



KINDNESS is wisdom; there is none in life but needs it and may I err.
—Daley.

Winning the Wilderness

(Continued from last week.)

"Pryor Gaines writes Jim Shirley that they are a secret order of fanatics bent on stamping out all Christianity and all western ideas of advancement in the Orient. Things begin to look ugly in China, even from this distance. When a band of religious fanatics like the Boxers go on the warpath, their atrocities make a Cheyenne raid or a Kiowa massacre look like a football game. I hope Pryor will not be in their line of march."

"Pryor Gaines' better stayed right here. It's what's likely to happen to a man who goes missionary too far, and we could use him here."

It was an unusual concession for Darley Chambers to make regarding the church, and Asher looked keenly at him.

"Say, Aydelot," Chambers said suddenly, "you have more influence with John Jacobs 'n anybody else, I know. If you see the Jew, pass it on to him that Wyker's at his old cut-up again over in Wykerton, and he's dinged bitter against Jacobs. I can help him on the side like I did before, but the Jew's got hold of enough over there now to run things, with owin' land all round and holdin' mortgages on town property just to keep joints open of 'em, do no end of business for Jacobs now. Never had dealin' with a straighter man. But he'd better look out for Wyker. The Dutchman's insides is all green with poison, he's hated Jacobs so many years."

"I guess John will make it hard on him if they come to blows again. The jail sentence and fine Jacobs fastened on him let Wyker down easy. John Jacobs is one of the state's big men," Asher responded.

"I've lost another big man when we let Darley go," Chambers went on. "I used to set up nights and rest myself hatin' him. He done the biggest missionary work in me the two weeks I stayed at his house ever was done for a benighted heathen. I hated to see him go. The sadness of the tone was genuine. "But I mustn't be hangin' round here all the mornin'; I've got other things to do. Hope your boy'll keep acorn' till his term's out. Goodday!" And Chambers was gone.

"Till his term's out!" Asher repeated with a smile. "Wouldn't that six-foot of a soldier boy, whose patriotism burns like a furnace, see the joke to that! Till he gets his stripes off and forgets the lock-step! My Thaine, who is giving a young man's strength of body and inspiration of soul to his country's service. But Carey did do a missionary work in Chambers. The fellow was crooked enough 'inside the law' always," he said, but no more than that scores of reputable business men are today. And the fact that he's Jacobs' agent now measures the degree of trustworthiness Carey has helped to awaken in him."

Darley Chambers' business took him

down the river to the Cloverdale Ranch, where he found Leigh Shirley training the young vines up the trellis by the west porch.

"You got a mighty pretty place here; just looks like Jim Shirley," Chambers declared as he greeted the young gardener.

"Yes, Uncle Jim is never so happy as when he is putting about the lawn and garden," Leigh answered.

"How's your alfalfa doing?" Chambers asked as he turned toward the level stretch of rich green alfalfa



A Strawberry Patch in Durham Co., Ont., which yielded over 4,000 boxes of berries in 1916.

fields. "Danged money-maker for you," he added jovially.

"We'll clear the place with the first cutting this year. It's just the thing for Uncle Jim," Leigh asserted.

"Yep, Jim's in clover-alfalfa, rather. You had a good business head when you run your bluff some years ago, an' you won't only nineteen then. You walked into my place an' jest bought that land on sheer bluff. Chambers laughed uproariously, but he grew sober in the next minute.

"Miss Shirley," he said gravely, "I ain't got much style nor sentiment in my makin', but I've honestly tried to be humane by widders an' orphans. I've done men to keep 'em from doin' me, or jest 'cause they was danged easy, but I never wronged no woman, years ago back East 'cause I wouldn't turn my old mother out o' doors, but kept her and provided for her long as she lived."

Nobody in Kansas had ever heard Darley Chambers mention his home relations before. Leigh looked at him gravely, and the sympathy in her deep

blue eyes was grateful to the uncultured man before her.

"Miss Shirley, I ain't wantin' to meddle none, but I come down here to ask you if you know anything about your father?"

