The Homesteader

By ROBERT J. C. STEAD

Author of "The Cow Puncher," Etc.

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CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

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The dinner was late that day, and Harris was in worse humor than usual. He had just broken a plow-beam, which meant an afternoon's delay and some dollars of expense. When he had started his meal his wife laid the full envelope before him. "A letter from Beulah," she said.

Without a word he rose from the table, took the letter in his hand, and thrust it into the kitchen range. A blue flame slowly cut round the envelope; the pages began to curl like dry leaves in autumn, and presently the withered ghost of the missive shrank away in the dull glare of the coal fire behind.

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At last the plowing was finished, and, although the rich smell of wheat in the milk filled the air, it still would be almost a month before the ripening crops were ready for the binder. Harris felt that he could now allow himself a breathing spell, and that the opportunity to investigate the rich lands of the Farther West was at hand. Many a night, while Mary milked the cows, he had walked over to Riles', and the two had discussed their forthcoming venture, until they had grown almost enthusiastic over it. A quarter of a century having elapsed since his former homesteading, Harris was now eligible again to file on free government land; Allan could do the same, and, by also taking advantage of the purchase of script, it was possible to still further increase their holdings.

Harris found the task of disclosing his intentions to his wife more unpleasant than he would have supposed, and it took him some days to make up his mind to broach the subject. He felt that he was doing what was for the best, and that his business judgment in the matter could hardly be challenged; and yet he had an uncomfortable feeling that his wife would not fall in with his plans. That, of course, would not be allowed to affect his plans; since Beulah's departure nothing but the most formal conversation had taken place in their household; yet it would certainly be easier for him if Mary should give her encouragement to his undertaking. He felt that he was entitled to this, for was it not for her that he was making the sacrifice? Was not all he had hers? And were not all his labors directed toward increasing her reserve against the rainy day? And yet instinctively he felt that she would oppose him.

It was the evening of a long day in July when, very much to Mary's surprise, her husband took the handle of the cream separator from her. To the sad-hearted woman it seemed that the breach was at length beginning to heal, and that happiness would shortly return to their hearthside. Below the din of the separator she actually found herself humming an old love-song of the eighties.

But her happiness was of short duration. When the milk had been run through, and the noise of the whirling bowl no longer prevented conversation, Harris immediately got down to business.

"Allan and me will be leavin' for the West in a day or two," he said. "I suppose you can get along all right for a few weeks until harvest. Bill (the hired man) will be here."

In an instant she saw the motive behind his apparent kindness, and the hopes she had just entertained only deepened the flood of resentment which swept over them. But she answered quietly and without apparent emotion: "That's unfortunate, as I was planning for a little trip myself."

"You!" he exclaimed. "You plannin' a trip! Where in the world do you want to go?" Such a thing as Mary going on a trip, and above all, unaccompanied by himself, was unheard of and unthinkable.

"Yes, I thought I would take a little trip," she continued. "I've been working here pretty hard for something over twenty-five years, and you may say I've never been off the place. A bit of a holiday shouldn't do me any harm."

"Where do you think of goin'?" he demanded, a sudden suspicion arising in his mind. "Goin' to visit Jim and Beulah?"

"I think you might at least be fair to Beulah," she retorted. "If you had read her letter, instead of putting it in the stove, you would have known better."

"I ain't interested in anythin' Beulah may have to say, and any other letters that fall into my hands will go in the same direction. And what's more, she's not goin' to have a visit from any member of this family at the present time. I'm goin' out west to take up land, and Allan's going with me. It ain't fair or reasonable for you to try to upset our plans by a notion of this kind."

"It isn't a notion, John. It's a resolve. If you are bound to take up more land, with more work and more worry, why go ahead, but remember it's your own undertaking. I helped to make one home in the wilderness, and one home's enough for me."

