

"And who be you, you worthless lout, to say when thieves have had their comeuppance?" bellowed the drover, letting his rage run wild. "Stand clear of them two men."

"Now, Ben, don't you do it," advised Cromit, his reddish brows working up and down. "I'm telling you, don't you do it. I ain't no nigger, or thief. I shan't take it kindly, Ben. I'll hate it most mortally."

With an animal howl the drover drew back his long arm and lashed at the tall awkward figure. With the scream of a panther making a night kill, Cromit's long body shot through the air, his blue eyes burning with murder, his wide mouth opened to its fullest extent. As he crashed against the drover he half-laughed, half-sobbed:

"I told you not to do it, Ben."

They went down in the dirt, a most bewildering swirl of legs and arms, but they had kicked up the dust for only part of a minute before Cromit was erect again, grinning and spitting blood. The drover remained on his back and looked as if Braddock's army, heavy guns and all, had marched over him. His face was covered with blood and there were bloody finger-prints on his dark throat.

Believing the man was dead, I kneeled to examine him. Cromit kept up his chattering laugh as he watched me. Round Paw glided forward and stared at the damaged visage and wounded throat and gave a loud "Yoh-hah!"—his way of expressing amazement or approval. With a fendish finger-strength, Cromit had all but torn the man's throat open.

"He will make a warrior," gravely said Round Paw as he resumed his stolid bearing and stepped back to show the spectacle had no further interest for him.

"I'd have had his gullet open like the split craw of a fowl in another jiffy," whined Cromit. "But he'll be owing me two days and one night of work and I want my pay I asked him not to do it, but he was ever a masterful man."

The Widow Cox appeared from somewhere, and with the border-woman's quickness of perception she wasted no time in asking questions, but brought a noggin of rum which we poured down the injured throat. Then followed a bucket of water over the shaggy head. With a groan the drover regained his senses. He glared feebly at Cromit, who shook his head and said:

"It'll be a farning to you, Ben. I told you not to do it."

"You devil!" gasped the drover.

"Then all the more reason why I should be quitance with you. I'm off to march with Braddock's army. I've worked two days and a night for you—a whole night gitting the bells back—three days' work. You pay me and drive your own cattle."

Moaning and sighing, and taking on like one badly broken, the drover crawled to his feet, fished a bag of coins from the bosom of his shirt and counted out a small sum into Cromit's palm. Cromit turned to me and said:

"Now I'm ready to show old Braddock's army how to fight."

The Widow Cox spoke up and shrilly upbraided him:

"Shame on you, you lumbering dolt! You've hurt a most proper man."

"He'll be proper now, Mother Cox."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

WORLD SPLIT 50-50 ON RULES OF ROAD

Europe Presents Puzzle to Visiting American.

Washington.—Automobile drivers in the United States keep to the right.

Automobile drivers in England, Austria, Sweden, Argentina and Angola keep to the left.

How did these opposite customs arise?

"For the world divides roughly half and half on the rule of the motoring road," says a bulletin from the Washington (D. C.) headquarters of the National Geographic society.

"The present score is: Sixty of the nations and colonies favor the right-side drive; 43 cling to the left. Iraq added one to the right-side score when she decided to reverse the English rule of left-side driving, which has been in use there since the World war, and return to her former rule of keeping to the right.

Problem for Motorist.

"The need of a uniform rule is not so apparent in North America as in Europe. Consider the problem of a motorist who tries to drive from Norway to Italy through the Dolomites. He starts bravely out from Oslo, keeping to the right until he reaches the Swedish border. Thereupon he keeps to the left. Let him have his wits about him, because, when he ferries over to Denmark, he must again move over to the right of the road. Germany the same, he thanks heaven. Back again to the left in Czechoslovakia. And just as the bewildered motorist gets used to left driving in Austria he must steel his nerves to switch back to the right rule of the road in Yugoslavia and Italy.

"Probably our custom had its origin because it was natural to grasp weapons with the right hand while the left hand carried the shield over the heart on the left side of the body. From this it follows that armed men passed each other shield to shield, left hand to left hand.

"That fact accounts for the pedestrian custom of keeping to the right.

"Even in England the rule of the sidewalk or pathway is 'keep to the right.' How, then, did England acquire the custom of keeping to the left on highways?

"One student of the problem finds the origin of the practice in the habit of the English coachman of sitting on the right side of the coach driver's seat. He grasped the whip in his right hand. In passing another coach he wanted to be in a position where he could best prevent a collision. So he passed an oncoming coach on that coach's right. From his seat on the right of his coach he could see how near his wheels came to those of the other vehicle.

Rhyme Summarizes Code.

