

WHISPERING ROCK

by JOHN LEBAR

CHAPTER 18

Had she dumped a keg of gold coins among them, Ruth could not have created more joyous excitement...

Ruth told Snavely of the celebration. He had come into the kitchen on Friday morning...

On the night before the fiesta Ruth and Ann got little rest. They stayed up until ten o'clock...

By nine o'clock Saturday several horsemen and three wagonloads had arrived; the unfortunate heifer had been cooking whole for some hours...

Ruth noticed that nearly every one looked, sooner or later, toward the gulch. Once or twice, also, she saw a mother or father bring back some youngster who had wandered near the fence...

When the line was formed at dinner time the young man who was dominated by the green shirt went to the aid of the solitary celebrator and brought the music...

"Oh, I don't think they'll hurt anything," said the old man. "They'll yell until they go dry and then drop off to sleep. We can wake 'em up to-morrow or next day."

"There's another one well prepared for snake-bite," observed Will, watching a tall slender fellow with a blue sash who was talking volubly to Alfredo and gesturing toward the ranch house...

"Umm—ever seen that boy before, Ruth? Is he a friend of Alfredo's?" Old Charley was eying the action of the man, critically.

"Why, no, I don't think so," replied Ruth. "I've never seen him before."

"Looks as though he was beginning to take things seriously," observed Will a moment later. Alfredo had turned his back to the man, only to be pulled about again by a jerk on his shoulder.

Ruth saw a knife glint in his right hand. Old Charley caught his son's eye, then turned to the girl. "If you'd like, Ruth, you and me might go in and take a look at your round-up figures. If I get a line on what you have I can talk to the buyer when he comes to my place next week."

W. C. T. U. Notes

THE NEW YEAR

Another stage of time is left behind us. One less to come.

Another shortening of the link; that blind us. To Heaven and home: An urgent call to keep our lamps so bright.

Our garments girded so. That in the Master's summons came tonight. We stood prepared to go.

Another leaf is turned of Life's strange story. Its lines lead us to its picture shaded up from grief to glory.

Forever set; The past, as yet untrod. If marked by hope or sorrowful surprise, Is only known to God.

Our part, in lowly service still fulfilling. Each day's demands, With girded heart and hands by grace made willing. As He commands.

One step today, tomorrow one step more. The path we tread shall win. The homelike light shows our Father's door. His love shall lead us in. —J.L.H.

"ONE YEAR OF REPEAL" The utter rottenness of the liquor trade both in Canada and the United States is being held in view by the vicinity of strong and reliable writers.

John Haynes Holmes in the November "Christian Herald," has written an indictment of social conditions begotten by the twenty-first amendment to the American Constitution, which displaced the Prohibition Amendment under which the American Republic enjoyed moral and economical advantages that are now being realized as lost under legalized liquor sale and which had been in force for over a year.

This writer recalls the wet propaganda it furnished the same promises that were made to do the damage in Canada when Canadians were persuaded to yield provincial prohibition for so-called Government control of liquor.

A month before repeal took effect, a Massachusetts deputation came over to Quebec, as the fame of the Quebec liquor control law had travelled far, thanks to wet propaganda. This deputation had to return with the disheartening return to face, and every one was watching. Suddenly, the man swept off his big hat with his left hand and crouched low. Ruth, who in spite of Old Charley had stopped to watch through the window, saw a knife glint in his right hand. Alfredo, also, now crouched, knife in hand, his hat held out as a shield. The two men circled slowly about each other like a pair of game cocks. Will broke into a run. But Indian Ann was first. In two strides she had walked up to the man in the blue sash. She hit him once behind the ear with her fist, then returned to the barbecue pit where she had been cutting off the remaining meat with the idea of having it.

Will helped to revive the stricken man and later led him to where his saddle horse was tied. He talked with him for a moment, then the man mounted and jogged down the road, homeward low.

At one o'clock the priest arrived in a buckboard drawn by a pair of burros. Ruth went to greet him and found that he could not speak a word of English. He was fat, dirty, stupid, and the least interesting of her guests.

"When shall the marriage be?" asked Ruth as Alfredo came listlessly up to the ranch house porch about the time the priest arrived. Alfredo shrugged; his face was pitiful. "The papers have not come," he said mournfully, looking down the road.

"What in thunder will we do?" Old Charley asked. "We'll do it. We've got the bride, the groom, the priest, the music and the audience. The priest knows enough not to marry 'em without a license."

Ruth frowned thoughtfully. "Do you suppose the priest can read English?" "Don't suppose he can read anything."

