

PLAYING SAFE

BY HENRY C. ROWLAND

PART III.

Then, watching his task, its method puzzled her, for instead of tapping continually on one point of the chain he now spread it the length of the stone and proceeded to hammer this segment flat.

"Why are you doing that?" she asked.

"Watch and learn," he answered. Satisfied presently with the result, he picked up the chain of which the links were now hammered so closely together that there was no play between them, but remained stiff like a piece of wire. Taking this between his hands, he began to bend it back and forth at the point which he had first eroded. The result was almost immediate, as the chain, no longer able to articulate, broke at the eroded part.

"Easy enough when you happen to be an inventor," and glanced at Claire with a flashing smile which brought the color to her face. But this was not because of her deshabille. She was beginning to forget about that, or at least to disregard it. For a moment her gray eyes clung to his hazel ones, when for some mysterious reason both faces glowed with a crimson which was not entirely a reflection of the sunrise. Stephen rose to his feet, picked up the valise, and set it away from the edge of the roof, almost in the centre.

Claire laughed. "Invention seems to be your first instinct, and playing safe the second," said she. "How much have you actually got in that bag?"

He raised his eyebrows. "In real money, none."

"What?"

"None. In fact, it would not even be negotiable to anybody who might steal it."

"Well, upon my word," gasped Claire. "Then why do you invite attack by chaining yourself to it?"

"Because I am very absent-minded and I did not want to risk losing it. I am apt to get thinking about something and go off and leave my things anywhere."

"You didn't forget about me?"

"Ah, that was something of real value. The contents of the valise have still to prove their value."

"When will that be?"

"When the hour strikes," Stephen answered, and as he spoke an astonishing thing occurred. There came a buzzing from the inside of the valise, as if it imprisoned an enormous bee, and this was followed by the muffled ringing of an alarm clock.

The effect upon Stephen was electrifying. For a moment he stared at the bag with open mouth, then sprang to his feet, rushed to it, picked it up, and held it while the alarm continued merrily to ring. Claire, for her part, was petrified with amazement. It flashed suddenly across her mind that she must be adrift on that muddy river with a madman, for who else would think of winding up and setting an alarm clock, then placing it in a valise and chaining himself to it?

Stephen's immediate manoeuvres appeared to confirm this startling conviction. The alarm rang itself out and stopped. He set down the bag and stared from one side of the river to the other as if trying to take bearings. Then turning he glared at Claire with a wild expression on his face.

"We're smack over it," said he. "Over what?" she asked faintly.

"Over gold," he answered. "Quantities of gold, either in the bed of the river or on a sunken steamer or private treasure or something of the sort."

Claire looked about fearfully as if seeking some avenue of escape. There being none in sight she steadied her voice and asked, "How do you know?"

He flung out his arms in a sort of despair. "Smack over scads of gold and no way of getting an accurate bearing or buoying the spot or anything to locate it. Never mind. I know where it is in a general way and I can get a boat and come back here and paddle around until I find it."

Claire had no longer any doubt. Her rescuer was unquestionably mad, but with the madness of the inventor, some monomania or insistent idea which left him sane enough in other

respects. She began to breathe more freely when his next words confounded her diagnosis of his case.

"You see, Miss MacNorton," said he, now staring directly at her, but apparently unconscious of her near nudity, "that thing in the bag is an invention for locating precious non-magnetic metals, principally gold. Mr. Lothrop financed me while I was at work upon it. That's been since the end of the war. I've discovered an affinity for gold which acts in a way to liberate a certain force which makes an electric connection and rings a bell. This would only happen if the gold was in great quantity and directly underneath, even at a considerable depth."

Claire's face cleared when she reflected for a moment. "Would it do it if the gold were in small quantity but very close," she asked.

"Why, yes," he answered. "I've tested it over a gold brick."

"Then maybe it's in the bank," said Claire.

He stared at her uncomprehendingly, then frowned.

"I'm not joking," said he. "Neither am I," said Claire. "We're sitting on the roof of a bank. Don't you remember the sign?"

He slapped his thigh. "By jiminy, I hadn't thought of that!"

And then to Claire's dismay he strode across to where she was sitting, poised himself on the edge of the roof and took a clean dive into the turbid waters.

