The Homesteader

By ROBERT J. C. STEAD

Author of "The Cow Puncher" Etc.

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CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

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"I have tried," said Harris, "and it's no use. She's got those notions like Beulah—quittin' work, and twilights and sunsets and all that kind o' thing. There's no use talkin' with her; reason don't count for anything. I gave her a good pocketful o' money, and told her to write for more when she needed it. She'll get over her notions pretty soon when she gets among strangers. Go in and have a talk with her, boy; there's no use you bein' at outs with her, too. As for me, I can't do anything more."

"I suppose you know best," he answered, "but it seems—hang it, it's against all reason that you two—that this should happen."

"Of course it is. That's what I said a minute ago. But reason don't count just now. But you have your talk with her, and give her any help you can if she wants t' get away at once."

Allan found his mother in her room, packing a trunk and gently weeping into it. He laid his hand upon her, and presently he found her work-worn frame resting in his strong arms.

"You're not going to leave us, mother, are you?" he said. "You wouldn't do that?"

"Not if it could be helped, Allan. But there is no help. Your father has set his heart on more land, and more work, and giving up this home, and I might as well go first as last. More and more he is giving his love to work instead of to his family. Perhaps when I am away for a while he'll come to himself. That's our only hope."

The boy stood helpless in this confliction. He knew something of the depth of the nature of his parents, and he knew that beneath an undemonstrative exterior they cherished in secret a love proportionate to the strength of their character. But the long course down which they had walked together seemed now to be separating, through neither will nor power of their own; it was as though straight parallel lines suddenly turned apart, and neither lost its straightness in the turning.

So he comforted his mother with such words as he could. Loyalty to his father forbade laying any of the blame on those shoulders, and to blame his mother was unthinkable; so with unconscious wisdom he spoke not of blame at all.

"Of course, while we are away, why shouldn't you have a visit?" he said. "Here you have been chained down to this farm ever since I can remember, and before. And then, when I get settled on my own homestead, you'll come and keep house for me, won't you?"

"You're sure you'll want me?" she asked, greatly comforted by his mood. "Perhaps you'll be getting your own housekeeper, too."

"Not while I can have you," he answered. "You'll promise, won't you? Nothing that has happened, or can happen, will keep you from making my home yours, will it? And when Dad gets settled again, and gets all these worries off his mind, then things'll be different, and you'll come, even if he is there?"

"Yes, I'll come, even if he is there, if you ask me," she promised.

Harris did not come back that night. A light rain came up, and he accepted the excuse to sleep at Riles'. The truth was, he feared for his resolution if it should be attacked by both his wife and son. Surrender now would be mere weakness, and weakness was disgrace, and yet he feared for himself if put to the test again. So he stayed at Riles', and the two farmers spent



"You're Not Going to Leave Us, Mother, Are You?"

much of the night over their plans. It had been decided that they were to leave within the next couple of days, but Harris broke the news that his wife was going on a visit, and that arrangements would have to be made for the care of the farm.

Riles took the suggestion of a few days' delay with poor grace.

"Yes, an' while you're chasing up an' down fer a housekeeper the Yankees get all the homesteads. They're comin' in right now by the train load, grabbin' up everythin' in sight. We'll monkey round here till the summer's over, an' then go out an' get a sand farm, or something like. Couldn't your wife do her visitin' no other time?"

"I'll tell you, Riles," said Harris, who had no desire to pursue a topic which might lead him into deep water, "you go ahead out and get the lay of the land, and I'll follow you within a week. I'll do that, for sure, and I'll stand part of your expenses for going ahead, seein' you will be kind o' representin' me."

The last touch was a stroke of diplomacy. The suggestion that Harris should pay part of his expenses swept away Riles' bad humor, and he agreed to go on the date originally planned, and get what he called "a hede on the easy money," while Harris completed his arrangements at home.

He was to get "a hede on the easy money" in a manner which Harris little suspected.

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When Harris returned home the next forenoon he found that Mary had already left for Plainville. He sat down and tried to think, but the house was very quiet, and the silence oppressed him. * * * He looked at his watch, and concluded he had still time to reach Plainville before the train would leave. But that would mean surrender, and surrender meant weakness.

CHAPTER IX.

A Whiff of New Atmosphere.

Riles found the journey westward a tiresome affair. It was his first long rail journey in over 20 years, but his thoughts were on the cost of travel rather than on the wonderful strides which had been made in its comfort and convenience.

