



Copyright, 1916, by Little, Brown & Co.

Some time during the next forenoon she went southward along the lake shore on foot without object or destination, merely to satisfy in some measure the restless craving for action. When she returned to camp at 2 o'clock, driven in by bumper, Jack Fyfe sat on the doorstep.

"How do you do? I've come to bring you over to my place," he announced quite casually. "Thanks. I've already declined one pressing invitation to that effect," Stella returned dryly. His matter of fact assurance rather nettled her.

"A woman always has the privilege of changing her mind," Fyfe smiled. "Charlie is going to be at my camp for at least three weeks. It'll rain soon, and the days'll be pretty gray and dreary and lonesome. You might as well seek your war bag and come along."

"I moved over here before 12. Thought I'd get you back to camp in time for dinner. You know how I love a twinkle in his blue eyes. A logger never eats anything but a meal. A lunch to us is a snack that you put in your pocket. I guess we lack tone out here. We haven't got past the breakfast-dinner-supper stage. Too busy making the country fit to live in."

"You have a tremendous job in hand, she observed. "Oh, maybe," he laughed. "All in the way you look at it. Suits some of us. Well, if we get to my camp before 3 the camp might feel us. Come on. You'll get to hating yourself if you stay here alone till Charlie's through."

Howe lacked in the higher culture she made up in homely perception and unassuming kindness. Her husband was Fyfe's foreman. She herself was not a permanent fixture in the camp. They had a cottage at Roaring Springs, where she spent most of the time so that their three children could be in school.

"I was up here all through vacation," she told Stella. "But Lefty he got to howlin' about bein' left alone shortly after school started again, so I got my sister to look after the kids at a spell while I stay. I'll be goin' down about the time Mr. Benton's through here."

Stella eventually went out to take a look around the camp. A hard beaten path led off toward where rose the distant sounds of logging work, the ponderous crash of trees and the rattle of the donkeys. She followed that a little way and presently came to a knoll some 300 yards above the beach. There she paused to look and wonder curiously.

A noble stretch of lake and mountain spread out before her gaze. Parallel across the lake two deep clefts in the eastern range opened on the water five miles apart. She could see the white ribbon of foaming cascades in each. Between lifted a great mountain, and on the leeward slope of this stood a terrible scar of a slide, yellow and brown, rising 3000 feet from the shore. A vaporous wisp of cloud hung along the top of the slide and above this aerial banner a snow-capped pinnacle thrust itself high into the jade blue sky.

Stella stepped on a pair of her brother's gun boots and an overcoat and ran out on the path beaten from their cabin to the shore. It led past the bunkhouse, and on that side opened two uncurtained windows, yellow squares that gaped gleaming on the snow. The panes of one were broken now, sharp fragments standing like saw teeth in the wooden sash.

Two men were being held apart, one by three of his fellows, the other by Jack Fyfe alone. Fyfe grinned mildly, talking to the men in a quiet, pacific tone. "Now you know that was nothing to scrap about," she heard him say.

"You're both full of fighting whisky, but a bunkhouse isn't any place to fight. Wait till morning. If you've still got it in your systems go outside and have it out. But you shouldn't disturb our game and break up the furniture. Be gentlemen, drink or sober. Better shake hands and call it square."

Charlie's voice, drunk thickened, harsh, came from a corner of the room into which she could not see until she moved nearer. By the time she picked him out Fyfe assumed his seat at the table with three other men. Benton waited with cards in their hands, red and white chips and money stacked before them.

She knew enough of cards to realize that a stiff poker game was on the cards. She had watched one hand dealt and played. It angered her, not from any ethical motive, but because of her brother's part in it. He had no funds to pay a cook's wages, yet he could afford to lose on one hand as much as he credited her with for a month's work. She could stare at the kitchen job day in and day out to save him \$45 a month. He could lose that without the flicker of an eyelash, but he couldn't pay her wages on demand. Also she saw that he had imbibed too freely. If the redness of his face and the glassy brightness of his eyes could be read aright.

He leaned a little toward her. "How long do you think you can stand it?" he asked gently. "God knows," she answered, surprised into speaking the thought that lay unpermitted in her mind, surprised beyond measure that he should read her thoughts.

He stood looking down at her for a second or two. His lips parted, but he closed them again over whatever rose to his tongue and passed silently through the dining room and into the bunkhouse, where Benton had preceded him a matter of ten minutes.

It lacked a week of Christmas. That day three of Benton's men had gone in the Chickamauga to Roaring Springs for supplies. They had returned in mid-afternoon, and Stella gazed by the new nose of blizzards in the bunkhouse that part of the supplies had been liquid. This had happened more than once since the big snow closed in.