But Claire was no longer alarmed. Looking over the edge, she saw him rise and reach a window in a stroke or two. Then he turned his dripping face upward. "Hand me down that stone," said he.

Claire obeyed. Stephen smashed a pane of glass, reached inside, removed a window stick, then raised the sash and crawled over the sill, which was just awash. Claire could hear a sloshing about beneath her. A few moments later Stephen's head and shoulders reappeared. He held in his hand a canvas shotbag which appeared to be about half full, and, standing on the sill, he handed this up to her.

"They don't believe in safes down here," said he. "This was tucked away up under a roof beam. I set the valise down smack over it. I may be a good inventor, but about most other things I'm a darn fool. If it hadn't been for you I'd have come back here and wasted weeks paddling around in a scow."

He slipped back into the muddy water, swam around to the rear and got aboard. Together they opened the sack and found it to contain \$450 in twenty-dollar gold pieces.

"This ducky banker was getting ready to loan a little money on the crop," said Stephen. "We'll find out about him when we land and see that he gets it. Meanwhile we might negotiate a little loan ourselves."

They looked at each other and burst into a gust of laughter.

"I begin to understand," said Claire, "why you kept it chained to you. It seems to me you've got a fortune in that bag."

"I hope so," Stephen answered. "My object is to locate big gold shipments on vessels mined or torpedoed. The Government has been sufficiently interested to put a chaser at my disposal for the next three months. I doubt if my invention would work on land except in the case of buried treasure where the gold was in considerable volume and near the surface. A mere lode or vein would scarcely get enough reaction."

"All the same, you ought to try," said Claire.

"I intend to, of course. A rich surface vein would ring the bell, I think. There's a lot of prospecting ahead and I've got a considerable grub stake, thanks to your godfather, but—I need a partner."

He turned his head slowly and his hazel eyes looked steadily into her gray ones, and again the wave of color spread over the faces of both. Then Stephen looked down at her left hand, which was devoid of any ornament.

"Has anybody a prior claim?" he asked.

Claire shook her head. Stephen possessed himself of the unadorned hand and raised it to his lips. "Not long ago you practically acknowledged a claim on my part," said he. "I don't intend to press that, because what I did was distinctly in the line of duty, so if you prefer I'll waive it. Do you?"

Again Claire shook her head. She turned, and as he looked into her eyes Stephen wondered how he could ever have found them hard and hostile.

"Two years ago," said Stephen, "I begged a picture of you from Mr. Lothrop. It has been my shrine ever since. He knew of this, but I asked him to keep it secret until I might have something to offer. He thoroughly approved, and no doubt it was on that account he was so furious at learning of your engagement."

Claire's eyes widened. "You knew about that?" she asked.

"Yes," said Stephen, "still holding the unresisting hand. I asked the lawyers why your name had not been



read, and they told me. I fully intended to regulate that score. But as it turns out I seem to be asking instead of giving."

He raised her hand again to his lips. Claire, scarcely able to breathe, turned and stared at the distant shore. "There are some men running down the jetty and getting into a boat," said she.

"Never mind the men," said Stephen. "How about this partnership which I propose? Do you accept or do you refuse?"

Claire turned slowly and looked at him, her face slanted upward and a stricken expression in her eyes. "What sort of partner?" she murmured.

"There's only one sort. A gold ring on this pretty finger and a light, invisible chain which nothing can break fastened to that and to my heart. You're not going to refuse."

Claire gave a little sob. "After all that's happened I don't see how I could refuse you anything. But—but, I haven't a thing in the world," and added, with a gurgling laugh, "I haven't even any clothes."

"You've got yourself," said Stephen. "You've got courage and sweetness and beauty. It's up to me to supply the rest."

He drew the hand toward him, and with it the arm and then the girl. His arms went round her and hers slipped up over his shoulders. Their faces were crushed together ecstatically. Then Claire freed herself and looked over his shoulder.

"We mustn't," said she. "Here comes the boat."

(The End.)

Fancy That!

One ton of coal yields 10,000 ft. of gas.

The Bible is printed in 528 different languages.

The Polish alphabet contains forty-five letters.

Mars has a day forty-one minutes longer than our own.