As fate would have it, Riles selected as the base of his homestead operations the very foothill town to which Beulah Harris had come a few weeks before. He sought out the cheapest hotel, and having thrown his few belongings on the bed, betook himself to the bar room, which seemed the chief center of activity, not only of the hotel itself, but of the little town. Men were lined three deep against the capacious bar, shouting, swearing, and singing, and spending their money with an abandon not to be found in millionaires.

Riles debated with himself whether the occasion justified the expenditure of 10 cents for a drink when a hand was placed on his shoulder, and a voice said, "Have one with me, neighbor." He found himself addressed by a man of about his own age, shorter and somewhat lighter of frame and with a growing hint of corpulence. The stranger wore a good pepper-and-salt suit, and the stone on his finger danced like a real diamond.

"Don't mind if I do, since y' mention it," said Riles, with an attempted smile which his bad eye rendered futile. One of the bartenders put something in his glass which cut all the way down, but Riles speedily forgot it in a more exciting incident. The man in the pepper-and-salt suit had laid half a dollar on the bar, and no change came back. Riles congratulated himself on his own narrow escape.

"You'll be looking for land?" inquired the stranger, when both were breathing easily again.

"Well, maybe I am, and maybe I ain't," said Riles guardedly. He had heard something of the ways of confidence men and was determined not to be taken for an easy mark.

"A man of some judgment I see," said his new acquaintance, quite unabashed. "Well, I don't blame you for keeping your own counsel. The rush of people and money into the West has brought all kinds of floaters in its train. Why"—with growing confidence—"the other night——"

What happened the other night remained untold, for at that moment came a clattering of horse's hoofs on the wooden walk at the door, and a moment later a gayly arrayed cowboy rode right into the room, his horse prancing and bodying from side to side to clear the crowd away, then facing up to the bar as though it were his manger. Riles expected trouble, and was surprised when the feat evoked a cheer from the bystanders.

"That's Horseback George," said the man in the pepper-and-salt. "They say he sleeps on his horse. Rides right into a bar as a matter of course, and maybe shoots a few bottles off the shelves as a demonstration before he goes out. But he always settles, and nobody minds his little peculiarities."

Horseback George treated himself twice, proffering each glass to his horse before touching it himself, and stroking with one hand the animal's ears as he raised the liquor to his lips. Then he threw a bill at the bar tender and, with a wild whoop, slapped the horse's legs with his hat, and dashed at a gallop out of the bar room and away down the trail.

Riles betook himself to his room. He had just got into bed when a knock came at the door.

"Who's there?" he demanded.

"Gen'l'man to see Mr. Riles," said the porter.

"Well, shoot 'im in. The door ain't locked," said Riles, in considerable wonderment as to who his visitor might be.

The door opened, and a well-dressed man of average height, with carefully combed hair and clean-shaven face, save for a light mustache, stood revealed in the uncertain glow of the match with which Riles was endeavoring to find his lamp. His visitor was a man of twenty-eight or thirty years, with clear eyes and well-cut face, and yet with some subtle quality in his expression that implied that under his fair exterior lay a deep cunning, and that he was a man not to be trusted in matters where his own interests might be at stake.

"Hello, Hiram," he said quietly. "You didn't figure on seeing me here, did you?"

At first glance Riles did not recognize him, and he raised the oil lamp to turn the light better on the stranger's face.

"Well, if it ain't Gardiner!" he exclaimed. "Where in Sam Hill did you come from?"

"It's a big country, Hiram," he said with a touch of bitterness, "but not big enough for a fellow to lose himself in." He sat down on the side of the bed and lit a cigar, tendering another to Riles, and the two men puffed in silence for a few minutes.

"Yes, I've hit a lot of trail since I saw you last," he continued, "and when you're in the shadow of the Rockies you're a long piece from Plainville. How's the old burg? Dead as ever?"

"About the same," said Riles. "You don't seem t' be wastin' no love on it."

"Nothing to speak of," said the other, slowly flicking the ash from his cigar. "Nothing to speak of. You know I got a raw deal there, Hiram, and it ain't likely I'd get enthusiastic over it."

"Well, when a fellow gets up against the law an' has t' clear out," said Riles, with great candor, "that's his funeral. As for me, I ain't got nothin' agen Plainville. You made a little money there yourself, didn't you?"



"Well, if It Ain't Gardiner!" He Exclaimed.

The younger man leaned back and slowly puffed circles of fragrant smoke at the ceiling, while Riles surveyed him from the head of the bed. He had been a business man in Plainville, but had become involved in a theft case, and had managed to escape from the town simply because a fellow man whom he had wronged did not trouble to press the matter against him.

