A Romance of the Bear **Tooth Range**

By HAMLIN GARLAND

Convright, 1914, by Hamile Garland

not being a boy .

Her eyes shone with mirth. "Not that I can notice. He 'pears con-

"You're a good deal like a son to him, I imagine. You can do about all that a boy can do, anybow-more than I could ever do. Does he realize how much you have to do with the management of his forest? I've never seen your like. I really believe you could carry on the work as well as he."

She flushed with pleasure. "You seem to think I'm a district forester in

"I have eyes. Miss Supervisor, and also ears, which leads me to ask. Why don't you clean out that saloon gang? Landon is sure there's crooked work going on at that mill-certainly that open bar is a disgraceful and corrupting thing."

Her face clouded. "We've tried to cut out that saloon, but it can't be done. You see, it's on a patented claim. The claim was bogus, of course, and we've made complaint but the matter is bung up and that gives em a chance to go on."

"Well, let's not talk of that. It's too delicious an hour for any question of business. It is a moment for poetry. I wish I could write what I feel this moment. Why don't we camp here and watch the sun go down and the moon rise? From our lofty vantage ground the coming of dawn would be

"We mustn't think of that," she protested. "We must be going."

"Not yet. The hour is too perfect. It may never come again. The wind in the pines, the sunshine, the conies erving from their rocks, the butterflies on the clover-my heart aches with the beauty of it. It's been a wonder ful trip. Even that staggering walk in the rain had its splendid quality. I couldn't see the poetry in it then, but I do now. These few days have made us comrades, haven't they-comrades of the trail?"

CHAPTER XII. The Death Grapple.

OU have been very considerate of me, Miss Supervisor." Wayland took her hand. "I've never seen such handr. They are like steel and yet they are femi-

She drew her hands away. "I'm ashamed of my hands-they are so big and rough and dingy." "They're brown, of course, and cal

loused-a little-but they are not big and they are beautifully modeled." He tooked at the girl of the forest speculatively. "I am wondering how you would look in conventional dress. "Do you mean"- She hesitated.

"I'd look like a gawk in one of those low negked outfits. I'd never dareand those tight skirts would sure crip-"Oh. no, they wouldn't. You'd have

to modify your stride a little, but you'd negotiate it. You're equal to anything."

"You're making fun of me!" "No, I'm not. I'm in earnest. You're the kind of American girl that can go anywhere and do anything. My siswould mortgage their share of the golden streets for your abounding

nogith and so would I." "You are all right now," she smiled. "You don't look or talk as you did." "It' this sunlight." He lifted a spread hand as if to clutch and hold omething. "I feel it soaking into me

like some magical oil. No more moping and whining for me. I've proved that hardship is good for me." "Don't' crow till you're out of the woods. It's a long ride down the hill

and going down is harder on the tenlerfoot than going up." 'I'm no longer a tenderfoot. need is another trip like this with you

All this was very sweet to her, and though she knew they should be going she lingered. Childishly reckless of the sinking sun, she played with the wild flowers at her side and listened to his voice in complete content. He was right. The hour was too beautiful to rtened, although she saw no reason why others equally delightful might not come to them both. He was stared at her with mingled fear and re of the lover than he had ever been before, that she knew, and in the light of his eyes all that was not girl- looked into each other's eyes as though ish and charming melted away. She nothing but words of hate and loathforgot her heavy shoes, her rough ing had ever passed between them. hands and sun tanned tace and listen. The girl saw in him only a savage, ed with wondering joy and pride to his wangeful bloodthirsty beast; the man words, which were of a fineness such confronted in her an accusing angen. as she had never heard spoken-only "I didn't mean to kill him." books contained such unusual and exquisite phrases.

A cloud passing across the sun flung crushed his life out with your big down a shudow of portenture akt! handsfor it!"

L she started to her feet with

"We must be going at once?" she "Not yet," he pleaded. "It's sply a The sun is coming out again. have perfect east loves in your wood-

art. Way not spend another mane . the trail? It may be our last trie ogether " He tempted her strongly, so frank and boyish and lovable were his glances and his words. But she was vaguely

afraid of herself, and though the long ride at the moment seemed hard and dull the thought of her mother waiting decided her action. "No, no!" she responded firmly. "We

have wasted too much time already. We must ride." He looked up at her with challenging glance. "Suppose I refuse suppose I lecide to stay here?"