A large nest of wasps will account for 24,000 flies in a day.

A single orange tree of average size will bear 20,000 oranges.

An ounce of gold could be drawn into a wire fifty miles long.

The King of Sweden has been wedded longest of any European crowned head.

The family Bible of William Burns, the father of Robert Burns, has been sold for \$2,250.

The world's envelope of air has just been proved to extend for 300 miles above the earth.

Obstinate.

Jimmy (after discussion with his governess on the subject of the Last Judgment): "Will everyone have to come out of their graves when the Last Trump sounds?"

"Of course, Jimmy."

"Shall you, Miss Brown?"

"Most certainly I shall."

Jimmy — (after deep reflection):

"Well, I shan't."

Keep Minard's Liniment in the house.

Spectacles for Russian Cows

A good deal of surprise was created when a long list of goods required by Russia was found to contain an order for spectacles for cows, says an English newspaper.

Surely this must be a joke, said the business men, or someone must have blundered in writing the word cows, for spectacles could certainly not be needed for animals.

But there was no mistake. Cows on the Russian steppes have long worn spectacles to protect their eyes from the glare of the snow, which stretches for hundreds of miles on all sides till late spring, and sets up a serious affliction that may result in total blindness.

Snow blindness is not a new complaint. There are many instances of it in history. The glare of the sun shining on the snow causes a pricking pain; then there is a sensation of grit under the eyelids; light of any kind becomes extremely painful and the sight begins to go. If the matter is not attended to, the eyelids swell and the vision may remain impaired for months.

On the vast steppes of Russia the cattle that graze during the early spring, when the ground for hundreds of miles is glistening white, are troubled with snow blindness; but several years ago an Englishman invented a special form of spectacles with brown glass which could be fastened round the horns of cattle with leather straps.

Quite a thriving business grew up in the manufacture of these spectacles, but the war put a stop to it, and the cattle suffered severely. Now Russia is anxious to adopt the remedy again.

Mountain climbers and Arctic explorers have to wear blue or green glasses when in snow-clad regions,

Counting Out.

Red, white and blue. All out but you!

Could any rhyme be briefer, simpler or more purely Canadian? It seems too trivial a scrap to be of interest, yet it is only one more variation in a long line of childish rhymes and games that are deeply interesting to the student, since the more he studies them the more he sees that in their fundamental similarity they link nation with nation and past with present. For children have always played games; and of course some one of them has always had to be "it."

In the very beginning, it is now supposed, all counting-out rhymes were simply enumeration; and many of them are still so in part. Gradually for the sake of rhythm or rhyme or alliteration other meaningless syllables or words or sentences were intermingled.

What Canadian child has not at some time followed eagerly the pointing finger of a comrade chanting and counting:

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—All good children go to heaven. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight—All bad children have to wait!

Or the equally familiar, if less edifying:

Little man driving cattle, Don't you hear his money rattle? One, two, three Out goes he (she)!

Of course all the "one-ey" forms fall into the same group, and so probably (through distant foreign derivations) do our old friends the "eeny-meeneys." A recent writer in a richly varied collection of counting-out rhymes includes several of the eeny-meenees, notably that ancient and inelegant favorite of both patrician and plebeian youth:

Eeny, meeny, miny, mo, Catch a nigger by the toe; If he hollers let him go, Eeny, meeny, miny, mo.

It is probable that with the influx of children from many foreign countries the very games that in their likeness bring all children so happily together may take on here and there new and wider variations, which will interest and perhaps puzzle future students of folklore. Some of our students of French may like to translate for themselves this little counting-out rhyme just as it comes to us from France:

Petite fille de Paris Prete-moi tes souliers gris Pour aller en Paradis. Nous irons un an Dans le chemin des Saints; Deux a deux Sur le chemin des cieus.

The Trail.

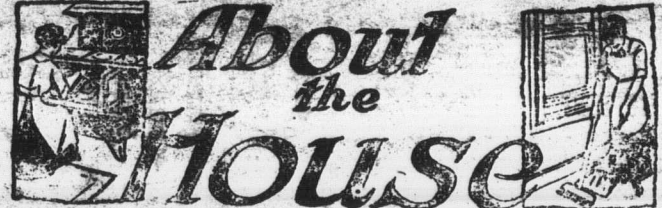
By hill and dale there is a trail That leads my vagrant footsteps far; And if perchance my courage fail There is the ever beckoning star.