Gardiner showed no disposition to reopen the conversation about Plainville, so at last Riles asked, "How d'you know I was here?"

"Saw your scrawl on the register," he said, "and I've seen it too often on wheat tickets to forget it. Thought I'd look you up. Maybe can be of some service to you here. What are you chasing—more land?"

"Well, I won't say that, exactly, but I kind o' thought I'd come out and look over some of this stuff the gover'ment's givin' away, before the furriners gets it all. Guess if there's anythin' free goin' us men that pioneered one province should get it on the next."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HER IDEA OF LUXURIES

Middle-Aged Negress Tells Mistress How She Will Spend $600 Insurance Left by Her Husband.

A middle-aged negro woman of Richmond was left some $600 insurance by her husband, and shortly afterward, when asked by the lady for whom she had cooked for many years what she intended to do with her money, declared that she meant to spend it on luxuries.

"Yo' see, Miss Mary, Ah done wuck hard all mah life, an' ain't had nuffin' but des needcessities, an' Ah's gwine blow in dis money," she explained.

"How are you going to spend it, Mandy?"

"Ah is gwine buy me a phoneygraf, an' two silk dresses, an' a dimont ring, an' marry Jack Thompson," Mandy declared happily.

"Marry Jack Thompson? Why, Mandy, he is nothing but a worthless loafer, a dressed-up dude who tries to be a 'sport!'"

"Yassum, Ah knows dat," Mandy agreed, "but, lack Ah said, Ah wants some luxuries. My ole man was a good nigger, but he sho' was sorry to look at. Now, dis Jack Thompson, he gwine be jest plumb ornamental, settin' round de house all day."

New England Colloquialism.

A colloquialism in frequent use, not only in rural communities, but in New England generally, is "at that." It is employed to express merit where none might be presumed, as "he's lazy, but a decent chap 'at that.'" "He's up and coming" is an expression familiar to every New Englander, and its meaning is synonymous with the rustic's, "head up and tail over the dasher."

Extremes Meeting.

"The electrician who was on the spot was certainly a live wire."

"How do you know?"

"I could tell by the way he handled the dead one."

The Proof.

"Is he a sound sleeper?"

"Sound, is he? You can hear him all over the house."

Magazine Department

Interesting Features for Home Reading

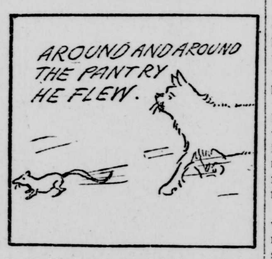
The Sandman Story

FAT MOUSE'S ESCAPE

MR. FAT MOUSE—his friends called him Fatty for short—decided one day that he would move from the house where he lived in the pantry wall because there were so many mice living in the neighborhood.

"When I first came here," said Fatty to himself one day when he was thinking how hard it was for him to keep fat and round, "there were only five mice living in the wall, and now I cannot count them. It is time for me to move, and I shall look about this very night for a new home."

So when all the other mice were busy running over the pantry shelves



Fatty Mouse ran out of the door and under the kitchen sink, where he found a hole large enough for him to get through.

He jumped into the yard and ran for a long time, and then next night found Fatty in his new home in the pantry of a house far away.

But Fatty Mouse had no home in the wall of this pantry, and he had to hide in the daytime behind boxes and pails and anything he could, for there had never been a mouse in this pantry and there were no nice places to run in when anyone came in the door.

But there was plenty to eat, and Fatty ate all night and slept all day, and he was sure he had found a pleasant place to live in even if he had no companions.

One day while he was resting behind a basket what should happen but that some one came in the pantry and lifted the basket from the floor, and poor Fatty Mouse had to run.

Around and around the pantry he flew while some one chased him with a broom, and a dreadful puss joined in the chase as well.

Just as Fatty was sure he was lost he ran up the side of the flour barrel and jumped to the shelf, and as quick as a flash he ran along to the door, which was open, and with a leap he was in the kitchen.

The outside door was open, and out went Fatty Mouse, and no one found him. All day he rested, and when it was dark he ran back to the house where he had lived so long in the pantry wall.

"It may not be so easy to get food here," he said, as he thought it over when he was safe in the wall, "but it is much safer here, for there are so many mice living here that the other fellow may be caught when they hunt for me.

"When I lived alone in the pantry I was the only one they were after, and my life was not worth a crumb. I shall stay here as long as I live, and never move again, for all mice look alike to cats and people."

(Copyright.)