"Don't be unreasonable," he answered. "There's a great opportunity right now to get land for nothin' that in a few years will be worth as much or more than this here. I'm ready to go through the hardship and the work for the sake of what it will do for us. We can be independently rich in five years, if we stand together."

"Independent of what?" she asked.

"Why, independent of—of everything. No more to worry about and plenty laid up for old age. Ain't that worth sacrifice?"

"John," she said, turning and raising her eyes to his, "Answer me a straight question: Was it not the happiest time in your life? Wasn't it when we lived in the one-roomed sod shanty, with scarcely a cent to bless ourselves? We worked hard then, too, but we had time for long walks together across the prairies—time to sit in the dusk by the water and plan our lives together. We have done well; we have land, horses, machinery, money. But have we the happiness we knew when we had none of these? On the contrary, are you not worried morning, noon and night over your work and your property? Don't you complain about the kind of help the farmers have to hire nowadays, and the wages they have to pay? And if you get more land won't all your troubles be increased in proportion? John, sit down and think



"You!" He Exclaimed. "You Plannin' a Trip!"

this thing over. We don't need more property; what we need is a chance to enjoy the property we already have. We have all the chance to choose now between life and land; won't you think it all over again and let us seek that which is really worth while?"

"Now I know where Beulah got her nonsense," he retorted. "All this talk about real life is very fine, but you don't get much life, real or any other kind, unless you have the cash to pay down for it. We've done pretty well here, as you say, but it's only a beginnin' to what we can do, if we set about it, and don't waft until the cheap land is all gone. I don't see why you should go back on me at this time o' life, Mary. We've stood together for a long while, and I kinda figured I could count on you."

"So you can, John; so you can to the very last, for anything that is for your own good, but when you set your heart on something that means more trouble and hardship and won't add one iota to your happiness, I think it is my duty to persuade you if I can. We've been drifting apart lately; why not let us both go back to the beginning and start over again, and by kindness, and fairness, and liberality, and—and sympathy, try to recover something of what we have lost?"

"I have always thought I had been liberal enough," he said. "Didn't I build you a good house and buy furniture for it, and do I stint you in what you spend, either on the table or yourself? More than that, didn't I put the title to the homestead in your name? And ain't I ready to do the same with the new homestead, if that's the sticker?"

"I never thought of such a thing," she protested. "And you shouldn't claim too much credit for putting the homestead quarter in my name. You know when you bought the first railroad land you were none too sure how things would come out, and you thought it might be a wise precaution to have the old farm stand in your wife's name."

"That's all the thanks I get," he said bitterly. "Well, I'll take the new one in my own name, but I'll take it just the same. If you don't want to share in it you won't have to. But for the present it's your duty to stay here and run things till we get back."

"What are you going to do after you get your new farm? You can't work two farms a thousand miles apart, can you?"

"Oh, I guess that won't worry us long. The Americans are comin' in now with lots o' good money. I was figurin' up that this place, as a goin' concern, ought to bring about forty thousand dollars, and I'll bet I could sell it inside of a week."

"Sell it?" she exclaimed. "You don't mean that you intend to sell this farm?"

"Why not? If somebody else wants it worse'n we do, and has the money to pay for it, why shouldn't I sell it?"

The tears stood in her eyes as she answered: "In all these years while we have been building up this home I never once thought of it as something to sell. It was too near for that—a part of ourselves, of our very life. It seemed more like—like one of the children, than a mere possession. And now you would sell it, just as you might sell a load of wheat or a fat steer. Is this place—this home where we have grown old and gray—nothing to you? Have you no sentiment that will save it from the highest bidder?"

"Sentiment is a poor affair in business," he answered. "Property was made t' sell; money was made t' buy it with. The successful man is the one who has his price for everythin', and knows how t' get it. As for growin' old and gray on this farm, why, that's a grudge I have against it, though I don't think I'm very gray and I don't feel very old. And if I get my price, why shouldn't I sell?"

