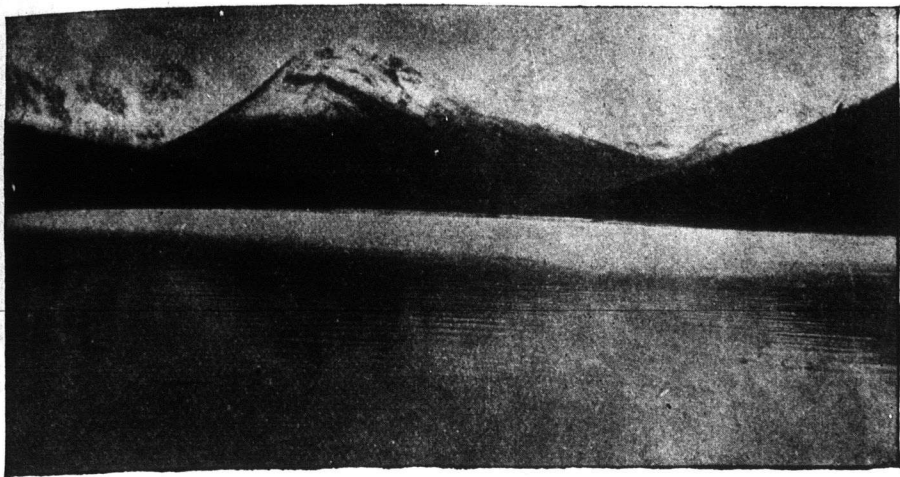




On the side of Bold Hill he had noticed something.

once, and everybody was happy, and the tall, benign Rector and his gentle wife moved among them with a sympathetic and directing word for all.

Merrill, standing at the door between the two rooms, seemed to see only one person. He was conscious of a dream-like feeling that he had said the same things to the same people at some previous time. With the departure of the Bishop, there was a general gathering up of hats and coats. Merrill, cap, gloves, and stick in hand, was also preparing to leave, when Mr. Walton pressed him to remain longer, and he gladly availed himself of the invitation, in order to finish describing some experience of his to Miss Martyn.

When he finally took his leave, it was snowing outside, though he hardly was aware of it. The rich tones of Miss Martyn were singing themselves over and over to him:—

"On the resurrection morning,
Soul and body meet again,
No more sorrow, no more weeping,
No more pain!"

and the fulness of its promise seemed to have begun for him. The smile of that movement became him rarely, because, though his countenance was naturally not grave, his usual smile was rather impersonal. The quiet reserve strength of his face was transformed by the feelings of the last two hours.

All night long the lights of the barracks burned; Merrill was busy making up monthly reports and other official work which he had allowed to lag the last few days, and in hunting up his maps of the Peace River detachment. A resolve, as yet dim and but half-formed, was shaping itself in his mind.

Back in the Eden period of his existence—which everything about Miss Martyn seemed to recall—the Other One had once remarked to him: "Some day you will undertake a long and dangerous journey for me." Across the shadows her words were coming to him now, making him feel that whatever he might do for Miss Martyn, yet it really was not done for her, nor yet for the Other One, but for the personality identical in each of them. How far his decisions were influenced by past or present, the result was the same.

Nine years before the eventful evening, a man had left his family with no word other than that he was going to the Peace River; he had been known to have large sums of money in his possession; he had never been heard of since. To find this man, her only remaining brother, was the dearest wish of Miss Martyn. By the time his reports were complete, Merrill had taken his resolve. He intended applying for leave to go on a searching party of one for the lost man, though he read in the Life Insurance Lists of 1905 and the

R.N.W.M.P. Report for 1906 that he was missing since June 14th, 1902, when he was last heard of in an Indian camp on the Little Buffalo River.

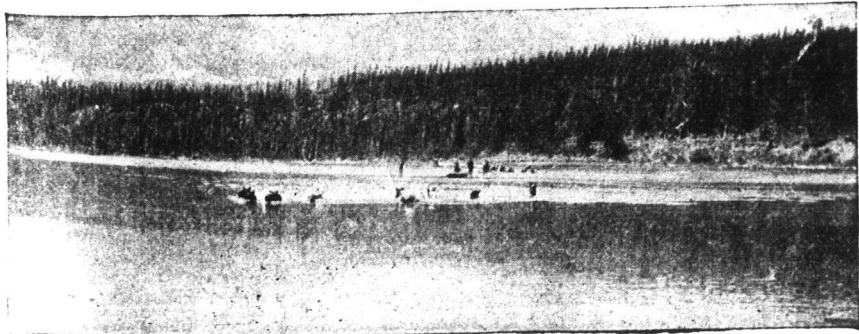
It would not do to tell the girl of his intended mission, for it might raise hopes only to have them shattered—whereas, he knew the reward he would claim if successful.

Obtaining leave was a long process, so long indeed that he almost gave up the hope of the grant. Detachments were short of men and the work for each detachment considerably in excess of the time and strength of the men required to do it.

In the meantime Merrill looked up all the information available re the lost man. The work of the Royal North-West Mounted Police has many phases—the mission of the force is constructive, not destructive. On many of the long, thinly-settled patrols its members are harbingers of mercy and relief. Many a trailer and homesteader, down and utterly disheartened, has been invigorated and given a fresh start by a red-coated 'Rider of the Plains,' bringing news of the outside world, and perhaps (as often happens), fresh supplies to tide him over his period of scarcity. Search for missing relative: is one form of their relief work. A description once given them is never laid aside nor search abandoned entirely till there is absolute proof of death.

By dint of many letters and some judicious wire-pulling at headquarters, Merrill finally received the coveted permission and transfer and began preparing for the long trip. One day is very similar to another in these new towns, and the day on which Merrill received his coveted order was like many others that had gone before; but he noticed details more just then because he was so soon to leave the scene. The Chinaman hanging out the washing in the slanting rays of the afternoon sun; Russian women, odd-looking in their great coats of sheepskin, high head dresses and big shoes which did not hide their bare ankles; sleepy Galicians, listlessly driving their oxen just where they would be most in the way; one or two fairly smart looking business men holding consultations on the street corners; some fat foreigner women routing their husbands out of various bar-rooms—all the points of the photograph were clearly impressed on his mind.

As he walked on towards the sand hills at the back of the town with Miss Martyn, he debated with himself how best to break the news of his departure to her. They sat down upon a little mound overlooking the town and a small lake nearby. The sunset was one of the opalescent variety sometimes seen in late fall—blues, greens, and other shades blended and deepened, shot with the



They prepared to return to the outside.

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