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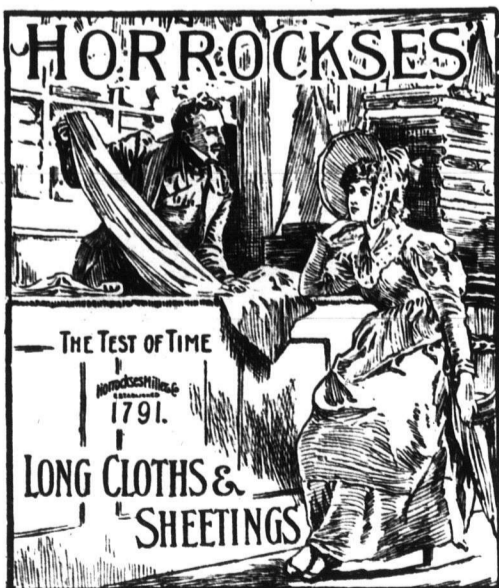
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## The Real Rogers

Specially Written for The Western Home Monthly by Madge S. Smith.

HE was a very homely dog and he had a homely name. They called him Rough, and he was rough also by nature to the world at large; his master being the one exception that proved the rule.

This master called him by many another name not to be set down by a polite pen, and Rough took no exception to the most lurid of them from the mouth of the one being that entered into his calculations at all. From all others, the tenderest of blandishments only provoked a surly rumble, as he went about his doggy affairs, stump up, neck bristling, the tips of two pearly canines just showing in an ugly scowl under a crinkled and hairy upper lip.

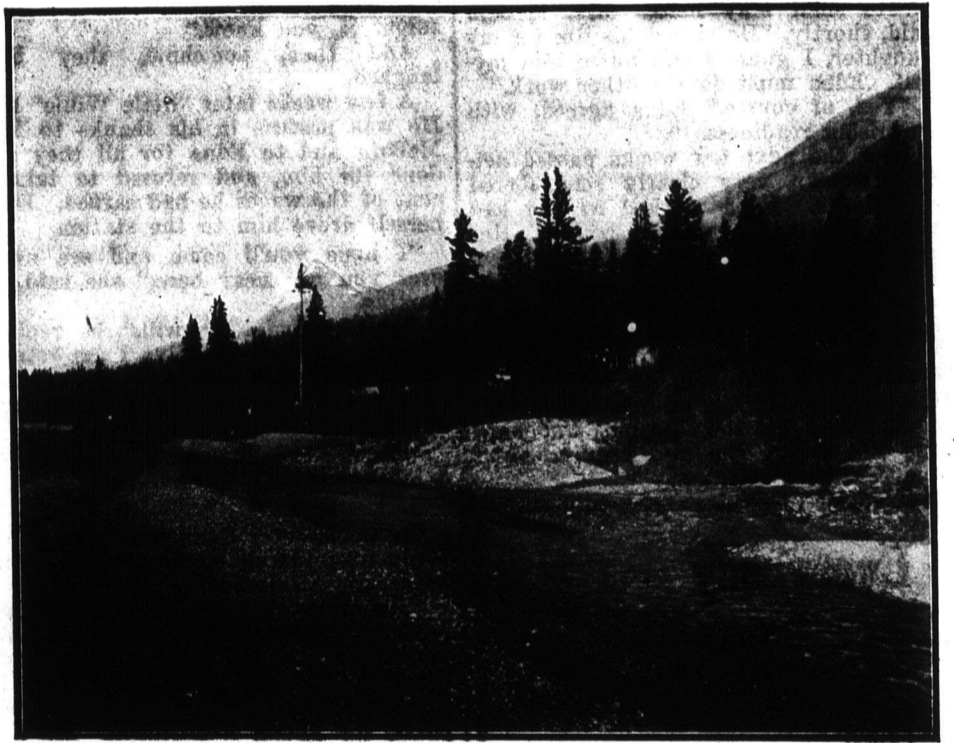
Very few, dog or man, cared to try conclusions with Rough. He minded his own business, and expected the rest of the world to do the same.

