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Ontario Limited, 46	7:46 a.m.
Accommodation, 28	12:33 p.m.
New York Express, 2	3:00 p.m.
Accommodation, 30	5:16 p.m.

C. VAN, Agent Watford

**THE**  
**Bad Man**

Did He Deserve  
the Name?

By CLARISSA MACKIE

He rode past Fancher's place in a cloud of dust from the sun baked prairie. Nan Fancher, standing in the shade of the wide veranda, met his fierce, dark glance with frightened, timid eyes, and instantly the savage fire died out of his eyes and was replaced by a wonderful softness.

"The bad man?" shrieked little Peter Fancher from his post near the gate.

"Hush, Peter!" admonished his aunt severely. "You mustn't say such naughty things."

"But he is bad," whimpered Peter as the horse and rider disappeared in the dust. "He lives all alone in a little hut over near the big mountain, and he bites little boys, Manuel has told me."

Nan related the incident to her brother and his wife at the noonday dinner. "Who is the man? He has an interesting face," she added.

"It's Gay Ransom; that's all we know about him. He's a sheep herder for Bleck beyond the mountain. The boys give him a bad reputation, and his appearance certainly bears them out."

Mrs. Fancher sent the Chinese cook into the kitchen on some errand and spoke in a low tone. "Loo Sing has told me that he lost fifteen chickens last night, Dick, and he is positive that Ransom is responsible for their disappearance."

"Aunt, dear," expostulated Nan, "that man didn't look like a chicken thief, somehow."

"He's a terror of the plains, such as I used to read about in the nickel novels hidden away in the garret years ago," Dick arose from the table and passed a large bronzed hand over his sister's sunny hair. "It's mighty nice to see you out here, Nan. I wish you'd shake that old school in the east and settle down here in Texas."

"I'd love to, Dick, now that there are just the two of us left," said Nan a little sadly. "Perhaps I may buy the next ranch to yours and become your neighbor."

"The next ranch is in the next county," grinned Dick teasingly. "You wouldn't be a very near neighbor in that case. There's plenty of room for you here for a long time to come," and Anne added such an urgent plea that Nan was sorely tempted to extend her summer vacation into a permanent stay.

"I believe I'll ride over to the herd," he but and see if I find any chickens," remarked Dick as he left the room. "Good time to investigate while the chap's away. Want to come, Nan?"

"Yes," said the girl soberly, for the errand was not exactly to her liking. She would have preferred that her first ride across the brown prairie had a more agreeable object than the ferretting out of a chicken thief, but she said nothing as she tossed on a wide gray felt hat and drew on soft leather gauntlets over her white hands.

As they rode along enveloped in the dust raised by their own progress Dick Fancher gave his sister brief sketches of the neighboring ranches and their owners.

"And, last of all, there's Bleck's place over the mountain. Bleck is an easterner with notions who came out here a year ago, bought the ranch, placed a foreman in charge and then went home to raise sheep from the office of a New York skyscraper."

"And this Gay Ransom is one of his herdsmen?" asked Nan.

"Yes; dropped on the country one day from nobody knows where, with a ready made reputation which was chinned far and wide by Bleck's foreman, Peterson. He says Ransom is a fire eater—shoots first and argues afterward."

"How dreadful!" murmured Nan.

"And to think he would steal chickens too!"

"See any feathers?" asked Dick as they approached the door of the hut.

"Nary," sang Nan in the vernacular. Dick rode close to the hut, suddenly swooped from his saddle and picked up the limp and yellow foot of a chicken.

"Not so far wrong there, my girl," he said to his sister, dangling the foot before her averted face.

The door of the hut opened suddenly and the bad man stood before them. He plucked off his hat and held it in his hand, revealing a white forehead between the thatch of his unkempt dark hair and the tan of his face.

"Howdy?" he said amiably. "Will you come in?"

"No, thanks," drawled Dick, with all the insulting emphasis he could summon. "I'm just collecting chicken feet;

that's all. I've found two familiar ones right here. Maybe the rest of 'em are still holding up the chickens, eh?"

"If it's a joke I've missed it," said the other quietly. "Why see you looking for chickens around here? This isn't a chicken ranch."

"See here, Ransom, joking aside," said Dick, with an entire change of manner. "I've found a pair of my feet—my chickens' feet, I mean—here in your yard. How the dickens did they come there?" He dangled the feet unpleasantly close to Gay Ransom's face.

"I'm not surprised they came from your place," said Ransom slowly, "because, you see, I bought them from your cook, Loo Sing. There's one more around somewhere. I was counting on having him for my dinner, but I don't receive stolen goods, of course. Want to take him home?"

"If you've paid for him he's yours, of course," said Dick in a disabelling tone, for which Nan could have shaken him. "I'll take the matter up with Loo Sing."

"Stop awhile, you and the lady, and I'll give you a broiled chicken dinner. I'm aiming to cook him right away."

"Not to worry, thank you," said Dick, with scant courtesy, and the bad man flushed under his tan at the implied insult. Nan looked down at him and met his embarrassed glance. She smiled reassuringly into his startled eyes, and there came a surprised look into her own. As she rode away she looked back more than once at the lone figure standing in the sheep herder's hut, and the last time she looked he waved his hat in friendly farewell. After that she kept her face straight ahead, her eyes fixed on the triangular space between her horse's ears. A little smile played about her lips, and now and then dimples came and went in her pink cheeks.

At the ranch Loo Sing was closely questioned and strongly denied stealing his master's chickens. The matter was talked over at the supper table, and Dick threatened to make trouble for Gay Ransom, the bad man.

"The country is well rid of such vermin," he muttered as he went to bed.

Two hours later, at midnight, there came the thunder of running hoofs on the ground without and the pounding of a revolver butt on the front door.