Upon her as he talked a sweet hestation fell, a dream which held more of happiness than she had ever known "It is a long, hard ride," she thought, "and another night on the trail will not matter." And so the moments passed on velvet feet, and still she lin-

gered, reluctant to break the spell. Suddenly into their idvilic drowse of ontent, so sweet, so youthful and so pure of heart, broke the sound of a horse's hurrying, clashing steel shod feet, and, looking up, Berrie saw a mounted man coming down the mountain side with furious, reckless haste.

"It is Chiff?" she cried out. "He's on our trail!" And into her face came a look of alarm. Her lips paled; her eyes widened. "He's mad-be's dangerous! Leave him to me," she added. There was something so sinister in the rider's disregard of stone and tree and pace, something so menacing in the forward thrust of his body, that Berrie was able to divine his wrath and was smitten into irresolution, all her bardy, boyish self reliance swallowed up in the weakness of the woman. She forgot the pistol at her belt and awaited the assault with rigid

As Belden neared them Norcross also perceived that the rider's face was distorted with passion and that his glance was not directed upon Berrie, but upon himself, and he braced himself for the attack

Leaving his saddle with one flying leap, which the cowboy practices at play, Belden hurled aimself upon his rival with the fury of a panther.

The slender youth went down before the big rancher as though struck by a catapult, and the force of his fail against the stony earth stunned him so that he lay beneath his enemy as help-

Belden snarled between his teeth, "I told you I'd kill you, and I will!" But this was not to be. Berea suddenly recovered her native force. With a cry of pain, of anger, she flung herself on the maddened man's back. Her hands encircled his neck like a collar

"Let go!" she commanded, with deadly intensity. "Let go or I'll choke the life out of you! Let go, I say!" He raised a hand to beat her off, but

she was too strong, too desperate to be driven away. She was as blind to pain as a mother eagle and bent above him so closely that he could not bring the full weight of his fist to bear. With one determind hand still clutching his hand into his hair and twisted his head upward with a power which he could not resist. And so, looking into his upturaed ferocious eyes, she repeated with remorseless fury, "Let go, I say!"

His swollen face grew rigid, his mouth gaped, his tongue protruded, and at last, releasing his hold on his victim, he rose, flinging Berrie off with a final desperate effort. "I'll kill you, Up to this moment the girl had felt

no fear of herself, but now she resorted to other weapons. Snatching per nisrol from its holster, she leveled it at his forehead "Ston!" she said, and something in her voice froze him into calm. He was not a fiend; he was not a deliberate assassin: he was only a jealous, despairing, insane lover, and as he looked into the face he knew so well and realized that nothing but hate and deadly resolution lit the eyes he had so often kissed his heart gave way, and, dropping his head, he said: "Kill me if you want to. I've nothing left to live for."

There was something unreal, appailing in this sudden reversion to weak-

ess, and Berrie could not credit his remorse. "Give me your gun." she

He surrendered it to her, and threw it aside, then turned to Wayland, who was lying white and still with face upturned to the sky. With a moan of anguish she bent above him and called upon his name. He did not stir, and when she lifted his head to her lap his hair, streaming with blood, stained her dress. She kissed him and called again to him, then turned with accusing frenzy to Belden: "You've killed him! Do you hear!

Von've killed him!" The agony, the fury of hate in her voice reached the heart of the conquer ed man. He raised his head and remorse. And so across that limp body these two souls, so lately lovers,

"Yes, you did! You meant it. You den," he said feebly. "How came you hands-and now I'm going to kill you here?" Then noting Berrie's look. he

startled recollection of the place and Some faroff ancestral deep of passion the hour. the weapon with steady hand and point | job?"

ad it at his heart His fear passed as his wrath had passed. His head drooped, his glance wavered. "Shoot!" he commanded sul lenly. "I'd sooner die than live-now."

His words, his tone, brought back to her a vision of the man he had seemed when she first met and admired him Her hand fell, the woman in her reasserted itself. 'A wave of weakness, of indecision, of passionate grief overwhelmed her. "Oh, Cliff!" she moaned. Why did you do it? He was so gentle and sweet."

He did not answer. His glance wandered to his horse, serenely cropping the grass in utter disregard of this tumultnons human drams, but the wind, less insensate than the brute, swept through the grove of dwarfed, distorted pines with a desolate, sympathetic moan which filled the man's heart with a new and exalted sorrow. "You're right," he said. "I was crazy, I de-

serve killing." But Berrie was now too deep in her own desolation to care what he said or did. She kissed the cold lips of the still youth, murmuring passionately. "I don't care to live without you: I shall go with you!"

