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From all Stores, in Tins and Packets

"Love in the Wilds"

—OR—
The Romance of a South African Trading Station.

CHAPTER XV.

UNDER FOREIGN SKIES.

"Plenty," said the captain, and led the way to the boat.

The horseman dismounted, flung the bridle across his horse's neck, and followed the captain.

As he passed the dark-looking youth on the gang-plank he cast a glance and half stopped, as though he recognized his face.

But a longer look convinced him that he did not, and with a courteous inclination of the hand, a sort of upward wave peculiar to the Cape, he passed on.

The youth turned and looked after him.

Since he had first come in sight he had not taken his dark eyes off him. He seemed fascinated—drawn as if by a magnet—and even then, when one would think he had gazed long enough, he bent forward to get another glance at the stalwart figure as it stood upright as a dart in the lading boat.

Presently, after the barter had been made—wine, sheep, and corn for English goods and tools—the cattle-runner and the captain returned—the captain with a satisfied smile on his face, talking agreeably; the cattle-runner listening, his face grave, uninterested, and absent.

They approached the youth, still standing where they had left him.

"Hello, my lad!" said the captain; "I'd forgotten you."

Then, turning to the horseman, who had stopped, too, he said:

"Look here, you don't want anything of this sort up at the Corner, do you, Laury?"

Wild Laury, as he was called, glanced keenly and critically at the slim youth, who, by the way, blushed deeply under the scrutiny, and shook his head.

"No," he said; "I think not."

Then, addressing the youth, he added:

"Are you looking for a situation at a station?"

"I am looking for employment of any sort," replied the youth, in a soft, musical voice that in some way moved the cattle-runner, for he half started and stared at the still blushing face.

Then he thought a moment.

"You are too slimly made for hard work," he said, kindly. "Can you read?" Then, as if anxious not to hurt the lad's feelings, added: "Of course, though; and write?"

"Oh, yes!" said the captain, answering for him. "He can read and write well enough, and figure, too."

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Weight for weight, "Skippers" are more nourishing than meat, and the valuable phosphates and fats which they contain will repair the wear of war on brain and nerve.

Your retailer will supply you with a tin of

"Skippers" are bracing with good points.

"Skippers"

had pointed them out with a few curt, quick but not unkind sentences.

When they came in sight of the farm-house, that rose from the plain of flowers, he turned to the youth, who was staring with delighted eyes, and said:

"That is the station. It is beautiful, at least I thought it so when, a year ago, it broke upon my vision; but even too much beauty palls upon the senses."

"Oh, not this; not this!" exclaimed the youth, in his musical accents, raising his dark, sparkling eyes to the stern sun-tanned face, but lowering them timidly as they caught the grave regard of the stern eyes.

"Well, it may not be so with you," said the runner; "but I told you, not to point out its beauty, but to warn you that we are nearing our destination. That's the station—your home if you decide to accept service there."

The youth flushed eagerly and was about to speak, but the other went on:

"You are young and, as I conjecture, unused to rough life. You will get nothing but rough life yonder. It is as well you should know it before you enter upon it. Not that there is ought to fear," he continued, seeing the youth's face pale slightly as if with alarm. "I said rough, not savage. The men are wild but honest, rough but true. This is the end of the world, this out-station here, and you may miss the comforts and the luxuries. Think ere you decide."

The youth looked up timidly, then flushed and knit his brows with determination.

"I thank you," he said, "but I've already decided. If your master will accept me, I will accept service."

"So be it," said the runner, and, spurring his horse, he galloped up to the door.

Beneath the porch the settler was smoking his long pipe. He rose and, pushing a group of negro children aside, went up and nodded a salutation.

"Hello, Laurence! Back? Got the tools? And who is this?"

"A youngster I found at the quay," returned Laurence, curtly. "He reads, writes, and keeps accounts. You said you wanted a book-keeper. If he suits he is willing to stay."

Stewart looked at the youth and held out his hand.

"Come inside, young sir, and we'll talk matters over. Come you in, too, Laurence," he called out, for Laurence had turned his horse's head and was riding away already.

He swung back like an arrow, though, and leaping down at the door followed the others into the room.

As usual the bottle was brought out and the glasses filled, but the youth drew back.

"I—I—can not drink it," he said, flushing, then turning pale.

The settler stared.

"Don't like French brandy?" he said, with a laugh. "I reckon you'll soon change that song. Well, here's your health! Laurence, the other glass is for you."

But the runner shook his head and turned aside, and, strange to say, the settler made no remark at his refusal.

"Well, it's to be hoped you can keep accounts better than you can tittle," said the settler, in his rough but not unkindly way. "Look here, my lad, can you make anything of these?" and he took a pile of long account-books from the cupboard and threw them on the table.

The youth picked up one and frowned at it, as was his wont when anxious.