Leigh gave a start and stared at her questioner, but her woman's instinct told her that only kindly purpose lay back of his question.

He had sat down on the edge of the porch and Leigh stood leaning against the trellis, clutching the narrow slats, as she looked at him.

"I think he is dead," she answered slowly. "Uncle Jim says he must be. He was a bad man, made bad not by blood but by selfishness. The Shirleys are a fine family."

"Excuse me for sayin' it, Miss, but you took every good trait of that family, an' Nature jest shied every bad trait as far from you as it took the sins of our old savage Anglo-Saxon ancestors off of our heads; them that used to kill an' set their neighborin' tribes, like the Filipinos, that was. Don't never forget you're a Shirley an' not a Tank. Your grandma's name was Tank, I've been told."

Leigh made no response, but something in her face and in the pose of her figure bespoke the truth of Darley Chambers' words.

"I jest come down to tell you," he continued, "that the man I represented when I sold you this quarter, he represented your father, Tank Shirley, and Tank got it through this man away from Jim out of pure hate. I

neither. I don't make money out of women's needs. I never made a cent on this sale to you, but it was worth it to get to do that agent once," Chambers declared.

Leigh waited quietly.

"I'll be in better shape inside of two days to tell you something definite. I wish Carey was here. Do you know where he got the money he loaned you?"

"I never asked him," Leigh answered.

"He borrowed it of Miss Jane Aydelot of Cloverdale, Ohio."

Chambers did not mean to be brutal, but the sharp cry of pain and the look of anguish on Leigh Shirley's face told how grievous was the wound his words had made.

"Why, you paid it all back; she ain't lost nothin'. Besides, I heard with my own ears folks sayin' she'd always loved you and it was a pity Jim ever took you away from her. She might 'a done well by you, they said. You got no wrong doin', I don't know you've paid it conscientiously enough," Darley Chambers insisted.

"Mr. Chambers, will you be sure to tell me all you know as soon as possible," Jacobel interposed, "I'll try to find out something to tell you."

"I sure will. Goodday to you."

When Chambers rose to leave, Leigh put out her hand to him, and the smiling smile that made all Grass River folk love her as they loved her uncle Jim now touched the best spot in the heart of the man before her.

"God knows it's a lot better to do for folks than to do 'em, and in the end I believe you prosper more at it. My business, except the infernal boom days, never was so good as it's been since I had that time with Carey, and it's all clean business, too, not a smirch on it. Wish I could forget a few things I've d thought." So Darley Chambers thought, as he drove up the old Grass River trail in the glory of the April morning.

That morning, Leigh Shirley wrote a long letter to Jane Aydelot of Cloverdale, Ohio. Leigh had written many letters to her before, but never one with a plea like this. Miss Jane had mentally grown up with Leigh and had built, many a romance about her, which was only hinted at in the letters she received.

In the letter of this morning, Leigh begged for all the information Miss Jane could give concerning her father, and further, she pleaded boldly for reconciliation of the Aydelot family, a thing she had never written of before. Five days later her letter came, what "unclaimed" with a brief statement from the Cloverdale postmaster that Miss Jane Aydelot had passed away on the day the letter was written, much beloved, etc.

John Jacobs had no need to be warned by Asher Aydelot of Hans Wyker's doings. He knew all of Wyker's movements through Rosie Gimpe. Jacobs had been kind to Rosie, whose bare, loveless life knew few kindnesses, and she had kept the memory of a good deed as her grandfather harbored his hatred. Moreover, the Wyker joint had played havoc with the Gimpe family. Her father had died from a fall received in a drunken brawl there. Two brothers, too drunk to know better, had driven into Little Wolf in a spring load and been drowned. A sister had married a drinking man who regularly beat her in his regular sprees. For a heavy-footed, heavy-brained, fat German girl, Rosie Gimpe could get into action with surprising alacrity for the safety of one who had shown her a kindness.

And it was Rosie Gimpe, whom John Jacobs called the Wykerton W. C. T. U., who swiftly put the word to