

# THE INVERTED PYRAMID

BY  
**Bertrand W. Sinclair**  
Author of "North of Fifty-three"

(Continued from last issue.)

Rod sat with elbows on the sill of his bedroom window late that night, staring out over a moon-bathed landscape, silver barred with black, where the shadows of great trees lay across the lawn. He looked down at a shimmering moon-path that seemed to offer a bright highway across the channel where Mary Thorn lay sleeping—if indeed she slept. Rod wondered if something in her breast ever drove her to a window to stare across the tide and think of him. She was home now. He had his own sources of information. Tomorrow he would see her. Tonight the querulous imps that make a man question his destiny and desire bade him consider if he did well to let his heart abide so constantly with Mary Thorn when there were other desirable women to be had for the asking. Isabel, for instance? All clear sailing. No questions asked or answered. The dual family blessing, and any little material wants cheerfully attended to. On the personal side, well, he was flesh and blood, sexual tinder. When Isabel put her face against his breast and sobbed in that stifled, choking fashion he had been deeply moved, thrilled, conscious of her physical nearness, the sweet fragrant odor of her tousled hair, the trembling of her small, soft body. Wasn't that good enough? What did a man want of a woman when he took her to wife?

Rod shook himself impatiently. What rot he had been thinking. Whatever it was in Mary Thorn that so imperatively promised to fulfil his every need, it didn't reside in Isabel Wall. He was sure of that. He could let himself slide into a temporary infatuation with Isabel—perhaps. He could conceive of possessing her. But he couldn't behold her down a long vista of years, playing the game fairly and bravely, taking the cards dealt from the deck of life, good, bad, and indifferent, with courage and fortitude. He couldn't picture Isabel doing that any more than he could picture her, at six-teen, shooting the Eucataw Rapids in a dugout, eyes shining in sheer ecstasy of swift movement, hair streaming in the wind. Isabel would either have been frightened or wildly, dangerously excited.

That was as far as Rod carried his analogy. It was sufficient. He had not tried his hand at creative fiction with-out a sense of character, of form, proportion. He egotistically assumed that he could accurately gauge personal values, that he did it intuitively as well as rationally. If his prescience did not clearly account for the depth and tenacity of his affection for Mary Thorn it quickly and thoroughly disposed of Isabel as a substitute.

A light flashed from a window in Oliver Thorn's house. Rod rested his chin on cupped palms. Unrest, longing blew through the spaces of his being like a hot wind. The bright moon and the dusky woods beckoned him into their restful silences, and the light across the channel seemed to blink a message. It drew him like a magnet. Over there his heart lay. If Isabel's unheralded breakdown had served no other purpose, it had filled him with a wild impulse, revived a fever that burned him. The madness of a lover's moon! The coursing blood of youth clamoring for the fulfilment of life's promise—life that promises so much and often gives so little. The impulse to translate dreams into realities. Quen sabb?

He rose and went softly downstairs and out a side door to the pale emptiness of the lawn crossed with inky bands of shadow, and so sauntering, head bowed and hands sunk deep in his pockets, presently brought up on the float. The Haida lay moored on one side, the Kowloon on the other. A profusion of canoes and rowboats lay hauled out on the planks.

Rod stood awhile, like a man in two minds. His eyes lingered on the moon-path. His ears took note of the lessening monotone between the Gillard Islands on the east and the choked westward passage inside Little Dent. A still night and a slackening tide. He got into a dinghy, shipped the oars, rowed slowly out into the channel. Halfway, an eddy setting toward the Valdez shore took him in its sweep. He let the oars rest and lighted a cigarette, gazing at the tranquil, silvery beauty.

"What a night," he whispered. "What a night for fairies and mermaids—and lovers."

Then the current slid him into the deep shadow cast by the high forested ridge behind Oliver Thorn's house, and as his boat touched the float and he sat in a moment of indecision, a voice spoke softly.

"Hello, Rod."