"The English rule of the road was made a law in 1835, but before that date this poem appeared in an English journal:

The law of the road is a paradox quite
As you're driving your carriage along;
If you go to the left you're sure to go right,
If you go to the right you go wrong.

"On the continent it was more frequently the custom for a postilion to guide the horses than a coachman. The postilion took his place at the left of the lead team in order to have his right hand free to grasp the nearest bridle. He also wanted to avoid collisions, but, being on the left, it was better for him to turn his horses to the right. Thus France and other European countries have the same rule of the road as the United States.

"It has been suggested that automobiles in America keep to the right because oxen did in the old days. Oxen were the draft animals most used in the colonies. The ox driver directed them by voice and whip. He held his whip in his right hand and trudged along on the left of the oxen and, therefore, turned to the right.

"All the countries of the New world keep to the right, except British Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Argentina, Uruguay and Prince Edward Island in Canada. The Far East follows the British, or left turning custom, almost unanimously: China, Japan, Siam and even the Philippines. That the Philippines should reverse the American custom is surprising. Generally as a country drives so drives the colony or protectorate. Nearly all British colonies follow the mother country's lead. Exceptions are Iraq, Palestine, Canada and British Guiana. Most French colonies keep to the right with France, but Angola has the left driving rule although Portugal stands by the 'right.'"

Fisherman Wins Fight Against Huge Octopus

San Mateo, Calif.—W. J. Terry of this city now is a full-fledged member of that small band of persons who have successfully combated and escaped an octopus.

While hunting abalones at Point Arena recently, Terry suddenly felt his legs jerked together. He was horrified to find himself in the grip of a 16-foot devilfish.

Terry's cries for help brought a companion to his assistance and for five minutes the two men fought the octopus before Terry escaped from the tentacles.

"Its body was as big as a dishpan, and its eyes the size of a cat's," was Terry's description of the monster.

BIG TOMCAT CASTS HOODOO ON SHIP

So It Walks Plank Into Shark-Strewn Sea.

New York.—The crew of the full-rigged ship, the Seven Seas, hove-to in the mouth of the Hudson river with a tale of a "sea devil with fur" that walked the plank into a shark-strewn sea.

Fifty-one days out of Cowes, Isle of Wight, the Seven Seas arrived here to become the property of Inglis Moore Uppercu, who intends to refit her for a junket to the South seas.

Uppercu thanked the 21 members of the crew for disposing of the "sea devil with fur," which, on closer question, turned out to be a black tomcat, appropriately christened "Old Hellion."

"Old Hellion" turned up seven days out of Cowes and the cook's dough turned sour almost immediately, it was said. Then the ship's charts were clawed to pieces and there were mutterings in the forward cabin about the way "Old Hellion" was treating the shepherd puppy that was the official ship's mascot. Then it developed that the cook had kissed a girl on the Isle of Wight and promised he would see to it that Alice was the only cat on board.

Alice, a blue ribbon around her neck, covered under the kitchen stove from the time "Old Hellion" raged into view and the cook passed the word on up to the fore-castle that no black tomcat was going to make a coward out of Alice.

The crew conferred and it doesn't matter what they decided, for "Old Hellion" was not to be found. Seaman C. H. Rassmussen started aloft when "Old Hellion" sprang out of nowhere onto his shoulder. Rassmussen couldn't shake him off, and aloft they went. Then the top gallant mast snapped and Rassmussen plunged in to the sea to be rescued promptly.

"Old Hellion" plunged, too, but there was no mention of a lifeboat putting out to save one of the black devil's nine lives.

London Bobby to Shed Old Bell Bottom Hat

London.—The famous bell bottom helmet and the straight-jacket tunic of the London bobby are to be relegated to the museum, and within a month the London cop will appear in a costume that will make him look more like a human being and less like a character in an Irish art theater play.

The high helmet will be supplanted by a neat peaked military cap and a military jacket will replace the tight tunic. The tremendous leather belt around the constable's midriff upon which is mounted an electric lamp of formidable proportions is going to go. Hereafter the policeman will carry an electric hand torch.

The double-breasted coat, about the thickness of a medium-sized steak, is also taboo. In its place will be worn a coat, open at the neck, with a storm collar for use the 95 days out of every 100 that English weather necessitates it. The color of the costume remains blue.

Town May Have to Move When Leases Expire

Austin, Texas.—An entire town built upon leased land must move on July 1, 1930, unless a new lease is arranged. The town is Best, Reagan county, a community of 1,500 population. Stores, churches and homes have been built on land upon which the lease expires in little more than a year.

Best sprang up five years ago as a result of discovery of oil in the vicinity. Both the oil and Best are on part of the land which Texas endowed its state university.