The beckoning star, the guiding sun, And sooth, why should I ask for more? The pathways to oblivion Stretch on and on before.

Oblivion, or the bourne of dreams, Serene within the afterglow, Where joy sits by the singing streams, And there is peace for friend and foe.

So, high of heart, I take the trail; So, sure of soul, I make the quest, But at the end, whatever prevail, I needs must bow to what is best.

He knows much who knows how to hold his tongue.



Cooks Less—Smiles More.

There was a vegetable soup for dinner that has required several hours of preparation and cooking; a delicious roast; potatoes that had been mashed and creamed; cauliflower with a cream dressing; lettuce salad; pineapple that had been bought that morning, sliced and cut in cubes; nuts that had taken a half hour for the cracking and picking; mayonnaise that had made a right arm ache with the stirring and the beating; homemade jam; hot biscuit; and hot apple pie with whipped cream.

"Do you wish any of the roast?" the husband asked his wife as he carved.

"I don't want any. I don't want any dinner at all. I'm too tired to eat."

"Then why do you go to so much trouble? The children and I would be satisfied with a much simpler meal, you know."

"I guess I know my duty to my family."

Then followed the silence that marks the knowledge of a futility of argument and the father and the children ate a perfectly cooked meal without comment or enjoyment.

When Serena, the oldest daughter, repeated her employer's compliment over some acceptable work she had done that day, it was her father who gave her a smile of encouragement.

The mother remembered that she, too, had worked that day and—sighed.

When Tom, aged ten, related an amusing incident that had happened in school, Mother was the only one that didn't laugh.

The next evening, Serena was a guest at the Whites, next door neighbors. It was warm. The open dining-room windows revealed the Whites and their five children and Serena sitting at the table. Across the partition fence came sounds of repeated laughter.

"What," she asked of Serena a few hours later, in a reproachful tone, for she remembered the laughing, "did you have to eat?"

Serena was not sure if she could remember. They had talked so much she had not noticed what they were eating, except that the dinner was good. Soup? No, there wasn't any soup. Potatoes? Yes, scalloped. Dessert? Little cakes covered with custard. She remembered that the cakes were cookies.

Was it good? Oh, everything was good; she had never enjoyed anything so much in her life. But was not that a plain meal to serve a guest? Serena did not think so. She could not have eaten more, everything was so good and Mrs. White was so happy and jolly.

"I had more than that for our dinner," said Mrs. Brown resentfully, "and there was no one here but your father and brothers." This with a sigh, the corners of her mouth drooping.

Serena looked at her thoughtfully. Mrs. Brown resented the look.

"I cook so much for my family," she began defensively, "that I am too tired to be what you call jolly. I'm growing more antagonistic, though she could not explain why, 'know my duty to my family.'"

"So does Mrs. White know hers," answered Serena sorrowfully. "She cooks less than you do but she—smiles more!"

"Cooks less and smiles more!" The words rang through Mrs. Brown's brain the next morning when she beat batter for muffins, whipped up an omelet, put potatoes in the oven to bake and otherwise prepared breakfast. She could not go to the school exhibition, she told Tom at breakfast, because she had a pudding to make that would require four hours, steaming; she could not eat lunch with Serena and her father down town because there was an angel cake to be made that would require at least an hour to beat. Both refusals made with a sigh.

As she turned from the door after seeing the last child start to school, she caught a glimpse of Mrs. White starting off to the school exhibition with her children. "I wonder," she thought, feeling very self-righteous, "what my family would think if I left my cooking for such a trivial excuse? They'd soon be tired of pick-ups."

Perhaps she thought, when later in the day she caught a glimpse of her face in the mirror, Mrs. White was right and she was wrong. There were deep wrinkles in her forehead. Mrs. White had none. Her eyes were tired and listless. Mrs. White's were full of purpose and laughter. Her cheeks were white and hollow. She saw a vision of Mrs. White's plump and pink.

With her chin in her hands, she sat before her mirror a long time. She stared earnestly into her own soul.