Dick Fancher threw up his window, to find the glare of a grass fire reddening the sky with lurid flickering light and outlining the tall, graceful form of the bad man on his brown horse.

"Well, what is it?" he demanded sharply.

"Fire! See it coming? I've come to help you ditch it around the house or else get the women away. What do you want to do?" He asked the question impudently, and indeed there was little time to be lost for the long red wall of flame was approaching rapidly.

The ranch house was of adobe and would stand the fierce encircling flames if they could manage the ditch. They could turn the contents of the water tank into the ditch. Dick was thinking while he rapidly dressed and ordered his family from their beds, and Loo Sing had quite disappeared, and the three Mexicans, who were all the help Dick had on the farm at this season, were doubtless gambling down at Gunning's saloon, eight miles away. There was nobody here but the bad man and Dick Fancher.

First they drove the frightened horses to the shed near the house. Then they turned loose the restless cattle and saw them flee instinctively to the refuge of the hills to the east. It would take days to gather them in again. The two men fell to work with shovels and made a wide ditch all around the little lonely adobe house, waiting there in the middle of the crisp, parched plain to know what her fate would be. Would the heat of the flames crack her walls beyond endurance of the women within, or would the two be able to complete the ditch and fill it with water, thus frustrating the cruel tongues of devastating fire?

The ditch was finished while the hot breath of flame fanned their cheeks. They turned the water, an all too slender stream, into the ditch, saw the earth drink it up, drink and drink, and then when it could absorb no more saw the ditch slowly fill to half its depth. Then Gay Ransom, hatless, coatless, single by him and scorched beyond recognition, threw pall after pall of water against the walls of the house, even while the heated surface hissed under the contact and the steam rose in a white drift. Dick Fancher was everywhere at once, beating back little incursions of flame, tossing a bucket of water on a flaming shrub, chasing bearded chickens into the house, soothing first his family and then his horses until the morning dawned and found them safe.

Black and grimy beyond recognition, they stared at each other while the smoke clouds billowed away to the northeast. Then it was that Loo Sing emerged from the adobe chicken house, wild with fright and dragging after him the evidences of his own guilt in the shape of a bag of muffled chickens.

"I owe you the sincerest apology,

Ransom," said Dick Fancher frankly as he grasped the other's hand, "and I owe you more than I can say for the help you've given me tonight."

"I think you've made a mistake, Dick, dear," said Nan's soft voice, with a hint of laughter in its tone. "This is not Gay Ransom, the desperado. I am sure it is Mr. Bleck himself, for I met him last summer at the Teteleys'."

"Of course, of course!" cried Bleck excitedly. "I knew I'd seen you before. I took you in to dinner, you know."

"Please explain," said Dick with what patience he could muster. "Why are you not Gay Ransom? Why are you Mr. Bleck? Why are you posing as a bad man and a sheep herder?"

Bleck laughed heartily. "I'm Bleck because I can't help it. I came out here to learn the business on my ranch from the bottom up, and the bottom seems to be herding. I told my foreman I'd be in for a while, and the rascal planted on me the name and reputation of a well known bad man hereabouts. I've just discovered the fact, and I marvel that I've not been lynched before this."

This is the story of how the bad man came to be Dick Fancher's warmest friend and finally his brother-in-law and how Nan became her brother's nearest neighbor and yet lived in the next county.

**WHY A BASEBALL CURVES.**

For the Same Reason that an Open Door Slams in a Draft.

All have wondered at some time or other why a door opened nearly to the limit will close when there is a draft or wind going through the opening. Certainly the wind does not get in behind the door and shove it, for the draft is through the opening.

The explanation of this fact lies in a fundamental principle of moving fluids and is the same principle that makes a baseball curve. Whenever there is a current in the air sideways pressure is least in that current, so when the draft blows through the opening to the door the pressure on that side of the door is decreased, and consequently the pressure on the other side will start slowly to move the door, making it go faster and faster till the door swings into the draft itself and starts going in the direction of the draft. When it does so in this direction of course the draft helps it along, because it is now not the sideways motion that counts, but the forward motion.

When a ball is rotated in the air it carries around with it a good deal of air sticking to the sides. This, then, is the same thing as saying that a current of air is flowing round the rotating ball in the direction of rotation. Now, if a wind blows against that ball it is easy to see that the little rotating current will be with the wind on one side and against it on the other, so that on one side the velocity of the air will be increased and on the other diminished. So the greater pressure on the slow side will shove the ball against the low pressure on the fast side. Now, throwing a ball in the air is the same as making a wind blow against it, so if a ball be thrown and rotated at the same time it will necessarily curve.—Chicago Record-Herald.

**Grammatical Oversight.**

A correspondent has complained that in a story the other day we used "scissors" in the singular number. If we did so it was an oversight. But this kick just goes to show another one of the foolishnesses of our beloved tongue. If there were any logic in it a three tined fork is a triplet and should always be called "they." Why isn't a glove plural if a scissors are? If a shears is two, what are a sawbuck?—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

**Disappointed in Love.**

"What's wrong with that melancholy man you were talking to just now?"

"He has been disappointed in love."

"Too bad! Did some other fellow get the girl?"

"No, he got the girl, but she won't support him."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

**Would Meet the Demand.**

Indignant Wife—I wonder what you would have done if you had lived when men were first compelled to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows? Indolent Husband—I should have started a little notion store and sold handkerchiefs.—Chicago Tribune.

**Very Scornful.**

"Our waiters must say 'Thank you,' even when the tip is small."

"That rule does not prevent them from showing their scorn, my friend. Some of your waiters can say it with seven different inflections."—Pittsburgh Post.

**Worms in children.** If they be not attended to, cause convulsions, and often death. Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator will protect the children from these distressing afflictions.



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