He looked sharply over the float. The shadow of the hills lay on it like folds of crepe. But in a moment he made out a dim figure. He went over, still holding the painter in his hand. It was Mary, wrapped in a gray coat, sitting on a box.

"I thought you'd be in your little trundle bed," he greeted her.

"He knew, or thought he knew. There was an attitude of surrender, unmistakable, complete, that filled him with a strange delight. But he wanted the verification of that voiceless pledge.

"I don't know. How can one account for a mood, a longing? I came down here to sit in the moonlight. It was so radiant. Then after a little the shadow crept out from shore, and it was just as if something black and gloomy had settled over me. I felt small and forlorn and lonely. And all at once I wanted you, Rod. I wished you were here. I wanted you. And you're here. That's all.

"It's enough," he said tenderly.

### CHAPTER XIII

The day following Rod drew his father into the library and bluntly announced his engagement to Mary Thorn, also that the date of their marriage was set for the first week in July, exactly one month ahead.

Norquay senior sat down, lighted a cigar. He did not precisely lose his poise, but he was slightly staggered.

"Well," he said at last, "the younger generation is supposed to be speedy but didn't imagine you would ever step on the accelerator like this. Why the mad haste? Can't you at least give us a chance to get acquainted with the young woman?"

"We've had plenty of opportunities for acquaintance," Rod could not forbear saying, "since she is a close neighbor, so to speak. Besides, the family isn't marrying, Miss Thorn, pater. I am. And I have known her for several years."

"I suppose she's pretty," his father observed grimly. "Has she any manner? Education? Ever been anywhere?"

Rod looked at him soberly.

"Are you trying to get my goat?" he asked. "You want me to blow up, polite insult is as good a way as any. I'm of age and a little more. You took pains to educate me. You've granted at various times that I have good taste in many things. I should be qualified to choose a wife without the ordinary essentials."

"Perhaps I didn't put it very well," Norquay senior replied. "I don't mean to adopt a toplofty hypercritical attitude. I may seem unduly impertinent, my son, but marriage is important—in this family, and to this family. A wife isn't something to be put aside if she doesn't happen to suit. Remember, I've had no warning of this. Therefore, naturally, the first questions that occur to me are these: Is the girl such as we can accept into the family as one of us? Is she a person our friends can meet as one of themselves? Have you asked yourself this, Rod?"

"Contrary to the general notion of what an infatuated youngster does in such circumstances I have. Or at least I should certainly have done so if there had been any doubt in the matter. To be quite candid, Mary Thorn has equally as good a deal more—education as any girl I know. And about fifty per cent. more discrimination in most things. If the family and the family's set refuse to accept her at her face value, that will be the privilege of snobbery. It won't make any difference to me."

"Quite sure about that?"

"I meant it wouldn't make me hesitate. Of course, it would make a difference," Rod amended. "I'm not a fool. But this girl means more to me than merely pleasing my family and friends by what they regard as a suitable match."

"You're fully determined on this?"

"Absolutely," Rod confirmed.

Norquay senior half-turned in his chair to look out the window. His gaze crossed the channel, rested without change of expression on Oliver Thorn's house.

"I can scarcely conceive of a suitable mate for a Norquay arising out of such surroundings," he said gravely, "nor from such antecedents."

"I wonder if you know what you really mean by antecedents," Rod said patiently. He had to force himself to be patient. He had warned himself that he would have to encounter just such prejudice. It grated on him, but he kept his temper in hand and his wits alert. "For instance, you accepted Laska Wall as being quite worthy of the most important of your three sons. And I am sure Laska is. But you must know, pater, that if John P. Wall didn't have scads of money you would never have tolerated the Walls. Mrs. Wall herself is only passable. Wall is simply a keen, able money-grabber. His people were nobodies—petty tradesmen. Wall's father kept a little two-by-four shop in Toronto for twenty years. I learned that quite by accident. And it is nothing against them. It simply happens that in our more or less democratic West, Wall's daughters, having enjoyed every advantage of easily and quickly acquired wealth, go everywhere and are accepted. That being so, antecedents do not seem to carry so much weight as you infer. I believe myself that they do; but not in the way you mean. And though you may not credit it, Mary Thorn's people are as good, able, pioneering stock as we are. Except that they didn't take permanent root and acquire wealth."