She remembered Charlie's fury at the logger who started Matt the cook on his heels. A night swell from the outside waters beat its melancholy dirge on the frozen beach. And, as she always did at that bushed hour before dawn, she experienced a physical shrinking from those grim solitudes in which there was nothing warm and human and kindly, nothing but vastness of space upon which silence lay like a smothering blanket, in which she, the human atom, was utterly negligible, a protesting mote in the inexorable windmill of fate.

A light burned in the kitchen. She thanked her stars that this bitter cold morning she would not have to build a fire with freezing fingers while her teeth chattered, and she hurried in to wash her face. A spartan girl had not meant to the occasion. Instead Jack Fyfe sat with his feet on the oven door, a cigar in one corner of his mouth. The kettle steamed. Her porridge pot bubbled ready for the morning meal. "Mind my pre-empting your job?"

"Not at all," she answered. "You can have it for keeps if you want." "Aren't you getting pretty sick of this sort of work, these more or less uninteresting surroundings and the sort of people you have to come in contact with?" he asked pointedly.

"I am," she returned as bluntly, "but I think that's rather an impertinent question, Mr. Fyfe." "You're right," he said positively. "I know you do. I've seen your feelings many a time. I don't blame you. It's a rotten business with a girl of your talents and bringing up. And I'm afraid it will be worse if this snow stays and I know what a logging camp is when whisky stops and whisky creeps in and the fellows go hissing."

"That may be true," she returned gloomily. "But I don't see why you should enunciate these disagreeable things for my benefit." "I'm going to show you a way out," he said softly. "I've been thinking it over for quite awhile. I want you to marry me."

Stella gasped. "Listen," he said peremptorily, leaning closer to her and lowering his voice. "I have an idea that you're going to say you don't love me. Look, I know that. But you hate this. It grates against every inclination of yours like a file on steel. I wouldn't jar on you like that; wouldn't permit you to live in surroundings that would threaten the material side of it. Nobody can live on day dreams. I like you, Stella Benton, a whole lot more than I'd care to say right out loud. You and I together could make a home we'd be proud of. I want you, and you want to get away from this infernal natural. Marry me and play the game fair and I don't think you'll be sorry. I'm putting it as baldly as I can. You stand to win everything with nothing to lose but your domestic chains. The price is a small bit up his features for a second. Won't you take a chance?"

There's things lacking in your life, and so are there in mine. Why shouldn't we go partners? You think about it." "I don't need to," she answered coolly. "It wouldn't work. You don't appear to have any idea what it means for a woman to give herself up body and soul to a man she doesn't care for. For me it would be plain self-surrender. I haven't the least affection for you. I might even detest you."

"You wouldn't," he said positively. "What makes you so sure of that?" she demanded. "I would sound conceited if I told you why," he drawled. "Listen. We're not gods and goddesses, we human beings. We're made of flesh and blood, we're impulsive, so much different from the age when a man took his club and went after a fellow that looked good to him. They mated and raised their young and very likely faced on an average fewer problems than arise in modern marriage, supposedly established in heaven. You'd have the one big problem solved—the lack of means to live decently, which wrecks more homes than anything else, far more than lack of love. Affection doesn't thrive on poverty. What is love?"

His voice took on a challenging note. "I don't know," she answered absently, turning over strips of bacon with the long handled fork. "There you are," he said. "I don't know, either. We'd start over, then, for the sake of argument. No, I guess we wouldn't, either, because you're the only woman I've run across so far with whom I could calmly contemplate spending the rest of my life in close contact. That's a fact. To me it's a highly important fact. You don't happen to have any such feeling about me, eh?"

"No, I hadn't even thought of you in that way," Stella answered truthfully. "You want to think about me," he said calmly. "You want to think about me from every possible angle, because I'm going to come back and ask you this same question every once in awhile so long as you're in reach and doing this dirty work for a thankless boss. You want to think of me as a possible refuge from a lot of disagreeable things?"

I'd like to have you to chum with, and I'd like to have some incentive to put a big white bungalow on that old foundation for us two," he smiled. "I'll never do it for myself alone. Go on. Take a gambling chance and marry me, Stella. Say yes, and say it now." But she shook her head resolutely and as Katy John came in just then Fyfe took his foot off the stove and went out of the kitchen. He threw a glance over his shoulder at Stella, a broad smile, as if to say that he harbored no grudge and nursed no wound in his vanity because she would have none of him.

Katy rang the breakfast gong. Five minutes later the tattoo of knives and forks was heard in the dining room. "That was only one of a dozen brutal incidents," she said.

