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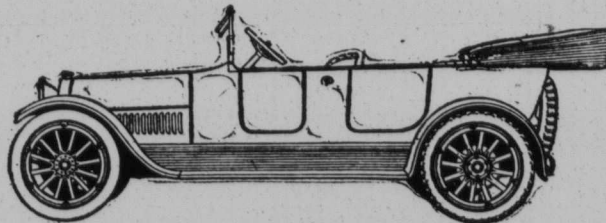
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The Chalice of Courage

(Continued)

Kirkby shook it vigorously. "This ain't committin' myself," he said cautiously. "So far's I'm concerned, you ain't good enough for Miss Maitland, but I admire your spirit, Armstrong, an' I'm goin' with you. That's no good, 'won't produce nothin', most likely we'll never come back again; but jest the same, I'm goin' along. Nobody's goin' to show me the trail. My nerve and grit, w'en it comes to helpin' a young female like that girl, is as good as anybody's, I guess. You're her father," he drawled, on turning to Stephen Maitland. "An' I ain't no kin to her, but, by gook, I believe I can understand better than any one else yere what you are feelin'."

"Kirkby," said Robert Maitland, smiling at the other two, "you have gone clean back on me. I thought you had more sense. But somehow I guess it's contagious, for I am going along with you two myself."

"And I cannot accompany you?" pleaded Stephen Maitland, eagerly drawing near to the other three.

"Not much," said old Kirkby promptly.



"I'm Goin' into the Mountains With You."

"You ain't got the strength, of man. You don't know them mountains, neither. You'd be helpin' on a pair of snow shoes; there ain't anything you could do, you'd jest be a drag on us. Without sayin' anything about myself, w'ich I'm too modest for that, there ain't three better men in Colorado to tackle this job than Jim Armstrong an' Bob Maitland. We'll go on as I said, I won't mention no other names."

"God bless you all, gentlemen," faltered Stephen Maitland. "I think, perhaps, I may have been wrong, a little prejudiced against the west. You are men that would do honor to any family, any society in Philadelphia or anywhere else."

"Lord love ye," drawled Kirkby, his eyes twinkling. "There ain't no three men on the Atlantic seaboard that kin match up with two of us yere, to say nothin' of the third."

"Well," said Robert Maitland, "the thing now is to decide on what's to be done."

"My plan," said Armstrong, "is to go to the old camp."

"Yep," said Kirkby, "that's a good point of departure, as my seafarin' father down Cape Cod way used to say; an' wot's next?"

"I am going up the canon instead of down," said the man, with a flash of inspiration.

"That ain't no bad idea, neither," assented the old man. "We looked the ground over pretty thoroughly down the canon. Maybe we can find something up it."

"And what do you propose to take with you?" asked Maitland.

"What we can carry on the backs of men. We will make a camp somewhere about where you did. We can get enough husky men up at Morrison, who will pack in what we want, and with that as a basis we will explore the upper reaches of the range."

"And when do we start?"

"There is a train for Morrison in two hours," answered Armstrong. "We can get what we want in the way of sleeping bags and equipment between now and then, if we hurry about it."

"If we are goin' to do it, we might as well get a move on us," assented Kirkby, making ready to go.

"Right," answered Robert Maitland grimly. "When three men set out to make fools of themselves, the sooner they get at it and get over with it the better. I've got some business matters to settle. You two get what's needed, and I'll bear my share."

A week later a little band of men on snow shoes, wrapped in furs to their eyes, every one heavily burdened with a pack, staggered into the clearing where once had been pitched the Maitland camp. The place was covered with snow, of course, but on a shelf of rock half way up the hogback, they found a comparatively level clearing, and there, all working like beavers, they built a rude hut which they covered with canvas and then with tightly packed snow, and which would keep the three who remained from freezing to death. Fortunately they were favored with a brief period of pleasant weather, and a few days served to make a sufficiently habitable camp. Maitland, Kirkby and Armstrong worked with the rest. There was no thought of search at first; their lives depended upon the erection of a suitable shelter, and it was not until the helpers, leaving their burdens behind them, had departed, that the three men even considered what was to be done next.