Peanut Pietro

By KAYEM GRIER

ONE time before I tella you ees maka no deefrence eef you like or no like, I try anyting, do anyting or say anyting one time for least.

So other night weeth some frien I go geeva look at da sheemmie dance. I reada plenta bouta sheemmie but I never see heem dance before. And after I geeva look I never see heem dance yet. But da sheemmie ees no moocha dance anyway. Besta way for do eet ees geeva imitash of da earthquake—plenta shake. Eef you can sheever whole lot you can dance heem greata style.

One guy tella me besta way for dance da sheemmie ees standa straight up, no mova da feet or da head and den try shaka your shirt off. Eef you no can shaka heem off you dance preety bum.

Ees preety hard for da skeeny one to do dat dance—no gotta ver mooch shake. But for fat ones ees preety soft. Alla fat one do for maka sheemmie ees run leetle way and stop queeck.

Jusa between you and me and no for spreada round, I tella you somating. I no lika dat dance ver good. Eef you shaka eggs too moocha ees maka rotten eggs. And eef you shaka too moocha for dance ees maka rotten dance, too. Mebbe I am right or wrong idee, I dunno—

Wot you tink?

—O—



Ruby De Remer



Miss Ruby de Remer, popular "movie" actress has been crowned the "most beautiful woman in America" by Paul Helleu, the famous French artist. Miss de Remer was born in Colorado and makes her home in New York.

BEAUTY CHATS

by Edna Kent Forbes

EARLY WRINKLES

THE first wrinkle is usually regarded as the milestone that points the way to middle age. And the first wrinkle is something a woman discovers suddenly one day, when she glances into the mirror. How many tragedies of past youth are fought out over the discovery—well, only those who have watched these lines appear can tell.

Yet— wrinkles are seldom a sign of age, at least upon their first showing. Indeed, their sudden appearance shows this; the skin that was unlined a week ago has a few lines in it today. This is not age—it's temporary ill health.

Because I claim that the first wrinkles are the result of poor health, does not mean that I want you to neglect



Early Wrinkles May Mean Nothing More Than Temporary Ill Health.

them. But, before you go for the cold cream jar, get yourself some health building tonic, and take it regularly. If you are thin, get something with olive oil in it, if you are stout, something that will tone up the blood. Then, while you are getting all the fresh air and sleep you can, and while you are exercising perfectly to keep the system running smoothly—then, start massage with cold cream, use complexion brushes, if you wish, and ice rubs to freshen the skin. Anything that brings blood to the face is to be recommended. New blood means new tissues, and a prettier skin.

Above all, don't worry over the appearance of the wrinkle. Worry is responsible for more wrinkles than old age ever could be.

(Copyright.)

—O—

How It Started

THE LOVING-CUP.

THE two-handled form of cup, now used mostly as a prize or a testimonial, had its origin in a more suspicious and violent day than ours. The cup, as served, had a cover and a napkin. One man, drinking with another, would hold the cup by one handle and the napkin; the other removed the cover and held the other handle. Both hands of both men being thus occupied, they might drink without fear of bodily assault with a dagger or other weapon!

(Copyright.)

—O—

A LINE O' CHEER

By John Kendrick Bangs.

A WEALTHY MAN.

I have no holdings in the soil,
I hold no shares of Steel,
No motor stocks, or Standard Oil,
My coffers e'er reveal.
But I've a first-class appetite,
A job that pays me well,
A cozy home to seek at night,
Where love and kindness dwell.

I've now and then a bit to spend
On things I do not need;
To ease the burden of the friend
Who seeks the friend indeed.
No enemy I know. My cares
Impair no jot my health,
And Croesus' self, for all his shares,
Can boast no greater wealth.

(Copyright.)

—O—

HOW DO YOU SAY IT?

By C. N. Lurie

Common Errors in English and How to Avoid Them

"LET YOU AND I DO IT"

DESPITE all the teaching in the schools and in spite of preachments of grammarians, it seems almost impossible to establish among the American people the proper use of the pronouns "I" and "me." For example, the incorrect phrase "between you and I"—instead of "between you and me"—is heard so often that grammarians almost despair of establishing the proper usage. Unaided, they cannot do it; all must help.

"Let you and I go to the theater tonight," we hear. It is incorrect. The correct form is "Let you and me go to the theater tonight," although this may sound queer. The explanation is simple. "Let" is a transitive verb; that is, it must have an object or objects. And the objects in the sentence quoted are "you" and "me" (not "I"). They must, therefore, be in the objective case.