"Very well," she answered. "I've nothing more to say. Sell it if you must, but remember one thing—I won't be here to see it pass into the hands of strangers." She straightened herself up, and there was a fire in her eye that reminded him of the day when she had elected to share with him the hardships of the wilderness, and in spite of himself some of his old pride in her returned. "I leave tomorrow for a visit, and I may be gone some time. You reminded me of your liberality a few minutes ago; prove it now by writing me a check for my expenses. Remember, I will expect to travel like the wife of a prosperous farmer, a man whose holdings are worth forty thousand dollars cash."

"So that's your decision, is it? You set me at defiance; you try t' wreck my plans by your own stubbornness. You break up my family piece by piece, until all I have left is Allan. Thank God, the boy, at least, is sound. Well, you shall have your check, and I'll make it a big one that it may carry you farther."

Even in the teeth of his bitterness the mention of Allan's name strained the mother's heart beyond her power of resistance, and she turned with outstretched arms towards her husband. For a moment he wavered, the flame of love, still smouldering in his breast, leaping up before the breath of her response. But it was for a moment only. Weakness would have meant surrender, and surrender was the one thing of which Harris was incapable. So he checked the impulse to take her in his arms, and walked stolidly to his desk in the parlor.

He returned shortly and placed a check in her hands. She looked at it through misty eyes, and read that it was for $200. It represented a two hundredth part of their joint earnings, and yet he thought he was dealing liberally with her; he half expected, in fact, that his magnanimity would break her down where his firmness had failed. But she only whispered a faint "Thank you," and slowly folded the paper in her fingers. He waited for a minute, suspecting that she was overcome, but as she said nothing more he at length turned and left the house, saying gruffly as he went out, "When that's done I'll send you more if you write for it."

It was now 10 at night, and almost dark, but Harris' footsteps instinctively turned down the road toward Riles'.

At the gate he met Allan, returning home from spending a social hour with the Grant boys.

"Where going, Dad?" the younger man demanded.

"Oh, I thought I'd take a walk over t' Riles'. There's a lot o' things t' talk about."

"What's the matter, Dad?" The strained composure of his father's voice had not escaped him.

"Nothin' * * * I might's well tell you now; you'll know it in a little while anyway. * * * Your mother is goin' away—on a visit."

"Like Beulah's visit, I suppose. So it's come to this. I've seen it for some time, Dad, and you must 've seen it too. But you're not really goin' to let her go? Come back to the house with me—surely you two can get together on this thing, if you try."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THIS YOUNG MAN A COMER

Description Will Bring to Mind the Good Old Copybook Maxims Some Can Remember.

There is a certain man in our employ who is not in a very responsible position at present.

Some day he will be and the "gang" will ask: "Where did he get his pull?"

He's putting pressure on the rope right now and every day the pressure is getting stronger.

He's here early and he goes home late; in fact we do not think he knows anything about working hours.

He's doing more than his present position requires and has already worked out of two jobs that have been given him. You can't keep him down.

He studies at night, reads, and, best of all, uses his head at all times.

He makes many mistakes, but only makes the same mistake once.

But he goes ahead and does things. Doesn't wait until he's told, but looks ahead.

Wonderful thing this looking ahead, and more wonderful still, you don't have to look very far ahead to make yourself different from the rest of the "gang."

He smiles easily and is cheerful.

We've never heard him even suggest that any one was "trying to get him."

He is too busy to think about it and the crowd who might be trying to do it are not going fast enough to even bother him.

He isn't a hundred per cent yet, but he's coming along fast, and some day you are going to say "Why did he get that job?"—Fore River Log.

Ever Meet Anyone Like Her?

A man who lives in a West side boarding house describes his landlady: "She is a kind of parallelogram; that is, an oblong, angular figure which cannot be described and which is equal to anything; and any two meals in her house are together less than a square meal."—New York Times.

Definitely So.

"What is your idea of a practical joke?"