"We must begin a systematic search tomorrow," said Armstrong decisively, as the three men sat around the cheerful fire in the hut.

"Yes," assented Maitland. "Shall we go together, or separately?"

"Separately, of course. We are all hardy and experienced men. Nothing is apt to happen to us. We will meet here every night and plan the next

days' work. What do you say, Kirkby?"

The old man had been quietly smoking while the others talked. He smiled at them in a way which aroused their curiosity and made them feel that he had news for them.

"While you was puttin' the finishin' touches on this yere camp, I come across a heap o' stuns that somehow the wind had swept bare, there was a big rift in front of it which kept us from seein' it afore; it was built up in the open w'ere there was no trees, an' in our lumberin' operations we wasn't lookin' that a-way. I came across it by any chance an'—"

"Well, for God's sake, old man," cried Armstrong, impatiently, "what did you find, an' what?"

"This," answered Kirkby, carefully producing a folded scrap of paper from his leather vest.

Armstrong fell on it ravenously, and as Maitland bent to him, they both read these words by the firelight:

"Miss Enid Maitland, whose foot is so badly crushed as to prevent her traveling, is safe in a cabin at the head of this canon. I put this notice here to reassure any one who may be seeking her as to her welfare. Follow the stream up to its source."

"W.M. BECKLEY NEWBOLD."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Robert Maitland.

"You called me a fool, Kirkby," said Armstrong, his eyes gleaming. "What do you think of it now?"

"It's the fools, I find," said Kirkby sagely. "The goner's gits there. Providence seems to be a-watchin' over 'em."

"You said you chanced on this paper, Jack," continued Maitland. "It looks like the deliberate intention of Almighty God."

"I reckon," answered the other, simply. "You see He's got to look after all the fools on earth to keep 'em from doin' too much damage to themselves an' to others in this yere crooked trail of a world."

"Let us start now," urged Armstrong.

"Tain't possible," said the old man, taking another puff at his pipe, and only a glancing of the eye betrayed the joy that he felt; otherwise his phlegmatic calm was unbroken, his demeanor just as undisturbed as it always was. "We'd jest throw away our lives a-wanderin' round these yere mountains in the dark. We've got to have light, an' clear weather. If it should be snowin' in the mornin' we'd have to wait until it cleared."

"I won't wait a minute," said Armstrong. "At daybreak, weather or no, weather, I start."

"What's your hurry, Jim?" continued Kirkby, calmly. "The gal's safe; one day more or less ain't goin' to make no difference."

"She's with another man," answered Armstrong quickly.

"Do you know this Newbold?" asked Maitland, looking at the note again.

"No, not personally, but I have heard of him."

"I know him," answered Kirkby quickly, "an' you've seed him too, Bob; he's the feller that shot his wife, that married Louise Rosser."

"That man!"

"The very same."

"You say you never saw him, Jim?" asked Maitland.

"I repeat I never seed him," said Armstrong, flushing suddenly; "but I knew him wife."

"Yes, you did that," drawled the old mountaineer.

"What do you mean?" flushed Armstrong.

"I mean that you knowed her, that's all," answered the old man with an innocent air that was almost childlike.

When the others woke up in the morning Armstrong's sleeping bag was empty. Kirkby crawled out of his own warm nest, opened the door and peered out into the storm.

"Well," he said, "I guess the damn fool has beat God this time. It don't look to me as if even He could save him now."

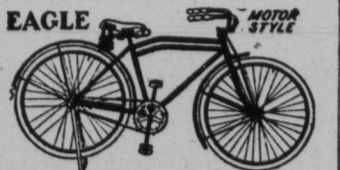
"But we must go after him at once," urged Maitland.

"See for yourself," answered the old man, throwing wider the door. "We've got to wait 'til this wind dies down, un less we give the Almighty the job o' lookin' after three instid o' one."

(To be continued)

OCCUPIED PULPIT
Prof. Line of Mount Allison University occupied the pulpit of the Methodist church on Sunday morning and delivered an able discourse of the needs of that institution.

A bomb exploded in the Suffolk county court house, Boston, on Friday, killing two men and injuring another.



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