The university leased the townsite to P. L. Childress of Ozona, receiving a cash payment of \$1,152 and 20 per cent of the net proceeds of subleases. Four other prospective towns are to spring up on townsite leases made by the university in Ward county, if oil development takes place there, as in Reagan county.

The university received \$1,000 cash payment for each of these 640-acre leases and will also get 20 per cent of net proceeds of subleases if the towns are built.

Unreasonable!

Worcester, Mass.—Chaining that she had to wash her husband's feet six times a week, that he bought her a piano but objected to her taking music lessons, and that he once beat her for donating 25 cents to the Salvation Army, Mrs. Mary Georgeson has applied for a divorce here.

100-Year-Old Doll Still Used as Toy

Atlanta, Ga.—Christine Jones, six years old, claims she has one of the oldest dolls. The doll's appearance supports Christine's claims. It was made more than 100 years ago for a little girl in England and has been played with by a great many little mothers since then. There is barely the hint of a nose left and the once beautiful complexion has turned from cream and pink to almost black. The eyes have become slightly popped as the wax lids have worn away.

KAISER'S SISTER WRATHY

Defends Her Marriage; Will Join Husband.

Paris.—Princess Victoria, the Kaiser's sister, is angry with her critics in the Hohenzollern family and in Germany itself.

Her husband, the first Baron Zoubkoff, cheerfully explained that his wife was entirely but of sympathy with those who have protested the marriage, and stated further that Princess Victoria still thinks the world of him.

Zoubkoff himself is still the happy adventurer that he was, and despite the number of contracts that he has had offered him recently he has let them all pass, preferring to contemplate the world from the viewpoint of an aristocrat.

May Work Together.

"I am going to bring the princess to Paris," Zoubkoff said, "and, if necessary, we will go to work together. We might even open up a night club. The princess says she will work as a bar maid rather than yield to her critics. This is entirely possible, as the princess will do anything I tell her."

The princess herself is still furious with the officials of Buckeburg, the capital of the German principality of Schaumburg-Lippe, who have protested so actively against the ex-kaiser's sister marrying Zoubkoff. The princess said in a recent interview:

"The measure of brutalities and humiliations they have heaped upon me is full, and I shall defend myself to the last breath against the unchivalrous and malignant fighting methods of my antagonists. I do not believe there is anyone besides those nearest to me who realize what means my enemies have used to bring me to my knees. They may starve me to death, they may force me into the worst of calamities, but they can never break my will.

"I know the fight is directed not so much against my own person as against my husband. But my enemies at Buckeburg utterly fail to realize that their brutal tactics are driving me ever closer into the arms of those they so lovingly wish to liberate me from. I am alone. They have forcibly taken my husband from me. All the cares and problems of the last few months have fallen on me alone.

"What ridiculous nonsense it is to claim that my husband and I lawyers are exploiting me. We cannot rob where there is nothing to rob. The Buckeburgers have left me nothing, not one penny of annuity."

Princess Victoria admitted that her lawyers might conceivably have used strange methods to collect money for her, but she points out that, after all, money was necessary keep up her modest household.

Had Title Annull.

She said, further, that the officials at Buckeburg had by the annulment behind her back destroyed the title she properly possessed in the palace at Bonn. \$6 \$9

"Without warning, I told I must vacate the greater part of the palace and that certain parts would be within in for use of the Buckeburgers. The walls were built in, excluding my own drawing rooms and apartments. My house, thus arbitrarily rented to others, brings in £450 yearly, which I do not get. This is only one sample of my enemies' tactics.

"The worst of all is that I am longer in touch with my husband, because I have no longer use of the postal facilities; but I will stick to him through thick and thin."

"I long to be with him in Paris."

Ceremony Takes Place After 300-Year Wait

Washington.—A ceremony was just taken place in the city of Mantua Italy, which was planned for the year 1640. At that time, under the city ruler, Duchess Maria, arrangements were made to put a golden cross studded with jewels on the head of the statue of the Blessed Virgin, whose protection Mantua had long been placed, says the Pathos Magazine. But because of circumstances the ceremony did not place.

A second attempt was made a couple of centuries later and nothing was ready when Napoleon's army overran the town and the soldiers carried off the crown.

Finally another subscription was taken up for the crown, and it was at last been placed on the head of the statue, which waited nearly 300 years.

Too Many Bowlegs; Judge Rules

Lexington, Ky.—The family of J. Miller, residing near Irvin, in the southwest of here, is the family of bowlegged Kentucky, according to a revelation just made before Judge Holland in county court. The family has seven children and some bowlegged in bowlegs.

The father was recently taken before County Judge Holland on account of the hospital bureau, who endeavored to force him to have his children operated on to straighten their legs. After a long and fruitless problem Judge Holland ordered an operation was performed on Mary Miller, aged seven, and several years ago the same operation was performed on her other children.