"Wait a minute!" Ruth entered the house and returned shortly with a roll of parchment tied with a blue ribbon. She unrolled the crackling paper, and exhibited it silently to Old Charley and Will. It had a beautiful red seal.

"Say, you're a wonder!" Will turned to his father. "Now what do you say a college diploma is good for, hey that day Ruth wrote in her notebook: 'The wedding was solemnized on the front porch of the bride and groom's future home. The bride wore a beautiful veil of old Spanish lace, a handsome gown of white satin with a large shawl draped tastefully about the shoulders. The ensemble was strikingly set off by a pair of red pumps. The groom wore the conventional black corduroy."

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NEWSY NOTES

MORE REMINISCENCES

One of the Western Provinces is going to keep Boxing Day. I see, says, especially the glauk south ern so would tell you that Boxing Day is the day after Christmas: more explicitly that it is the next week day after that festival, as Sunday cannot be Boxing Day. Its origin has a pleasant Dickensian flavor: in olden times, merchants displayed a slotted box on the main counter, with a notification that this was a "Christmas Box" for the benefit of the apprentices and assistants. The customers dropped in topper or silver coins, as the spirit moved them; and the box was opened and its contents divided, on the 26th day of December. Such an event was, in the long run, bound to lend a festive character to the day, and eventually it became a public holiday under the name of "Boxing Day," although the box had long disappeared from the counter. The British public, however, still keep up the practice of giving a "Christmas Box"—now understood to be a small sum of money—directly to the errand boy, postman, carrier, and others who had served them well and faithfully during the year. During my sojourn in P. E. I. I lived for some years in a locality where each boxholder, at Christmas time, put a piece of money in a box addressed to the carrier. In his mail box. A kindly custom, and deserving of imitation.

About the year 588 King Athelric founded the Kingdom of Northumbria, which stretched from the river Humber, whence the name north to the Firth of Forth. The lowland Scot was, in that sense, a Northumbrian and remained so till the Norman Conquest parted the two nations. The Cheviot Hills became the natural boundary between the Kingdom of Scotland and England. The Scot nevertheless has been abiding interest in the affairs of his southern neighbour: his slogan was "Ay gang sooth!" whether for plunder, or in later days, commerce Newcastle upon Tyne was the first large city created after the war, and a great part of the population was Scottish; some estimated that fifty per cent could claim that nationality.

This made Newcastle a very lively place around the winter solstice, for the true Northumbrian planned his year with all the cheer and good things he could get, and a week later his Scottish neighbor soiced his exile by keeping New Year's Day in national style, which in those days meant usquebauch galore!

The oldest church in Newcastle, dedicated to Scotland's patron saint, St. Andrew—which by the way did not prevent his countrymen from bombarding the edifice and almost ruining it when they besieged the town in 1614 and an inscription on the west arch states that it was built in the year 1100. With a record like that one could have looked for our Canadian friends to "play up to the old church" but no, for some unexplained reason they left it to rot. It was in St. Nicholas's Square on the New Year's Eve—hundreds of them. All the varieties of the "Doris" were blended in a merry medley, but I cannot recollect of having heard the Gaelic. The noise and laughter were deafening, and every one seemed to be talking at once. The Square was brilliantly lighted up and in the centre was the clock tower of St. Nicholas's Cathedral, with its illuminated dials high above all. As the night wore on, the music grew louder and louder, and the air was filled with the sound of three-gill bottles in production from the inside top-coat pocket! Then comes a thunderous stroke from the Major, eleven times solemnly repeated: the "Major" could be heard seven miles away on a still night. That is the signal, and the bottles are passed from hand to hand as the bearers wish each other a good New Year. Half an hour later, a first messenger, like Marius in the ruins of Carthage, picks his way carefully among the broken glass. One New Year's day the authorities removed three cartloads of broken bottles.

It did not terminate the night's adventures. The "Kinty Scot" then went first-footing. This was rather a serious business in one way, since prosperity in the coming year was linked up with the personality of the first foot to cross the threshold on New Year's day. No man if he had had a red, blond or brunette, could be a first foot without bringing bad luck to all in the house. In the old paintings of the Last Supper Judas is painted with a red hair and beard merely to distinguish him from the rest of the disciples; and from this has come down a belief that a "red-head" as a first-foot is unlucky. In order to further enhance the value of his visit the first foot brought in a gift, usually a piece of coal, representing the source of the Scotch's prosperity. The host then produced a plateful of spice-loaf—which is here called fruit cake I believe—and a decanter of the national beverage to which full justice was done!

Then came the fourth and the three-gill bottle (a pint and a half) cost three shillings for whiskey of fair quality, and five shillings for the best. This explains the abundance of the cup that cheered in the long long years; now that the price has increased so, the first-footing will no doubt be what the poet calls a "maimed rite."