Belden's hand was on her wrist before she could raise the weapon. "Don't, for God's sake; don't do that! He may not be dead!"

She responded but dully to the sng gestion. "No, no. He's gone. His breath is gone." "Maybe not. Let me see."

Again she bent to the quiet face on which the sunlight fell with mocking member you as you looked when you splendor. It seemed all a dream till blood upon her hands. It was all so in- to forget all this just as soon as I can. credibly sudden. Only just now he and it don't help me any to have you was exulting over the warmth and beauty of the day-and now-

How beautiful he was. He seemed asleep. The conies crying from their runways suddenly took on poignant pathos. They appeared to be grieving with her, but the eagles spoke of revenge.

A sharp cry. a note of toy sprang



told you I'd kill you, and I will!"

rom her lips. "He is alive! I saw his evelids quiver! Quick! Bring some water!"

The man leaped to his feet and, running down to the pool, filled his sombrero with icy water. He was as eager now to save his rival as he had been mad to destroy him. "Let me help," he pleaded. But she would not permit him to touch the body.

Again, while splashing the water upon his face, the girl called upon her love to return. "He hears me!" she exilted to her enemy. "He is breathing Nash!" now! He is opening his eyes!"

his eyes, but his look was a blank, rehending stare, which plunged her back into despair. "He don't know me!" she said, with piteous accent. She now perceived the source of the blood upon ber arm. It came from a wound in the boy's head which had been dashed upon a stone.

The sight of this wound brought back the blaze of accusing anger to her eyes. "See what you did!" she said, with cold malignity. Then by sudden shift she bent to the sweet face in her arms and kissed it passionately. "Open your eyes, darling. You must not die! I won't let you die! Can't you hear me? Don't you know where you are?" He opened his eyes once more, quietly, and looked up into her face with a faint, drowsy smile. He could not so? Well, that's hard luck. Is he badyet locate himself in space and time, ly burt?" but he knew her and was comforted. Slowly the youth's eyes took on ex-"Are we still on the hill?"

he asked "Yes dearest." she assured him. Then to Belden, "He knows where he to the station. It will be deep night

Wayland again struggled with reality. "What has happened to me?" "You fell and burt your head." He turned slightly and observed the other man looking down at her with dark and tragic glauce. "Hello, Bel-

added: "I remember. He triet was. me." He again searched his antago. nist's face. "Why didn't you finish the

The girl tried to turn his thought "It's all right now, darling. He aside. won't make any more trouble. Don't mind him. I don't care for anybody now you are coming back to me."

Wayland wonderingly regarded to face of the girl: "And you-are you

"No, I'm not burt. I am perfectly happy now." She turned to Belden with quick, authoritative command Unsaddle the borses and set up the tent. We won't be able to leave here tonight."

He rose with instant obedience, glad of a chance to serve her, and soon had the tent pegged to its place and the bedding unrolled. Together they lifted the wounded youth and laid him small tent. upon his blankets beneath the low can vas goof which seemed heavenly belp-

"There!" she said caressingly. "Now you are safe, no matter whether n rains or not."

He smiled. "It seems I'm to have able to see the sun rise. I've sort of lost my interest in the sunset."

"Now, Cliff," she said as soon as the camp was in order and a fire started, "I reckon vou'd better ride on. haven't any further use for you." "Don't say that, Berrie," he pleaded.

"I can't leave you here alone with a sick man. Let me stay and help." She looked at him for a long time before she replied. "I shall never be able to look at you again without nating you." she said. "I shall always rewere killing that boy. So you'd better she felt once more the stain of his ride on and keep a-riding. I'm going around. I never want to see you or hear your name again."

"You don't mean that, Berrie!" "Yes, I do," she asserted bitterly. mean just that. So saddle up and pull out. All I ask of you is to say nothing about what has happened here. You'd should get worse it might go hard with

He accepted his banishment, "All right. If you feel that way I'll ride. But I'd like to do something for you pefore I go. Ill pile up some wood"-I'll take care of that." And without another word of farewell she turned away and re-cutered the tent.

Mounting his horse with painful slowness, as though suddenly grown old, the reprieved assassin rode away up the mountain, his head bent low, his eyes upon the ground.

CHAPTER XIII. Berrie's Vigil.