"Acquisitive ability is a pretty good test of character, Rod," his father commented. "It takes brains, initiative, determination, sterling qualities to amass wealth and hold it. Your prospective father-in-law doesn't exhibit those traits."

"No? You've tried to buy his timber holdings, haven't you? I heard you confess irritably that you couldn't see why he would never log it off nor sell. Perhaps it never occurred to you that he is doing precisely what we've done—on a smaller scale—acquire a natural source of wealth and hold it, benefiting by the sure increase in value. He has seventy thousand dollars' worth of timber there. He makes it produce a reasonable living. When he lets it go, he will have a moderate competence. He has managed to give his daughter a university education. If he hasn't luxury, he has something he values more— independence. That rather argues character, doesn't it?"

CHAPTER XIV

On the whole Rod considered that he came off very well in the matter of breaking this news to the family. Laska, who was staying while at Hawk's Nest, having a clear understanding of the situation, bundled Isabel off to town at once and gallantly proposed that she, herself, take Mary under her wing for the remaining four weeks. Rod promptly vetoed this.

"Won't work," he said frankly. "You have never even met the girl. She's much too clever to be fussed up by a burst of family interest all at once. I'm not going to have you pitchfork her into a giddy rind before she has time to get her bearings. When we're married and come home, I'll take it kindly if you will be as casual as if I'd married some girl we'd all known for years. No special efforts at gaiety, please, at this stage of the game."

Laska agreed that might be good policy. She was frankly curious about this girl Rod was going to marry. She was also well aware that the slinky fast-stepping crowd which occasionally descended on Hawk's Nest might make it difficult for a rank outsider thrown in their way. As Rod's wife, Mary would partake of the family dignity. As a mere fiancée she would be fair game, especially for the younger women.

So matters stood as they were. The circumstances were fortuitous enough. Grove was the one fly in the ointment, —an uncertainty as to what he might do or say. And Grove had just betaken himself across the Atlantic, cooking up some financial sly in London. Grove was very jealous of his dignity. He was more arrogant than ever. Rod anticipated a certain amount of minor trouble with Grove. Hence he was as well satisfied that Grove was not present to inject the virus of his distaste into the already dubious mind of their father. Phil merely grinned and wished him luck.

"I don't know that I'd have had it turn out just this way if I'd been the arbiter of destiny," Oliver Thorn said to him. "I hope you and Mary will never be sorry. It's natural, I suppose—but natural evolution sometimes has its pains and disasters. Why do you want to go outside your own class to fall in love and marry?"

"Because I can't find what I want in my own crowd," Rod responded blithely. "Neither can Mary," he added as an afterthought.

Old Thorn reflected on this.

"Maybe you're right," he admitted soberly. "I never thought of it that way before."

"And when it comes down to brass tacks," Rod went on, "the only fundamental difference between my family

and yours is a matter of money. It's hardly right to classify us as belonging to a different order."

"True enough," Thorn agreed. "Mary's people, her mother's and mine, have had advantages, as they say. We didn't somehow manage to retain a stranglehold on the sources of wealth, that's all. We've been a restless lot. We've helped open up new territory for the Alleghenies west. We've always been independent. But we never took root for long. There are certain inherent advantages in taking root in the right sort of soil," his gaze rested on the red roof beyond the channel. "In taking hold and hanging on. With the prestige that goes with money—aphaw!" he made an impatient gesture.

"When I let go this timber I'll have plenty to give two old people of ample tastes a comfortable living as long as they live. I never thought about money in connection with Mary before. Maybe she'll have a tussle with some of your crowd. Still—give her a wardrobe and a background—she has everything else—they'd all know."

