

The Whisky Runners

A Romance of the N. W. M. Police

By

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"The Black Peril," "The Mad Rancher of Wood Lake,"

"The Fatal Fence," Etc., Etc.

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CHAPTER I.

Tricked.

INSPECTOR COMBRONE, of the North-West Mounted Police, rode slowly away from the Redwood Homestead, which nestled prettily among the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

A frown, suggestive of great discontent, marred his keen-cut face. He had just left the ranch of his good friend Seth Redwood; but there had been another visitor there as well—Norman Hurleigh, whose ranch lay further up the foothills. Norman Hurleigh was a fine-built, good-looking chap, and Nelly Redwood had welcomed him so warmly that the police-instructor had mounted his horse and ridden away as nearly in a fit of sulks as is possible for a sensible man.

After a time, he tried to concentrate his thoughts on his professional affairs; but here again things looked gloomy, for he had to admit that he was not carrying out his duties with that success which he desired.

His superiors were continually strafing him for his failure to break up a gang of whisky-runners which was notoriously operating in the large district under his control.

Since the law prohibiting the sale of spirits in Alberta had come into force, smuggling had been rife, especially in the outlying districts.

What made it difficult for the authorities to put this down, was the fact that people who were otherwise perfectly honest did not look upon this illicit trade as a crime. Instead of joining in with the police to suppress the traffic, everyone seemed to be in league to protect the law breakers.

On reaching his quarters, he handed his horse over to an orderly, and entered his office. There were several official envelopes, which he tore open and perused the contents.

As he read them the gloom on his face became more accentuated.

"Inspector Combrone," he said bitterly to himself, "if you don't buck up and bring off a coup, I can see you getting the dirty kick-out. What's this, I wonder?"

He picked up a soiled envelope addressed to him in a badly-written hand, and opened it.