"One I can sell for a dollar and buy a pork chop."—Cartoons Magazine.

First National Conference On Parks for the People

by John Dickinson Sherman



"GRAND VIEW" ON UPPER IOWA



COURTESY NATL PARK SERVICE

FALL RIVER ROAD, ROCKY MOUNTAIN





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JOHN BARTON PAYNE

It now seems a national necessity promising the greatest results.

—JOHN BARTON PAYNE

A NATIONAL Conference on Parks—the first in our history—was called December 1 last for the second week in January, 1921, in Des Moines. The suggestion came from John Barton Payne, secretary of the interior and ex officio head of the national park service. Gov. W. L. Harding of Iowa issued the call. The conference was called because, as Secretary Payne says, "it seems a national necessity." It was called to meet in Des Moines because Iowa has become a leader among the states in park spirit and work.

More than 3,000 invitations have been sent out to individuals and organizations known to be actively interested. And Governor Harding also announced that the attendance was not limited to persons specifically invited, for everybody interested in the park movement would be welcome. The conference will discuss matters of all kinds pertaining to national, state and local parks.

President-elect Harding was in Denver March 10 last—long before the Chicago convention—and said, among other things, in an address before the Mile High club:

"I like the slogan 'See America First.' In these days of the motorcar we might revise it and say 'Motor in America First.' This is the automobile age. All America is motoring and leaving a golden trail behind. I want the golden trail in the United States and the education and pride in the country which attend.

"We are so vast, so varied, so physically beyond compare, that it is good to think of America first and know America first, and do the practical things which prosper America first.

"I shall never be content until I can motor from Washington to Denver in comfort, and from this gateway motor safely and rejoicingly over a circuit of our national parks and know the inspiration and rejoicings that ever must attend."

This is the keynote of the Des Moines conference. But the slogan of the conference goes still farther and declares:

It should be made possible for a citizen of the United States to travel in his automobile from the Atlantic to the Pacific and camp every night on public ground fitted up for his comfort—national, state, municipal and local parks.

"I have observed that from time to time," says Secretary Payne in his letter of suggestion to Governor Harding, "suggestions are made for the creation of national parks out of scenic areas that for definite reasons should be taken up by the states themselves, and there are undoubtedly many parks suggested to the state park authorities that should be taken up by counties and municipalities. Recently there has been a widespread desire on the part of state park authorities to confer among themselves and with the national park service, not alone on this question but regarding the possibility of securing uniform state park legislation throughout the country and the discussion of park problems in general.

"The requests for such a conference have become so insistent that it now seems a national necessity, promising the greatest results to the participants and the states they represent."

Secretary Payne suggested Des Moines as a meeting place for the conference because of the "extraordinary results in the field of state park creation and development achieved by the state of Iowa under its public park act," from which the delegates can learn much.

Governor Harding's invitation to the conference contains the following:

"Co-operating with the Honorable John Barton Payne, secretary of the interior, and in recognition of the importance of the public park movement throughout the United States, the governor of Iowa has the honor to invite you to a national conference on parks, to be held in Des Moines, January 10-11-12, inclusive, 1921. A program will be presented of addresses and discussions by eminent leaders upon the necessity of the establishment and maintenance of national, state and local parks; upon legislation, administration and use of parks; upon harmonizing and co-ordinating these and upon all allied subjects."

The truth of the situation is that what may be called the "national park movement" has grown so big that it must be organized, regulated and standardized. That is what is to be read between the lines of Secretary Payne's letter. The nation-wide national park movement is one of the livest national causes of today. Its success and its increasing influence have created an enthusiasm throughout the country for parks of all kinds—national, state and local.

There are, for example, more than a score of national park projects. Washington has three, including the Yakima valley. Iowa and Wisconsin ask the establishment of Mississippi Valley National park. Indiana, Illinois and Michigan want a national park in the dunes at the head of Lake Michigan. Kentucky proposes that congress purchase Mammoth cave and its environs, and so on. Are these properly national park or state park projects?