Stella watched him bathe his head copiously in cold water and then seat himself at the long table trying to force food upon an aggrieved and rebellious stomach. Gradually a flood of reckless, nervous welling up in her breast. "For two pins I would marry Jack Fyfe," she told herself savagely. "Anything would be better than this."

CHAPTER VII The Plunge. STELLA went over that queer debate a good many times in the ten days that followed. It revealed Jack Fyfe to her in a new, inexplicable light, at odd variance with her former conception of the man. She could not have visualized him standing with one foot on the stove front speaking calmly of love and marriage if he had not seen him with her own eyes, heard him with somewhat incredulous ears. She had continued to endow him with the attributes of unrestrained passion of besotted druggery. That's what it is, simple druggery. You crave lots of things you can't get by yourself, but that you could help me out for you.

At Wallbridge & Clarke's Finest Meat—Finest Quality. Pkg. 12c, 25c, 50c, 75c, 1.00, 1.25, 1.50, 2.00, 2.50, 3.00, 3.50, 4.00, 4.50, 5.00, 5.50, 6.00, 6.50, 7.00, 7.50, 8.00, 8.50, 9.00, 9.50, 10.00. Tomato Ketchup, Sterling, bottles. Maple Butter, tins. Pimento Cheese, pkgs. Roquefort Cheese, jars. Hams & Bacon—Finest Sugar-Cured. Peanut Butter. 1-lb. tins. 12c, 18c, 25c. French Mustard, jars. California Fruits in Tins. Extra Quality! Black Cherries. Royal Anne White, Cherries. Peaches—Pears—Apples. Wax Candles. AT WALLBRIDGE & CLARKE'S.

Save Your Eyes. With no intention of making glasses as cheaply as possible—no desire whatever to handle the greatest possible number of cases in a given time—we carefully check and re-check every finding of our examination, we deliberately use the very best materials, the finest instruments procurable. Consultation By Appointment. ANGUS McFEE. Mfg. Optician.

Royal Purple Calf Meal. DR. HESS Stock Tonic and Poultry Panacea. Sherwin Williams Paints and Varnishes. FORMALIN KILLS SMUT. Ostrom's DRUG STORE. 218 Front St.

Pies! Pies! Pies! Try Our Delicious Pies Made in Apple, Raisin, Peach, Pumpkin, Pine-apple, Coconut and Huckleberry 30c each. Apple and Raisin Cake 10c. Something New Try One. Chas S. CLAPP.

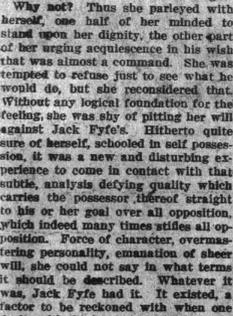
MONEY PRIVATE MONEY TO LOAN ON. Mortgage on farm and city property at lowest rates of interest on terms to suit borrowers. F. S. WALLBRIDGE, Barrister, 4c Corner Front and Bridge Sts., Belleville, over Dominion Bank.

DEAF PEOPLE. "EINHOERLEN" absolutely cures Deafness and Noise in the Head, no matter how severe or longstanding the case may be. Hundreds of persons whose cases were supposed to be incurable have been permanently cured by this New Remedy. This Wonderful Preparation goes direct to the actual seat of the trouble, and the Box ample to effectually cure any ordinary case. Mrs. Rowe, of Portland, Oregon, writes: "The 'Einhorn' has completely cured me after twenty years' suffering. Many other equally good reports. Try one Box today. It only costs \$1.00, and there is nothing better at any price. Address: 'EINHOERN' Co., 115 SOUTH 7TH AVENUE, WASHINGTON, D. C."

TURAZECK & ABBOTT, Barristers, etc. Office Robertson Block Front Street, Belleville, East Side. E. R. Turazek. A. Abbott.

PATENTS PROMPTLY SECURED. In all countries. American and Foreign. TOWN'S PATENT LAW OFFICE, 115 SOUTH 7TH AVENUE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Mrs. Parliament, wife of Nelson Parliament, M.P.P., who some days ago underwent a serious operation at the hospital here, is, we are pleased to report, making very satisfactory progress toward recovery.



"Now you know that was nothing to scrap about," she heard him say.

woman at this end of the lake besides myself!" She showed Stella into a bedroom. It boasted an enamel washstand with taps which yielded hot and cold water, neatly curtained windows and a deep seated morris chair. Certainly Fyfe's household accommodation was far superior to Charlie Benton's. Stella expected the man's home to be rough and ready like himself, and in a measure it was, but a comfortable sort of rough and readiness. She took off her hat and had a critical survey of herself in a mirror, after which she had just time to brush her hair before answering Mrs. Howe's call to a "cup of tea."

