

The Hold-Up Man

By C. Fox Smith

SO I suppose that settles it?" Philip Ross said dully. He stood holding his horse's bridle, and looked down with a hurt, questioning gaze at Ursula's averted head. He was unwilling to realize the finality of her answer all at once, even had he been quite able to do so.

"I suppose it settles . . . everything?" he repeated.

His voice was level and steady. He was a man who had learned to control himself through a stern and arduous life. The only sign of the mental storm which was raging within him was the nervous grip of his sinewy hand on the rein he held.

For a minute Ursula did not speak.

"Yes," she said presently, "it settles everything."

She lifted her head now and looked at him. Her look was steady, and so was her voice. That minute of silence had given her time to rally her forces.

"I'm sorry," she added quickly, "you don't know how sorry."

"And you're wrong," Ross said doggedly, "I'm sure you're wrong. But I suppose it's no use talking."

She shook her head, trying to smile.

"Not a bit," she said.

The man seemed to be about to mount and ride away without more words; but, after a pause with his foot in the stirrup, he flung the rein on the horse's neck and came back once more to the girl's side.

"Ursula," he said, "Ursula . . ."

Her face looked very pale as she stood facing him, slim and erect in her dark nurse's dress.

"Ursula," he broke out, "think—think what you're doing. You're—you're breaking my heart, if people's hearts do really break. You're spoiling my life—spoiling yours, for the sake of nothing but a memory. A man you haven't seen for years. He may be dead—or anything. He's treated you shamefully. And yet you stick to him in this—yes, this blind, crazy way. It's not right. It's not reasonable."

Ursula shook her head.

"I can't see it that way," she said steadily. "Two blacks can never make a white. I gave my promise. It has never been given back to me. I daren't break it. Think—if he should come to me, some day—if I did what you have asked me to—if he came and said: 'I have been faithful to you.' And I . . . No, I can't do it, Mr. Ross. Can't you let it

alone? It has hurt me terribly to have to tell you."

"You will never see him again," said Ross.

"Some day," said Ursula "I may meet him, face to face, in this great, new country. Strange things happen—strange meetings. It is a strange new world."

"And if you do meet him," Ross said almost savagely, "suppose you should not know him. Or know him, and find you don't even like him. You can't tell. I have seen men change a great deal in five years, living as some do in this country. It's a shadow you're following, Ursula—a dream."

"It was a promise," she replied; "I can't break it. Oh, Philip! Don't tempt me. It isn't brave. It isn't like you."

He gave a short, bitter laugh.

"Well, it's settled then. I'd better get a move on. Not much sense in loafing around here. It'll be late before you get home."

He turned away with a jerk of his head.

"Good-bye," said Ursula. She held out her hand; he took it, and wrung it in a nervous grip.

"Good-bye."

The thud of his horse's hoofs died away over the prairie in the fast-falling dusk.

A strange new land; a strange sad wooing! Ursula's heart was full of trouble and regret keener than she had known for years, as she walked quickly along the rough trail in the direction of the prairie town. She had been to visit a sick woman in a shack on the outskirts, in the course of her duty as mission nurse; and, returning, had met Philip Ross riding out to his farm.

Ursula had first seen Philip Ross, weak, lean and hollow-cheeked with fever, on his bed in the long hospital ward where her career as a nurse in Western Canada had begun. Philip said that Nurse Niel had saved his life; and, however that may be, he left the hospital with a set purpose before him, the purpose of making a home and a fortune that he might ask Ursula to share.

And now the hope was gone which had nerved him to overcome so many hardships and difficulties. No wonder, poor fellow, that his heart was very full of bitterness as he rode away. He had made very sure. He had thought he knew she cared for him. And he had never even wondered if there were anyone else.

And behold! the shadowy memory of a lost lover had risen up between them!

It had been a bitter moment for Ross when he heard the story of Ursula's promise to the wild lad she had loved. It was five years since she had bidden Maurice Field good-bye, and she was true to him still; or true, at any rate, to her promise. When she had found herself left alone in the Old Country on her father's death, an opportunity had offered itself of finding scope for her energies and training in the far Canadian West. She had taken it, with a vague hope lingering in her mind that she might one day meet Maurice there.

It had been bitter for Ross; but he could not guess how much more bitter for Ursula herself.

If she could have truly said: "No other man can be to me what that other is," she might almost have rejoiced to say it. But more and more often during the past few months, she had found Maurice's memory becoming a more vague and shadowy thing. It was no longer the burning, living reality it had been. She could not call to mind at will his voice, his face, his features. The letters he had written to her did not thrill her as they had once done.

If she had never given that promise! But, once given, there was a strain of almost fanatical loyalty in Ursula's nature which forbade her to break it.

A sudden shiver ran through her as she walked alone across the prairie. She wondered if she would always be alone. Why should she not have given way? Was it not the strong, kind reality of Ross's presence which was blurring out, in spite of herself, the dream to which she had been true so long? She had been so busy with her thoughts that she had not taken any heed of a shabby-looking man loitering along the trail a little ahead of her; and she was taken utterly by surprise when he turned suddenly as she



FAIRY SOAP

Pure and inviting in appearance—Fairy Soap is still more pleasing in actual use in toilet and bath. Its gentle, easy cleansing qualities are most agreeable and refreshing.

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

THE FAIRBANK COMPANY

MADE IN CANADA

INSTANT POSTUM

instead of tea and coffee on the family table makes for better health and more comfort.

Preferred by Thousands

"There's a Reason"

Vacuum Wash Your Clothes

IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

No need to bleach 'em. Snow white, sweet and clean clothes is the middle name of the

VACUUM WASHING MACHINE

It does the family wash thoroughly, from the baby's dirty rompers to the most delicate lingerie, without a rip or even causing mother to worry about the finest lace. Of course there's a reason. There is nothing built into it to tear. The ordinary washing machine pokes, forks and stirs the clothes. The Vacuum Washer pounces them with a vacuum cup-shaped head, which chases out dirt and forces clean water through the entire wash. Operated by hand, gas or electric power. Strong wringer, excellent rollers—every working part fully protected. A vacuum wash means extra hours saved for other work. Time saved is money earned. Better write to-night.



Cushman Motor Works of Canada, Ltd.
Dept. H Whyte Ave. and Vine St. WINNIPEG

When writing advertisers, please mention The Western Home Monthly