It is the same thing with state park projects—of which there is no end. Illinois, for example, has just finished through a semi-official and non-political commission a scenic survey of the state, and that body says it finds much state park material and much that is more properly local. A scenic survey of all the states, made by the General Federation of Women's Clubs, shows areas suitable for national, state and local parks.



GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK



YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

The conference will wrestle with this embarrassment of riches. It is hoped—and expected—that out of its deliberations will come a classification and standardization of park areas and a draft of a standard state park law, which can be amended by the several states to suit local conditions.

When Senator Harding declared, "All America is motoring and leaving a golden trail behind," he said something, as the tongue of the day has it. The official national parks attendance figures for 1920 give a hint of this motor travel. In 1916 there were 356,097 visitors to the national parks and probably a large majority of them went by railroad. In 1920 there were 919,504 visitors and more than 65 per cent of them were traveling in their own cars. In 1917 private cars were recorded to the number of 54,692; last season, 128,074. These cars bore the license plates of every state in the Union.

All conference roads lead to Des Moines because it is the capital of a state that has the real park spirit and is doing things the right way. The Thirty-seventh general assembly created a state board of conservation. The Thirty-eight assembly endowed this board with $100,000 a year and otherwise empowered it. The members of this board, who serve without pay, are: Dr. L. H. Pammel, Ames, chairman; Joseph Kelso, Bellevue; John F. Ford, Fort Dodge, and Edgar R. Harlan, Des Moines, secretary.

The Iowa state park law is a working instrument. The state board of conservation, with the written consent of the executive council, has the power to establish public parks in all suitable places and to improve them and make them accessible from the public highways. The board has power to purchase or condemn lands for both park and highway purposes.

Secretary Harlan, who is curator of the state historical department, delivered an eloquent address July 24, 1919, before the Des Moines Rotarians. The state has published it with the title, "Iowa Law, Policy and Proceedings Upon a System of Public State Parks and Reservations."

"In Iowa," says Mr. Harlan, "it is but a short spin from prairie lands to fairy lands." He goes on to enumerate some of the beauty spots and places of historic and scientific interest in a country of farming land worth up to $500 an acre. "But," he says, "you cannot go swimming, boating, fishing, camping nor play ball, unless in cities, without trespassing." After sketching the situation from the viewpoints of both recreationist and owner, he says in part:

"Recognizing these conflicting truths, respecting these inharmonious interests, the state set out to open, acquire and preserve some of these areas. Due compensation shall be made to private owners. Appropriate provision will be made that the healthful may resort to the open air with safety, without contempt of fellow citizens and with full self-respect. Areas unique for scenery will be acquired. Those embracing objects and materials useful or interesting in scientific study will be reserved. Grounds will be bought whereon occurred important scenes in early and recent social life; where prehistoric works exist; where lie the ashes of our great, where shafts that speak of all these facts should stand. Shore lines of lakes and rivers; reservoirs; steeps and slopes deforested in early days will be secured. Some will be replanted, in time, with useful and attractive trees. Small roadside areas on streams, in shade, will be provided where families touring may camp overnight and rise in the morning without passing cars having filled with dust their bed and breakfast. All this, in time to come, is the state's objective."

Chairman Pammel, who is a member of the faculty of Iowa State college, reports that in the two years of the board's existence it has secured 14 tracts for state parks. Public-spirited citizens have assisted the board in the purchase by over $100,000. A score or more of areas are under consideration. It is the hope of the board to have at least one park in each of the 99 counties of the state. Popular opinion is strong for the law

"Grand View," pictured herewith, is a scene in one of the prospective parks. It gives a hint of Mr. Harlan's "fairy lands," with which the Hawkeye state is abundantly blessed. This delightful scenic area is near Decorah, Winneshiek county.