"My idea," Rod agreed blandly. "They will."

"Perhaps," Oliver Thorn sighed. "Still she's got a handicap. If the going gets rough, don't blame Mary. Blame me. I should have foreseen something like this—and made preparation."

"Oh damnit," Rod said carelessly, "there isn't going to be any blame. Mary has real class. You know it. I know it. If there are poor simps on our visiting list who won't recognize it, why I'll just mark 'em off the list." And so they were married. (To be continued.)

"You are quite determined?" his father asked again.

Rod answered him with a simple "Yes."

"At any rate there is no need for such haste, is there?" Norquay senior continued, with a hint of petulance.

"Next month is absurd. Give us a chance to meet your fiancée, to get acquainted with her. If she is to become one of the family, let's have a show at making her feel that she'll be welcome. Incidentally, it will give you time to think. A month's engagement is positively indecent."

"Time to think, pater?" Rod echoed. "I've had a solid year of thinking it over. It has taken me a year to persuade Mary Thorn it's the only thing to do. You want us to think it over—after twelve months of thrashing it out from every conceivable angle. No. One month from today. And there aren't going to be any frills. If you are at all dubious about countenancing me in this, just say so and I'll make my own arrangements. I'd be delighted to have you meet Mary, and I'm sure you'll like her immensely, but if you have any idea of adopting a 'to-be-examined-on-approval' attitude with her, why I'll introduce her as my wife and we'll make the necessary adjustments afterward."

Norquay senior smiled at his son's vehemence.

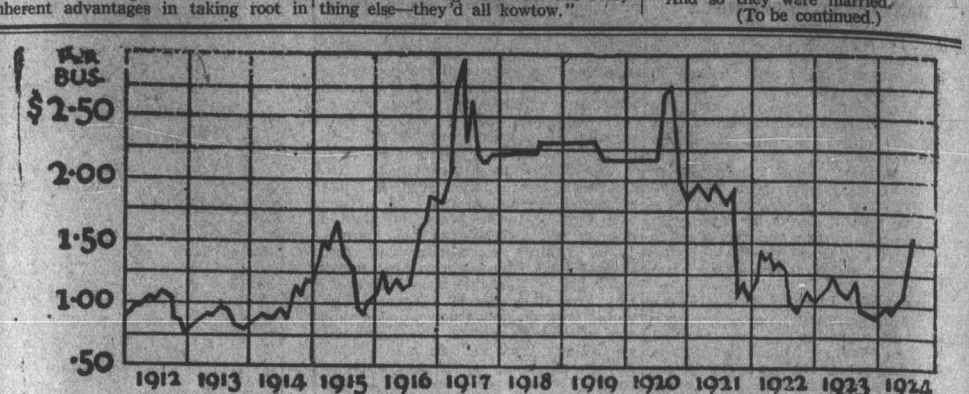
"I didn't dream you had so headlong a temperament, Rod," he said. "Speaking for myself, I wish you had chosen differently. Still, I concede you are well witted, and I am anxious to meet this unexpected choice of yours. I'll be courteous and cordial. You know that. But I can't promise that every one else will."

"If they aren't—" Rod shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I don't think people will be downright stupid."

"If they aren't," his father continued judiciously, "you can't browbeat them into being so."

Rod agreed that this was obvious. "In which case," his father said slowly, "I shan't be able to do much, if people won't receive your wife, Rod, on terms of equality, you can't shove her down their throats."

"You needn't be alarmed," Rod assured him stiffly. "I shan't try."