Wayland's mind cleared he be came curious to know precisely what had taken place, but he did not feel free to ask "She will tell me if she wishes know." That she had vanquished Belden and sent him on his way was evident, although he had not able to hear what she had said to him at the last. What lay between the enemy's furious onslaught and the aid he lent in making the camp could only be surmised. "I wonder if she used her pistol?" Wayland asked him- He said: "Of course you know that self. "Something like death must

have stared him in the face. That she loved him with the complete passion of her powerful and simple nature he knew, for her voice had reached through the daze of his semiunconsciousness with thrilling power. The touch of her lips to his, the close clasp of her strong arms were of ever greater convincing quality. And, yet be wished the revelation had come in some other way. His pride was abraded. His manbood seemed somehow essened. It was a disconcerting reversal of the ordinary relations between hero and heroine, and he saw no way of re-establishing the normal

attitude of the male. Entirely unaware of what was passing in the mind of her patient Berrie went about her duties with a cheerfulness which astonished the sufferer in the tent. She seemed about to hum a song as she set the skillet on the fire, but a moment later she called out. in a tone of irritation. "Here comes

"I'm glad of that," answered Way-The wounded man did, indeed, open land, although he perceived something of her displeasure.

Nash, on his way to join the supervisor, raised a friendly greeting as he saw the girl and drew rein. "I expected to meet you farther down the hill," be said. "Fony phoned that you had started. Where did you leave the supervisor?" "Over at the station waiting for von

Where's your outfit?" "Camped down the trail a mile or so. I thought I'd better push through tonight. What about Norcross? Isn't

he with you?" She hesitated an instant, "He's in the tent. He fell and struck his head a rock, and I had to go into camp

Nash was deeply concerned. "Is that "Well, he had a terrible fall. But

he's easier now. I think he's asleep." "May I look in on him?" "I don't think you'd better take the time. It's a long, hard ride from here

before you can make it"-"Don't you think the supervisor would want me to camp here tonight and do what I could for you? If Norcross is badly injured you will need

was right, and yet she was reinctant to give up the pleasure of her lone vigil. "He's not in any danger, and we'll be able to ride on in the morn-

Nash, thinking of her as Clifford Belden's promised wife, had no suspicion of her feeling toward Norcross. Therefore he gently urged that to go on was quite out of order. "I can't think of leaving you here alone certainly not till I see Norcross and find out how badly he is hurt."

one rieided. "I reckon von're right." she said. "I'll go see if he is awake." He followed her to the door of the tent, apprehending something new and inexplicable in her attitude. In the music of her voice as she spoke to the sick man was the love note of the mate. "You may come in." she called back, and Nash, stooping, entered the

"Hello, old man! What you been doing with yourself? Hitting the high spots?" Norcross smiled feebly. "No, the

"How did it all happen?" "I don't exactly know. It all came my way after all. I hope I shall be of a sudden. I had no share in it. I didn't go for to do it." "Whether you did or not, you seem

hill flew up and bumped me."

to have made a good job of it." Nash examined the wounded man carefully, and his skill and strength in handling Norcross pleased Berrie. though she was lealous of the warm friendship which seemed to exist between the men.

She had always liked Nash, but she resented him now, especially as he insisted on taking charge of the case. but she gave way finally and went back to her nots and wans with pensive countenance

A little later, when Nash came out to make report, she was not very graclous in her manner. "He's pretty badly hurt," he said. "There's an ugly gash in his scalp, and the shock has produced a good deal of pain and confusion in his head, but he's going to be all right in a day or two. For a man seeking rest and recuperation be cerbetter leave the state. If Wayland tainly has had a rough run of weath-

Through a serious minded, honorable forester, determined to keep sternly in mind that he was in the presence of the daughter of his chief, and that she was engaged to marry another, Nash was, after all, a man, and the witchery of the hour, the charm of the girl's graceful figure, asserted their power over him. His eyes grew tender, and his voice eloquent in spite of himself. His words ne could guard, out it was bard to keep from his speech the song of the lover. The thought that he was to camp in her company, to help her about the fire, to see her from moment to moment, with full liberty to speak to her, to meet her glance, pleased him. It was the most romantic and moving episode in his life, and though of a rather dry and analytic temperament he had a sense of poesy.

The night, black, oppressive and stlent, brought a closer bond of mutual help and understanding between them. She grew friendlier and asked bim about his work and especially about his ambitions and plans for the future. They discussed the forest and its enemies, and he wondered at her freedom in speaking of the mill and saloon, quite up to his usual level of adroit Alec Belden is a partner in that busiand I'm told-of course I don't know this-that Clifford Belden is also interested."