The deliberations and action of this first national conference on parks should interest the whole country. It is expected that both Secretary Payne and Director Mather of the national park service will attend. No program has been announced at this writing, but the call is broad enough to include all phases of the park movement, of which the following national park features are attracting public attention:

Assaults of commercial interests on the national parks under the new water-power act and necessity of amendment to exempt national parks. The Grand Canon scene pictured herewith is at the west end of the national park, where there are magnificent waterfalls. Application for power permit has been filed here, as in Yosemite and Sequoia.

Irrigation reservoir right of way bill, already passed by senate, covering Falls River basin in Yellowstone National park, and the entering wedge for many other irrigation projects in this and other parks. Diversion of water as proposed would spoil the Yellowstone falls, the crowning glory of Yellowstone gorge.

Readjustment of national park appropriations. Example: Rocky Mountain National park, with 240,966 visitors last summer, had $40,000; Yellowstone, with 79,777, had $278,000; Yosemite, with 68,906, had $300,000; Mount Rainier, with 56,491, had $40,000; Glacier, with 22,449, had $95,000. Thus Rocky Mountain, with 13,343 more visitors than the other four parks combined, had an appropriation of $40,000 as against $713,000, with an offset of about $250,000 in revenues produced. On the basis of the 1922 fiscal year estimates the discrimination against Rocky Mountain will be still more marked next summer, as it will have but $150,000 as against $1,615,337. Colorado will turn over to the national park service next season the Fall River road over the Continental divide, through the Rocky Mountain National park. It has been under construction by the state during the last seven years at a cost of approximately $162,000. It is the crowning touch of a 213-mile automobile highway circuit from Denver, which globe-trotters declare to be the most magnificently scenic on earth. Its importance to the tourist and the national park cannot be overestimated. The oldest part of the Fall River road (shown herewith) is in deplorable condition. It is unthinkable that it should not be put in shape early next season. And the cost of reconstruction will have to come out of the Rocky Mountain National park appropriation.

The public campaign of the Agricultural department and the forest service to wrest control of the national parks from the Interior department and their exploitation of the national forests—created for lumbering and grazing—as recreational competitors of the national parks.

Federal support of the National Park-to-Park highway, an automobile circuit of 5,000 miles connecting the principal national parks.

State parks and local parks of all kinds, from New York to California, offer a multitude of interesting and important topics, especially if considered in the spirit of the Iowa plan.

In just three centuries we have discovered this land, marched across it and made it ours. The old days have gone. The time has come when we must give thought to the ways in which we can get from it the most good. One of these ways is the creation and development of a nation-wide system of public parks—national, state and local.

Admitted Debt to Mother

Much of Sir Walter Scott's Literary Success He Acknowledged as Due to Her.

In the Cornhill magazine, Archibald Stalker, writing of Sir Walter Scott's mother, says:

"She had about £300 a year, of which a good third went in charities of her own. On the remainder she was able to keep a quietly hospitable house. Out of his superabundance Sir Walter Scott often offered her assistance, which was scornfully refused every time. She lived to see her lame son a baronet, to read not only his verses but his novels, and to point out to her visitor the discrepancies between Walter's plots and the real stories.

"He attributed a good deal of his knowledge of the manner and habits of the two or three preceding generations to her conversation. She had a fine memory and a gift for telling stories, and all the Scottish passion for genealogy, and could rattle off the ancestry of everybody she knew or had ever heard of. She had proverbs also for every occasion, and two of them were often in Sir Walter's mouth: 'We must do as we do,' that is, as we can do, and 'Well betides her that bides.' Both of these illustrate a patient mind and a happy knack of minimizing present troubles."

Refers to Rail Bird.

The saying "thin as a rail" does not refer to a fence rail, as is commonly supposed, but to the bird known as a rail. The rails, of which there are several species in this country, live in marshes and have extremely compressed bodies so that they may thread their way between reeds rushes.

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