(Copyright.)



HE'S ON

Sister: When Jack offered you a nickel to keep out of the parlor, why did you demand a quarter?

Bobbie: On account of the high cost of living.

—O—

This Rapid Age.

Man's business requires haste. The average business and professional man eats in a hurry and gets dyspepsia. He walks in a hurry and gets apoplexy. He talks in a hurry and gets the lie. He does business in a hurry and becomes a bankrupt. He marries in a hurry and forgets it in a hurry. He makes his will in a hurry and leaves a legal contest. He dies in a hurry and goes to the devil—and his tribe increases.—Exchange.

Daddy's Evening Fairy Tale

MARY GRAHAM BONNER

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NICK AND NANCY.

"Once a year," said Nick, "I like to stop and think about all our friends."

"I like to think about them more than that," said Nancy.

"Oh, so do I," said Nick. "I only meant that about once a year I like to let them know I'm thinking of them. I think of them a lot. I wonder so often if they've heard about us, and when Daddy tells us a wonderful story of some new animal or bird, or something like that, as he is always doing, I think to myself, 'Oh, I do hope some of our friends are going to share that story with us, and I hope, too, that some new friends will see it and will tell other friends about it.'



Nice Pair.

"I think about our friends a great, great deal. But I do not think it would be fair to spend too much time telling them that I'm thinking of them when they should be given stories and such pleasant things!

"I think, though, that they probably know that I think of them a great deal of the time and that I do so hope they like us and want to share our stories with us. Oh, I hope that so much."

"So do I," said Nancy. "I hope that boys and girls think we're a nice pair, and that they know what a fine brother you are.

"I hope they know that you don't bully me, and yet you aren't the kind that is wishy-washy or, as the old saying goes, 'tied to your mother's apron strings.' You're able to do lots of things and you're fine and you teach me how to swim and play tennis and skate, and you don't call me a cry-baby if once in a very great while I do make a mistake and cry, but you keep me from being a cry-baby, because you treat me like a real girl. And I like to show I am."

"You're a wonder, Nancy," said Nick. "You're a real girl and yet you can do all sorts of boy's stunts, too, and you're a great little pal, Sister!"

So they talked, and as they talked they thought of their friends all over the country. They thought of those who had heard the stories they had heard, who knew, too, the animals of the zoo and of the farm, the birds of the air, the happenings in the land of fairies and gnomes and all the little woodland creatures. They thought of all the secrets they had really shared together, of all the things they all knew. And they hoped that their friends would tell other friends about them, too, for they liked to feel that just as many as possible were going to hear of them, and especially of the stories that Daddy was always telling about the animals and the many creatures under the sun.

"Last year," said Nancy, "we asked some of our friends—all those who cared about writing to us—to tell us some of their favorite kinds of stories. We asked them to let us know whether they liked animal stories best, fairy stories, stories of birds, stories of animals in the zoo or when they were wild, stories of animals of the barnyard, and just what kinds were their favorites.

"Well, our friends wrote to us, and such wonderful letters as we did get!

"Weren't we happy, though! It was great to think we had so many friends and had shared our secrets and all that we were told of the animals and birds with many, many fine boys and girls!"

"You bet it was fine," said Nick. "They were a fine lot, too. Anyone could tell that from their letters."

"But," laughed Nancy, "there wasn't one favorite kind of story to choose. Every one, or almost every one, had different favorites. Some liked one kind, some another. So Daddy has told us all kinds during the past year or so, just so every one would hear a favorite kind.



Wonderful Letters.

"And we've so much enjoyed hearing what our friends did. So that now that over a year has gone by since we had a talk like this which we let them know about, we're wondering if they wouldn't keep up this plan—of writing to us just once a year and telling us the kind of stories they like, of any new friends we've made, most especially of what our old friends like, and if they will write us, care of Mary Graham Bonner, 307 West One Hundred Thirty-seventh street, New York city, we will get the letters. How we will be watching the postman to see what he has for us from now on, and once every year, if no one minds, we'll have a talk like this, in which we will tell our friends how much we like them all. If we didn't we wouldn't be so anxious to share all our stories with them."

Sure It Was Lost.

"Look at the lost ball I found on the links, daddy," said Bobbie.

But daddy was suspicious. "Are you sure it was a lost ball, son?" he asked.

"Surest thing you know," replied Bobby with conviction. "I saw the man and his caddy both looking for it."

Birthday Happening.

Little Arthur—What did you get on your birthday?

Little Edward—Why, I got borned, of course.

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