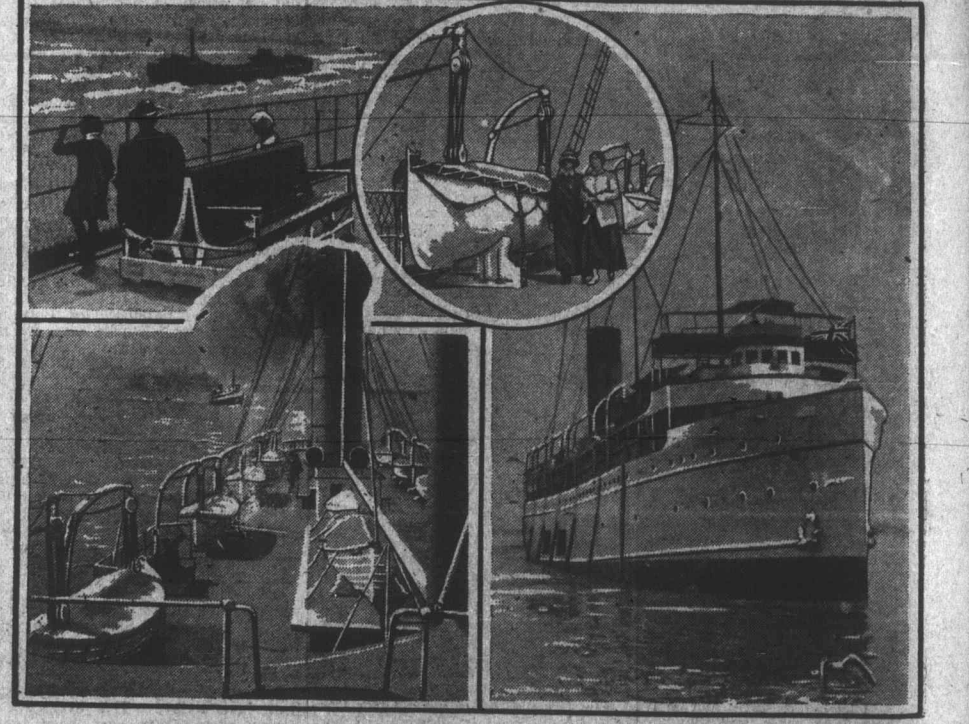


The recent jump in the price of wheat has focused the eyes of all Canadians in particular, on the crop situation in Western Canada. From the information available it appears that the Canadian West will see a reasonably good crop. As this diagram indicates it will be marketed at a much better figure than has been paid for No. 1 Northern since 1912.



WESTERN FARMERS ARE GROWING ENSILAGE  
Corn and sunflowers are the chief ensilage crops of Western Canada and more acreage is being devoted to these crops every year. This year, owing to the lateness of spring operations, a decided increase is being planted to corn and flowers, particularly in Saskatchewan, for the production of winter feed. Where a few years ago, the growing of corn was thought to be impossible, farmers in the mixed farming territory are now devoting considerable acreage to the production of this crop for winter feed.

## Afloat on the Big Water of Hiawatha



Above are scenes of one of the Great Lakes steamships—the Anahiloba. The decks are as spacious as the cabins, and so clean and comfortable.

No traveller has seen Canada until he has crossed the Great Lakes. Missing them he misses not only the opportunity of tracing a great, historic, important and beautiful waterway. He also misses an experience which cannot be enjoyed in any other part of the world—that of going to sea in the centre of a continent. Above all, he misses nearly two days of delightfully cool voyaging, which, if he be travelling between the eastern provinces and the prairie region, provides a welcome break in the long and dusty journey.

The Great Lakes of Canada form the most remarkable groups of lakes in the world—a group remarkable for its extent, its importance, its historic interest and its beauty. With the St. Lawrence river, they provide Canada, in summer, with a stupendous inland waterway by which it is possible to reach the heart of the Dominion from the Atlantic ocean, a waterway which, since the beginning, has been inestimably important to the country's development. This vast expanse is haunted by the ghosts of many of the most famous makers of North America. As for their beauty—the loveliness of these pine-fringed inland seas is something which one feels rightly belongs in dreams.