She shuddered. She had worked so hard for her family—so much harder than Mrs. White worked for hers—and her family loved her less for it. Her children never trooped into the kitchen after school, as Mrs. White's did. There was a pie, a cake, or a pudding in the oven, and a step across the floor might make it fall. Her children never played around her when she cooked, for her cooking had always been too elaborated and complex for such interruptions as childish needs and questions.

She never knew how long she sat there taking inventory of her soul but it was a long time and when she returned to the kitchen there was a smile on her face, a smile that was still there when the family came home. It dimpled her cheeks when her husband praised the extra good meal. "Your cooking improves all the time," he said with a look that reflected the love in his wife's face.

This time the smile swept away every wrinkle. She knew that she had never cooked less! She had mixed wisdom with her service.

A Successful Woman Farmer.

Another name added to the list of women who are successfully operating farms in Western Canada is that of May V. Hazlett, an English girl who for four years has lived alone on a homestead in the Touchwood Hills, in Saskatchewan, and made it pay. Her brother who homesteaded the land was killed in the Canadian forces at Vimy Ridge, and Miss Hazlett who was working as a stenographer, and tired of the eternal pounding, determined to go contrary to the advice to sell the farm, and though she had never lived in the country, decided to operate it herself. Success has attended her efforts; and she now owns several head of horses, a fine bunch of cattle and has more than one hundred acres under cultivation. She is again reversing the order of things, as having built a Western home she is returning to England to marry her fiancé and bring him out to the Saskatchewan farm. She is an ardent advocate of homesteads for women.

An Entertainment Exchange.

A contributor describes a novel plan for community entertainment that an invalid originated and brought to practical use.

In a brief letter, copies of which she sent to a number of residents in her town, she called attention to the fact that recreation is as necessary to the life of a community as food and clothing are; that its cost per capita amounts to a good deal in a year's time; that to attend the usual places of amusement requires not only money but time and effort. She concluded by asking her neighbors to exchange with one another their ideas on community recreation, as well as their actual entertainment facilities—magazines, catalogues, phonograph records, books, games, puzzles, sheet music and so on.

The plan having been tried and having proved useful, its most valuable result was felt to be that the persons concerned were convinced that it took only a little thought and interest to put in operation a scheme that kept children happy at home, entertained both old and young and created an undercurrent of good feeling in the community.

"And," said the happy invalid, "think what it has meant to me—persons coming and going; the interest in exchanging opinions. I have even persuaded them to go a step farther and to exchange their own special gifts. One who sings sings occasionally for us all; another who is a trained reader sometimes reads aloud to us. Since the introduction of our entertainment exchange we have all been entertained more pleasantly and more wholesomely than we ever were before."

Minard's Liniment used by Physicians.

Sea-Cow Seen.

The Arctic sea-cow, thought to have been extinct for forty years, has been seen again.

Native fishermen of the Aleutian Islands declare that when fishing off the islands one or more of these creatures have been seen. In the headquarters they appeared to be true fish, but in the head and neck they were ox-like.

The huge sea-cow often weight 4,000 lb., and is 40 ft. long. Seaweed grows in miniature forests along the Aleutian Islands, and the sea-cows once pastured there. They possessed a habit of herding together like cattle, snorting and puffing.

The hind legs were used as a single fin, but the front fins were used as legs to support the animal. There were udders between the forelegs, and plates instead of teeth.

The last time a sea-cow was seen by white men was forty years ago, over a hundred years after its discovery.

Pills imported into India are colored, to show their use; those tinted red contain poison.

Hot weather will frequently cause clock and watches long out of use to start working. The heat melts the old oil which has hardened and clogged the bearings.

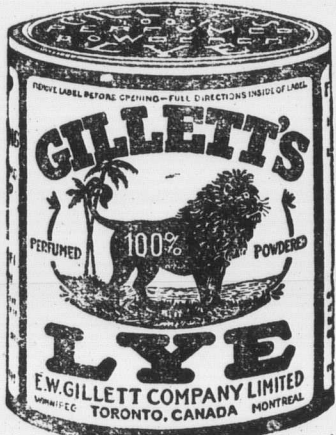
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