The coal trade was the basis of Tyneside's prosperity, but the Scotch immigrant was too shrewd to engage in an occupation which promised plenty of hard work, and little chance of advancement. Instead, we find that he preferred a career either as merchant or engineer, and no matter how humble was its commencement it was not a long period till he was holding a responsible position in his chosen occupation. The Englishman when his daily work was over, turned to some form of amusement and above everything, objected to "talking shop." The Scot spent his leisure under some tutor who was able to "give him points" which would be useful later on.

Newcastle owed its latter day prosperity to the genius of a descendant of a Scottish family, William Armstrong was a young lawyer who hung out his shingle in the ancient "town" but his friends noted with misgiving, that he spent much of his spare time in a little shack he had rented on the banks of the river. This was shortly after the Crimean War and Armstrong was experimenting with field and siege guns, while up to that time had been muzzle-loaders firing round shot. The young inventor perfected a breech-loading rifled cannon firing an elongated shell, which proved so effective that the British government adapted the design of the inventor. A factory arose on the site of the old shack and in the course of the years increased in extent and capacity: before I left that locality it had stretched along the river-side for five miles, and the factory employed 34,000 men in iron castings, and 8,000, and it was a remarkable sight to see that immense human tide surge from the factory gates after work was over for the day. Naturally such activity was very attractive to our Scottish friends and many became mechanics, carpenters and draughtsmen at "Armstrong's."

One of the Armstrong 70-pounders fired a six-inch shell through eleven inches of wrought iron, during an official test. Now for a change let us talk about the fish-folk. Near the mouth of the Tyne was the little fishing village of Cullercoats, with a fleet (in those days) of forty cobbles, as the boats were called. These boats were regarded with considerable interest by the casual visitor, on account of the ingenuity expended in their construction. They bore the name of mother, wife or sweetheart, others the name of some of the virtues as Amity, Gratitude, etc. the quaintest were the Cock Robin, the British fish-wife, the Gull, and the Ancient Promises.

To each coble was a crew of three men and a boy, but the success of the venture depended very much on the women who were helpmates indeed. The fish-wives prepared the bait, carried the fishing-gear to the boats, and above all, they were fish in all the towns and villages on Tyneside.

St. Walter Scott in the "Antiquary" makes us familiar with the fish-wife Mucklebackit, and the Cullercoats fish-wife in Burns' "The Fish-wife's Lament" and the Ancient Promises. To each coble was a crew of three men and a boy, but the success of the venture depended very much on the women who were helpmates indeed. The fish-wives prepared the bait, carried the fishing-gear to the boats, and above all, they were fish in all the towns and villages on Tyneside.

As readers are aware, the railway passenger-coaches are divided into compartments. In the arrangement which lends itself to rapid handling of the passenger traffic. This just suited the fish-wives who kept their own cobbles in-trail. So matters went on for years till the N.E.R. Co. electrified the local lines and introduced the long coaches with a central aisle. The fishwives were constrained to use the coaches but didn't the other passengers object! After a great deal of complaint the railway company proposed to run special coaches for our heroines, who waxed indignant at the idea of segregation, and a most acrimonious correspondence took place in the newspapers. All these difficulties, I am told, were solved by the advent of the automobile, and no longer do the fishwives patrol the streets and country lanes. They enter the market in their own private cars and become the mothers of children too magnificent to follow the retail trade. All things are become new, and the spirit of progress has driven out their laden creels, and their rows of tucks!

WHY THE DROUGHT? It has long been the opinion of scientists that the last great Ice Age is still on the wane, and great point out the gradual recession of Alpine and other glaciers as proof. An article in a contemporary by Mr. B. Cotsworth of London, England, links this up with the droughts which have afflicted this continent for some years past, and have also been felt in Britain. "The Grand Pacific and the Muir glaciers in Alaska have melted back from the front more than half a mile each year (for the thirteen years 1894 to 1907) and thereby released 2,000 acres of land yearly." The winds which formerly brought the moisture from these areas to the south-western coast of England, and the northern sections of Montana and Dakota, are now dry winds. The moisture is diverted in a northerly direction to the Greenland ice-cap, which is increasing in thickness. This great Muir glacier is known to have receded twenty-one miles since 1818.

KEEPS PULPIT FOR ANGLICANS PETERBOROUGH, England, Jan. 2.—(Canadian Press)—Explaining why he closed Peterborough Cathedral pulpit to nonconformist preachers Bishop C. M. Blagden said members of his flock had been offended because other than Anglican clergymen had been invited to preach there.