The Canadian Pacific Railway, through its Great Lakes Steamship Service, enables those anxious to enjoy all this to gratify their desire. Three fine steamships, the "Anahiloba," "Keewatin" and "Manitoba," are maintained by the company in this service. Built on, and brought out from, the Clyde, they are miniature ocean liners.

Choice may be made of three sailings a week, two from Port McNicoll and one from Owen Sound, both on the Georgian Bay, a north-easterly off-shoot of Lake Huron. A train run of a few hours from Toronto by Canadian Pacific brings one to Port McNicoll, within a few miles of the spot where Champlain and the Jesuits made their ill-fated treaty with the Hurons against the Iroquois three centuries ago.

The illusion of being at sea comes rapidly. Flocks of great gulls wheel overhead, fearlessly settling on rail and davit. The deck throbs beneath. Cool breezes drive out all unpleasant memories of heat, dust and smoke. Only two features of a life on the ocean wave are lacking—the tang of salt, for which the pleasant rolling, instead of which we have almost complete steadiness.

Throughout an afternoon one views an ever-changing panorama. Large islands bearing tiny houses, flit by. Small islands, canoes on their shallow beaches, give glimpses of white tents seen through trees, and the smoke of campfires. Night comes softly, gradually enveloping this picturesque medley of water, land and sky. The moon rises, casting a restless trail of silver across the lake, a trail left by the canoes of Radisson, Marquette, Etienne Brule, Father Horguez, Hennepin, Mackenzie, Henry, a long procession of daring men, whose paddles still make music in the pages of Canada's thrilling history. Acquaintance begins in the dining-room and is carried on in the verandah café, the lounge, the smoking rooms and on the decks, with card parties, music, dancing and yarning on every conceivable subject.

In the morning one finds that Lake Huron has been left behind. The ship is now in the St. Mary's River, whose green banks, with their succession of summer cottages and bungalows, are sliding by. And so on. Past the Soo, through the "Big Water of Hiawatha," out of sight of land to the Twin Cities—a never-to-be forgotten trip.

When They have... Saying thing to... Vol. XL... GIRL GU... Had a... On the... annual... forty girls... six were from... direction of... The cam... groups; the... direction of... (great pals... Melba Roo... under the... The camp... days and br... on the who... there being... out the tent... The tents... and no di... ever from... The time... ming, boat... gaves. Th... found the... Lake, and... These likes... the girls an... who are w... Badge.

On Sunday... we held... all the girls... The regul... afternoon of... parties from... liams were... enthusiastic... roundings... practically... not lacked i... increased th... Tuesday... many and n... put on by... of all was... storm which... but in spite... able and o... The camp... mander-in-ch... in command... medical dep... the nursing... chief of o... Patriquin, a... Roop, aides... The only... Haley was... camp becau... however, th... that she is... be back wh... On the w... this the m... they have... boating and... general imp... combined w... this ten de... However, all... and the girls... another year...

GOLDEN V... Amid sun... flowers a so... forest took... and Mrs. J... nesday, I... in honor of... sary of Mr... The bride... sat on their... prettily dec... arched by... bounteous w... dren, grand... relatives we... a social eve... and a beaut... of one of t... the bride a... dispersed w... and good wi... hostess. An... a handsome... and other p... Mr. and... at Gaspereau... Mr. Stevens... they have li... Ridge. Of th... ters live in... ter, Mrs. J... Duncanson;... is at home... Joseph Mine... Y. The latt... tended the... An only... of Billtown... present on... ple having a... niversary in... NEW... R. E. Har... fresh shipme... coal every v... pecting a se... coal. See th... Caldwell-Y... cal prices on... adv. page 2... J. C. Min... house for ele... on page 2... J. D. Harri... for \$8.70. Se... 4... A Mazola... had at Port... nouncement... N. Evans... Theatre, has... pictures for... with next we... on page 4... Waterbury... special prices... page 4... J. E. Hales... a shipment... Williams'... ment of inter... on page 4... W. A. Ste... lar day amou...