She offered no defense of young Bel- live." den, and this unconcern puzzled him He had expected indigment protest, but admiration. "I'm mightily obliged to she merely replied; "I don't care who | you," she replied, as heartly as she owns it. It should be rooted out. I could command. hate that kind of thing. It's just another way of robbing those poor tie jacks.

"Clifford should get out of it. Can't you persuade him to do so?" "I don't think I can" "His relationship to von"-

"He is not related to me." Her tone amazed him. "You kno what I mean."

"Of course I do, but you're mistaken We're not related that way any longer. This silenced him for a few moments, then he said: "I'm rather glad of that. He isn't anything like the man you thought he was-1 couldn't say these things before-but he is as greedy as Alec, only not so open

All this comment, which moved the orester so deeply to ulter, seemed not to interest Berea. She sat staring at the fire with the calm brow of an Indian. Clifford Beiden had passed out of her life as completely as he had vanished out of the landscape. She felt an immense relief at being rid of him and resented his being brought back even as a subject of conversation. Wayland, listening, fancied he understood her desire and said nothing that

might arouse Nash's curiosity. Nash on his part, knowing that she had broken with Belden, began to un-

derstand the tenderness, the anxious care of her face and voice, as she bent above young Norcross. As the night deepened and the cold air stung, he asked, "Have you plenty of blankets for a bed?"

"Oh, yes," she answered. "but I don't intend to sleen." "Oh, you must!" he declared. "Go

to bed. I will keep the fire going." At last she consented. "I will make my bed right here at the mouth of the tent close to the fire," she said, "and you can call me if you need me." "Why not put your bed in the tent? t's going to be cold up here."

"I am all right outside," she pro-"Put your bed inside. Miss Berrie. We can't let conventions count above

ilmoer ine. 4 span rest better if know you are properly sheltered." And so it happened that for the third time she shared the same roof with her lover. But the nurse was upper-

most in her now. Nash was the first to arise in the dusk of dawn, and Berrie, awakened by the crackle of his tire, soon foined

"If you'll round up our horses, Mr. Nash, I'll rustle breakfast and we'll get going," she said. Nash, enthralled, lingered while she

twisted her hair into place, then went out to bring in the ponies. Wayland came out a little uncertainly, but looking very well. "I think I shall discourage my friends from coming to this region for their health," he said ruefully. "If I were a novelist

now all this would be grist for my

Beneath his joking he was profoundly chagrined. He had hoped by this ime to be as sinewy, as alert as Nash, instead of which here he sat, shivering over the tire like a sick girl, his head swollen, his blood sluggish, but this liscouragement only increased Berea's tenderness—a tenderness which melted all his reserve.

"I'm not worth all your care," he said to her, with poignant glance. The sun rose clear and warm, and the fire, the coffee, put new courage into him as well as into the others and while the morning was yet early and the forest chill and damp with

rain, the surveyor brought up the orses and started packing the outfit.



In this Berrie again took part, w ber balf of the work quite as dextrous ly as Nash himself. Indeed, the forester was noticeably confused and not

At last both packs were on, and as said: "This has been a great experience one I shall remember as long as She stirred uneasily onder his frank

"Don't chank me, I'm indebted to you. There is so little in my life of such companionship as you and Nor-

cross give me." He helped Norcross mount his horse and as he put the lead rope into Berrie's hand be said, with much feeling: Good luck to you. I shall remember this night all the rest of my life, Miss Berrie.

"I have to be going to the rear." called Wayland, whose bare, bandaged nead made him look like a wounded young officer. "But I guess it's better for me to lay off a week or two and recover my tone."

And so they parted, the surveyor riding his determined way up the naked nountain side toward the clouds, while Berrie and her ward plunged at once into the dark and dripping forest below. "If you can stand the grief." she said, "we'll go clear through." Her caution was all for him. She

tried each dangerous slough first and thus was able to advise him which way was safest. His head throbbed with pain and his knees were weary. but he rode on. At last they came into open ground

on a high ridge and were gladdened by the valley outspread below them, for it was still radiant with color, though not as brilliant as before the rain. At 1 o'clock on the bank of a clear stream the girl halted. "I reckon we'd

better camp awhile. You look tired

and I am hungry." She unsaddled one pack animal and spread some blankets on the grass. Lie down and rest while I boil some coffee," she commanded, and he obeyed, too tired to make pretension toward

assisting. Lying so, feeling the magic of the sun, hearing the music of the water and watching the girl, he regained a serener mood, and when she came back with his food he thanked her for it with a glance before which her eves fell. "I don't see why you are so kind to me. I really believe you like to do things for me." Her head drooped to hide her face, and he went on: do you care for me? Tell me!"