His business was to take care of Rogers, and he minded it all his waking hours. Not often was he seen asleep, and even when deep in the enjoyment of forty winks stretched at Rogers' feet, that might awaken him with a kick only to awaken a quickening of love, I

would take him. And we may also infer, since Rough went everywhere that Rogers went, that, if the Devil has any use for shaggy dogs with torn ears, Rough was going to the Devil too.

Outside the Alexandra, you might see Rough on guard, nose up, nostrils twitching alertly, an anxious dog.

He was not tolerated inside. He had no introductory quarter. Only when anxiety became unbearable, between midnight and morning, he had been known to storm the position, jostling his way through the screen-doors to the private room where Rogers was making a night of it with his cronies. The bar-tender didn't care to interfere with him. A threatening rumble deep in his throat warned all and sundry that he was not a dog to be trifled with. There were times when he wrongly estimated the progress of his master's jag. At the right stage of development, a determined tug at a trouser-leg, or the flap of a pocket, might be relied upon to recall the wanderer to a sense of the direction of home, and the inevitable clock-hands working round to the hour when the office opened. Should he have



Camp in Mount Robson Park

think he dreamed of taking care of Rogers.

He was shaggy of coat, an Esau among dogs, a big-built, heavy-boned fellow, with a slouch in his gait, and an aggressive angle to his heavy jaw that bespoke the Britisher. Rough was an imported dog. He had crossed the Atlantic with Rogers six years ago, a shaggy pup, all legs and head. He had crossed Canada with Rogers, and been with him in all kinds of tight and queer places. He never went back on Rogers, and never told tales out of school. A dog is the best of pals for the ne'er-do-weel. It would be hard to say whether Rogers loved him, there being no other loved animate object about for purposes of comparison. Possibly he went on the lines of the old proverb, that says:

"A woman, a dog and a walnut tree, the more you beat 'em, the better they be."

He certainly handled his gun with more carresses on its smooth barrel than on Rough's wiry sides. Rogers' regard for the flowing bowl was only commensurate with the regard that Rough showed for his master, a perpetual state never long absent from his thoughts.

Rumor had it that when Rogers wasn't having a drink, or on the way to have one, he was cursing his luck that he was without the "introductory quarter." He was a "sociable" person, and one of the few men in town whom the introductory quarter at nine in the morning would keep going till noon. Rogers, so said rumor again, was going to the devil as quick as a successive run of "jags" and "jamborees"

passed the point of benefiting by such a gentle reminder, there were generally those in the company in a fit state to lug him out to the side-walk and set him on his feet; whence, aided by a friendly policeman, Rough would escort him respectfully to bed.

If anxiety led him to interfere too soon, however, it was a matter of sore ribs at the best. Rogers, drunk, was a bit of a fool and a decent fellow, half-drunk, they said he was a devil. Which was a pity, for as Eileen said, "he was such a nice boy when he was all right."

Not many people in Diamondville were in a position to contradict her, inasmuch as Eileen was one of the very few people who had seen Rogers all right.

It was as a convalescent after typhoid that Eileen made a special study of The Real Rogers, and the circumstances were possibly more abnormal than she realized.

Rogers came to her father's roof after a very narrow squeak for his life, came with a new leaf between finger and thumb, as it were, clean-shaved and short-cropped, with hands soft and white as a girl's, and a nice delicate pink in his cheeks.

He really was a nice boy for the time being. He had almost forgotten the old Rogers that Diamondville, and Pincher Creek, and a dozen other Western towns knew so well in turn. Rogers the frequently interdicted, Rogers the crooked, Rogers of many changing occupations, cow-puncher, pen-pusher, harvest-man, and finally culminating with fluctuating success as Rogers, Real Estate Agent.