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox Farming



The London fur auctions are getting off to a good start. For the variety this saw the following is the number of skins reported for the various companies. Hudson's Bay Company 25,000, C. M. Lamson & Co. 24,000, Frederick Huth & Co. 17,000, Anning & Cobb 10,000, total 80,000. Other concerns approximately 4,000, making a grand total of upwards of 80,000 skins, the largest number ever offered at a January sale in London.

Where did they come from? Norway, Sweden, United States, West Canada, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island. Of that vast number we think a safe guess would be 15,000 from Prince Edward Island. Our season being late we are not represented as heavily at this auction in London as we usually are in January.

We hope the auction companies will exercise a reasonable discretion in selling the above pelts which no doubt they will. The great trouble is that it is impossible for the buyers to give even a cursory inspection to such a vast number. Many of them arrive in London only a few days before the sales start and have the opportunity of seeing only one concerns furs and not all of them.

The present procedure is for Hudson's Bay to lead off, followed by Lampons, Huth and Anning & Cobb in the order named. As soon as the Hudson's Bay have finished selling the auctioneer will take up the cudgel for Lampons and so on. The selling is all done at the Hudson's Bay Company's auction room.

For those who are not familiar with the method of procedure at an auctioning furs, perhaps it would be well for us to go over it in short metre. Presuming one is interested in Frederick Huth & Company's Silver Fox sale, he goes to that company's place of business in London and registers as a buyer, giving name and address. If credentials are satisfactory he is handed a white coat and a catalogue and shown to the fur warehouses where the Silver Fox is on display.

Helpers are furnished who take the furs off the racks according to the numbers desired. The buyer places them on one of the tables, books them over, marks descriptions and prices with the numbers they are worth opposite the numbers in the catalogue. A very smart chap can get through about 2,000 skins between 9.30 A. M. and 4 P. M.

At the auction room the auctioneer calls out the lot number which is also indicated by numbers shown on the platform, and asks for bids. The highest bidder must bid for himself. Bids come thick and fast if the article is desired and it is quickly knocked down to the highest bidder. About 200 lots can be auctioned off in an hour usually. As the skins are put up in lots varying from one to twenty, quite a number can be disposed of in a day.

The auctioneers who handle the above work for all the companies are E. A. Goad & Sons. Auctioneering is a hereditary occupation, with them, Goad Senior's father, grandfather and great-grandfather having been auctioneers in London, the original founder of the firm handling the gavel for the Hudson's Bay Company in or around the year 1800.

Two sheep were slaughtered at the animal nutrition laboratory at Cornell University recently aged one and one-half years. They had never eaten a blade of grass but lived solely for science on "synthetic diets" and ended their lives with a perfect health record. They were fed a "synthetic" mixture of casein (the solid part of milk) and cellulose from wood pulp mills, starch, vitamins concentrates and solids. They matured rapidly and were free from the usual parasites which effect a sheep. It is hoped as a result of these experiments that much information has been gained which will be available for use in nutritional problems of other animals.

The third annual fox show of the California Fox and Fur Breeders' Association held in December was a great success. The judging was done in the open air but the light was modified by cotton awnings over the tables. The surprise of the show was the improvement made in the quality of the foxes raised at sea level in the vicinity of Los Angeles. The All Star ranch was the winner of the grand show champion and most of the cups and first prize ribbons.

It will be of interest to Prince Edward Islanders to know that the All Star ranch was stocked with foxes obtained from the All Star ranch at Winnipeg, which is managed by Arthur Doyle, formerly of Tryon, P. E. I., and the foxes are mostly descendants from Island strains purchased from Tom Hamill, Tignish.

In the United States ranchers are using the exhaust gas from automobiles to kill their silver foxes. A wooden box about the size of a shipping crate is constructed with light weight lumber, with two handles on each end. A removable wire shelf is placed on the bottom to prevent the foxes from lying on what might be a wet wooden floor. A small opening is left in the box where the exhaust pipe is introduced. Six or eight foxes are put to death in about 90 seconds by this method.

The International Trade Fair will be held in Grand Central Palace, New York, February 4th and will continue for one week. A large and impressive space in the centre of the first floor is being reserved to represent the fur industry. There will be exhibits of manufacturers, works, exhibits of good and bad peltries, gorgeous coats, scarves and mitts on mannikins and living models.

NOTICE ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Charlottetown Driving Park and Provincial Exhibition Association will be held in the Secretary's Office, Tweel Building, Wednesday, January 9, 1935 at the hour of 2 P. M.

J. W. BOULTER, Secretary. NOTE:—It is the intention to postpone the above meeting until the following Monday afternoon, January 14, at 2 P. M. L-3869-1-4-31.

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