The cup of tea resolved itself into a well cooked and well served meal, with china and linen and other unexpected table accessories which agreeably surprised her. Inevitably she made comparisons, somewhat tinged with natural envy. If Charlie would fix his place with a few such household luxuries life in their camp would be more nearly bearable despite the long hours of disagreeable work. As it was—well, the unrelieved discomforts were beginning to warp her outlook on everything.

Fyfe maintained his habitual sparsity of words while they ate the food Mrs. Howe brought on a tray hot from the cook's outlying domain. When they finished he rose, took up his hat and helped himself to a handful of cigars from a box on the fireplace mantel. "I guess you'll be able to put in the time, all right," he remarked. "Make yourself at home. If you take a notion to read there's a lot of books and magazines in my room. Mrs. Howe'll show you."

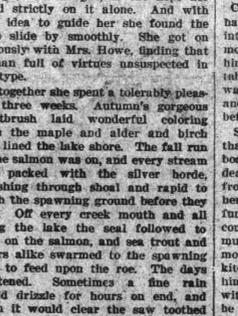


"Why did you make a point of coming for me?" she asked bluntly.

"Why did you make a point of coming for me?" she asked bluntly. Fyfe rested on his cane a moment, looking at her in his direct, unembarrassed way. "I wintured once on 'the Sticking,'" he said. "My partner pulled out before Christmas and never came back. It was the first time I'd ever been alone in my life. I wasn't a much older hand in the country than you are. Four months without hearing the sound of a human voice—stark alone. I got so I talked to myself out loud, before I'd come and bring you over to see Mrs. Howe."

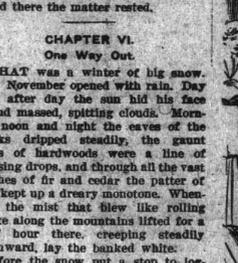
Stella sat gazing at the slow moving panorama of the lake shore, her chin

CHAPTER VI. One Way Out. THAT was a winter of big snow. November opened with it. Day after day the sun hid his face behind massed, spitting clouds. Morning, noon and night the eaves of the shacks dripped steadily, the gaunt limbs of hardwoods were a line of coating drizzle, and through all the vanes of rain and sleet and the rattling of ice and the clatter of the putter of rain kept up a dreary monotone. Whenever the mist that blew like rolling smoke along the mountains lifted for a brief hour there, creeping steadily downward, lay the blanket white.



Jack Fyfe sat with his feet on the oven door.

CHAPTER VI. One Way Out. THAT was a winter of big snow. November opened with it. Day after day the sun hid his face behind massed, spitting clouds. Morning, noon and night the eaves of the shacks dripped steadily, the gaunt limbs of hardwoods were a line of coating drizzle, and through all the vanes of rain and sleet and the rattling of ice and the clatter of the putter of rain kept up a dreary monotone. Whenever the mist that blew like rolling smoke along the mountains lifted for a brief hour there, creeping steadily downward, lay the blanket white. Before the snow put a stop to logging, Jack Fyfe dropped in once a week or so. When work shut down he came oftener, but he never singled Stella out for any particular attention. Once he surprised her sitting with her elbows on the kitchen table, her face buried in her palms. She looked up at his quiet entrance, and her face must have



CHAPTER VI. One Way Out. THAT was a winter of big snow. November opened with it. Day after day the sun hid his face behind massed, spitting clouds. Morning, noon and night the eaves of the shacks dripped steadily, the gaunt limbs of hardwoods were a line of coating drizzle, and through all the vanes of rain and sleet and the rattling of ice and the clatter of the putter of rain kept up a dreary monotone. Whenever the mist that blew like rolling smoke along the mountains lifted for a brief hour there, creeping steadily downward, lay the blanket white. Before the snow put a stop to logging, Jack Fyfe dropped in once a week or so. When work shut down he came oftener, but he never singled Stella out for any particular attention. Once he surprised her sitting with her elbows on the kitchen table, her face buried in her palms. She looked up at his quiet entrance, and her face must have

ESTABLISHED 1848. General in French. D. O. Y. R. li.

(Special) PARIS, in hand and man of color. man grown much to say man drive reserves for the fighting.

(Special) with the ing heavy nurse and the Ves man offensive would be in stronger position. The Germans put troops at the Both Front extraordinary standing tr. Aisne at his when the a.

(Special) ITALIAN brilliant was married Trent, early being early numerically sea.

(Special) PARIS early this

(Special) A Can having on cers, N.C.O arrived here. FAT (Special) COLU ward at the burning to tients are afterwards.

(Special) LOND Albert and The enemy carried out took pris also during enemy at.