"I don't know," she murmured. Then

sne added, with a flash of bravery 'But I do.'

"What a mystery it all is! You turn from a splendid fellow like Landon to a 'skate' like me. Landon worships you-you know that-don't you?" "I know-he"-, she ended, vaguely distressed

"Did he ask you to marry him?" "Yes."

"Why didn't you? He's just the mate for you. He's a man of high character and education." She made no answer to this, and he went on: "Dear girl, I'm not worth your caretruly, I'm not. I resented your engagement to Belden, for he was a brute, but Landon is different. He thinks the world of you. He'll go high in the service. I've never done anything in the world-I never shall. It will be better for you if I go-tomor-

She took his hand and pressed it to her cheek, then, putting her arm about his neck, drew him to her bosom and kissed him passionately. "You break my heart when you talk like that," she protested, with tears. "You mustn't say such gloomy things-I won't let you give up. You shall come right home with me. and I will nurse you till you are well. It was all my fault." "I will not have it go that way," he said. "I've brought you only care and anhappiness thus far. I'm an alien-

my ways are not your ways." "I can change," she answered. hate my ways, and I like yours." As they argued she felt no shame, and he voiced no resentment. She knew his mood. She understood his doubt, his depression. She pleaded as a man might have done, ready to prove her love, eager to restore his

bitter and sadly contemptuous. A cow hand riding up the trail greeted Berrie respectfully, but a cynical smile broke out on his lips as he passed on. Another witness; another gos-

self respect, while he remained both

She did not care. She had no further concern of the valley's comment. Her life's happiness hung on the drooping eyelashes of this wounded boy, and to win him back to cheerful acceptance of life was her only concern.

"I've never had any motives," he confessed. "I've always done what pleased me at the moment-or because it was easier to do as others were doing. I went to college that way. Truth is, I never had any surplus vi tality, and my father never demanded anything of me. I haven't any motives now. A few days ago I was interested in forestry. At this time it all seems futile. What's the use of my trying to live?"

CHAPTER XIV.

The Gossips Awake. ERRIE was frightened for Wayland, and as she thought of the long ride still before them she rung her hands. "Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?" she

instantly smitten into shame, into manlier mood, he said: "Don't worry about me. Please don't. I can ride. I'm feeling better. You must not coskon Please forgive my selfish complaints. I'm done: 100 ii 20,00 hear it again. Come! Let us go on. I

can ride." "If we can reach Miller's ranch"-"I can ride to your ranch!" he declared. and rose with such new found reselution that she stared at him in wor-

He was able to smile. "I've had my little crying spell. I've relieved my beart of its load. I didn't mean to agonize you. It was only a slump." He put his hand to his hend. "I must be a comical figure."

His sudden reversal to cheer was a little alarming to her, but at length she perceived that he had in truth mastered his depression, and, bringing up the horses, she saddled them and helped him to mount. "If you get tired of feel worse tell me, and we'll go into camp," she urged as they were about to start.

"You keep going till I give the sign." be replied, and his voice was so firm and clear that her own sunny smile came back. "I don't know what to make of you." she said. "I reckon you must be a poet." It was dark when they reached the viliage, but Wayland declared his abil-

was clinging to the pommel of his sad-dle; so Berrie rode on. Mrs. McFarlane, hearing the horses on the bridge, was at the door and received her daughter with wondering question, while the stable hands, quick to detect an injured man, hurried to lift Norcross down from his saddle.

ity to go on, although his wounded

head was throbbing with fever and he

"He fell and struck his head on a stone." Berea hastily explained. "Take the horses, boys! Mother and I will look out for Mr. Norcross." The men obeyed her and fell back,

"What's the matter?" repeated Mrs.

but they were consumed with curiosity, and their glances irritated the girl Slip the packs at once," she insisted. With instant sympathy her mother came to her aid in supporting the wounded, weary youth indoors, and as he stretched out on the couch in the sitting room he remarked with a faint, ironic smile, "This beats any bed of balsam boughs."

"Where's your father?" asked Mrs. McFarlane of her daughter. "He's over on the Ptarmigan. I've

a powerful lot to tell you, mother, but not now; we must look after Wayland nearly done up, and so am i.

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