It was one mass of jumble and confusion.

He shook his head rather mournfully.

The settler burst into a hearty laugh and threw himself upon the table.

"Now," he said, when he regained breath, "that's a good one! If you'd said you could, I'd 'a' packed you off to the Bay to-morrow, for I know there ain't a clerk in the whole world as could make anything of them blamed books. I tried and they drove me mad. It ain't difficult, neither. It's only a matter of entering and checking. So many hundred come in, and so many hundred gone out, and the price they fetched. Here, Laury, show the youngster, your method."

Laurence took a book from a shelf and opened it.

"There, look at that. Can you manage that?" asked the settler.

The youth took the book and his face cleared.

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"Oh, yes!" he said "this is simple. I have only learned to keep books while on board the ship, but I could manage this I am sure."

"Then you'll do," said the settler, and then he looked hard at the youth and thought a moment.

There was something about the bearing and the voice of the lad that told the astute Mr. Stewart he had another eliver fish in the net.

"Yes," he said, "you'll do. Now as for all the rest, I'll turn you over to Laury," and he sauntered out.

The youth turned to Laurence, who was seated on the table, his head bent down, his eyes fixed on the floor.

He started as if from a reverie as the settler spoke and, lifting his eyes, said:

"What is your name?"

"Cecil," replied the youth, dropping his eyes beneath the cold, calm gaze.

"Cecil," repeated Laurence. "It's a pretty name."

Then he spoke of the wages.

The boy was as indifferent to them as he himself had been, but stipulated for a room and some sort of office apart from the other men, and Laurence, promising he should have these, left the question of salary to the settler.

Then he took him upstairs, showed him a bedroom—there were plenty to spare—fixed upon the armory as an office for him, and telling him the hours for breakfast, dinner, and supper, left the room.

The youth stared after him as he strode down the stairs, and then ran to the window to watch him as he mounted his horse and rode off across the prairie.

For Wild Laury, as his fellow runners called him, seldom spent a night at the farm.

He knew no fatigue, no physical weakness. If the cattle came in at night, he was off again by the light of the moon, to sleep far away at some one of the out-stations, solitary and silent, at the base of some huge mountain or the center of one of the dark forests.

Solitude was dear to Wild Laury. He never shunned danger, but he was given to shunning men.

A fortnight passed, and the youth, Cecil, had become used to his duties and his home.

(To be continued.)

Fashion Plates.

A SIMPLE HOUSE DRESS WITH SLEEVE IN EITHER OF TWO STYLES.



2891—Percale, gingham, chambray, lawn, flannelette, and drill are good materials for this style. The sleeve may be finished in wrist length with a band cuff, or loose, at elbow length. The pattern is cut in 7 Sizes:—34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure. Size 38 requires 5 1/2 yards of 36 inch material. Width at lower edge is about 2 1/4 yards.

A pattern of this illustration mailed to any address on receipt of 15c. in silver or stamps.

A BECOMING SUMMER FROCK.



3237

Pattern 3237 is here developed. It is cut in 7 Sizes:—34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure. A medium size will require 7 1/4 yards of 42 inch material.

The width of the skirt at its lower edge, is about 1 1/4 yards.

Gingham may be combined with chambray for this style, or printed voile with organdy. Plain and figured foulard, linen, and shantung are also attractive.

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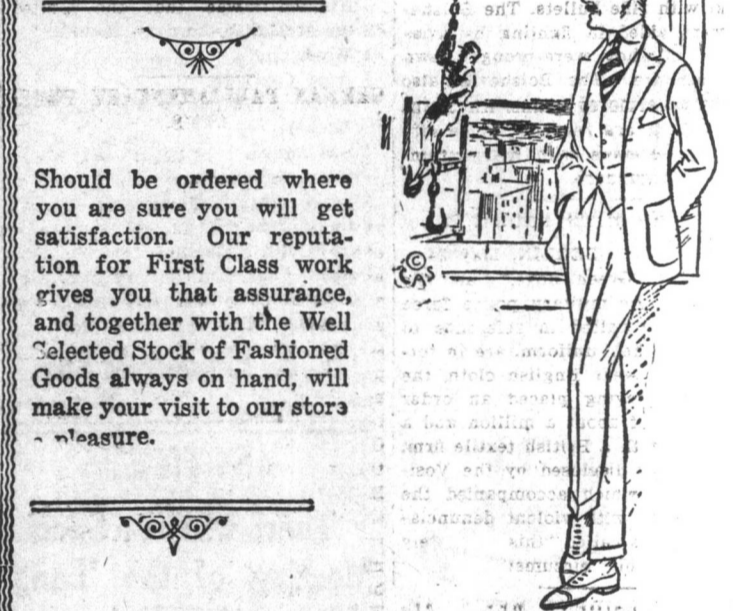
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