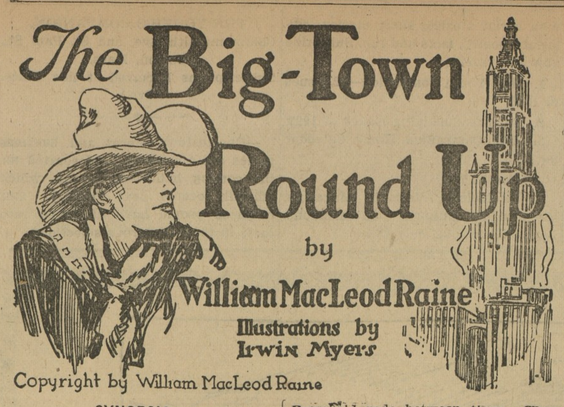
The Big-Town Round Up

by

William MacLeod Raine

Illustrations by Irwin Myers



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SYNOPSIS

FOREWORD.—Motoring through Arizona, a party of easterners, father and daughter and a male companion, stop to witness a cattle round up. The girl leaves the car and is attacked by a wild steer. A masterpiece of riding on the part of one of the cowboys saves her life.

CHAPTER I.—Clay Lindsay, range-rider on an Arizona ranch, announces his intention to visit the "big town," New York.

CHAPTER II.—On the train Lindsay becomes interested in a young woman, Kitty Mason, on her way to New York to become a motion-picture actress. She is marked as fair prey by a fellow traveler, Jerry Durand, gang politician and ex-prize fighter. Perceiving his intention, Lindsay provokes a quarrel and throws Durand from the train.

CHAPTER III.—On his first day in New York Lindsay is splashed with water by a janitor. That individual the range-rider punishes summarily and leaves tied to a fire hydrant. A young woman who sees the occurrence invites Clay into her house and hides him from the police.

CHAPTER IV.—Clay's "rescuer" introduces herself as Beatrice Whitford. Lindsay meets her father, Colin Whitford, and is invited to visit them again. He meets Kitty Mason by accident. She has been disappointed in her stage aspirations, and to support herself is selling cigarettes in a cabaret. Clay visits her there.

CHAPTER V.—Kitty is insulted by a customer. Clay punishes the annoyer. After a lively mixup Lindsay escapes. Outside, he is attacked by Jerry Durand and a companion and beaten insensible.

CHAPTER VI.—Lindsay's acquaintance with Beatrice Whitford ripens. Through her he is introduced into "society." His "side partner" on the Arizona ranch, Johnnie Green, comes to the "big town."

CHAPTER VII.—The two take an apartment together, Johnnie securing employment at the Whitford's as "handy man." An advertisement signed "Kitty M." conveys the information that she is in trouble and implores Lindsay to come to a certain house where she is imprisoned. Clay is dubious as to its authenticity, but finally decides to go. He makes his way into what he supposes is the right house and finds himself in a young woman's bedroom.

CHAPTER VIII.—Naturally indignant, the girl is reassured when Clay tells her the reason for his unmeant intrusion. She shows him how to enter the house he is after, through the roof. In the place he comes on a party of "gunmen," obviously waiting for his appearance. Lindsay "gets the drop" on the thugs, locks them in a room, and escapes.

CHAPTER IX.—With a theater party, which includes the Whitfords, Lindsay meets Kitty Mason, friendless and penniless. He leaves the party to take the girl to his apartment, there seemingly being no other place available and Kitty in dire need of immediate food and warmth.

CHAPTER X.—Beatrice resents Lindsay's interest in Kitty. Though not admitting it even to herself, she is becoming attached to the Arizonan, as he is to her. The two part in anger.

CHAPTER XI.—Hurt and indignant, Beatrice practically proposes marriage to an old admirer, Clarence Bromfield, wealthy man-about-town, and the third member of the party which we met at the beginning of the story. Their engagement is announced. Durand's gang kidnaps Kitty. Clay appeals to the girl he had met the night he escaped the trap Durand had set for him. She tells him where the girl is likely to be found.

CHAPTER XII.—At the place, Clay conceals himself to await the arrival of Durand, probably with Kitty. He gets the thug alone, and in a fist fight worsts the professional bruiser.

CHAPTER XIII.—Kitty is rescued from her abductors by Johnnie Green, who has long admired the girl. He makes a declaration of his love and the wedding day is promptly set.

CHAPTER XIV.—Beatrice has long since repented her treatment of Clay and sends him a note of apology. Their friendship is resumed. Riding through the park, Beatrice's horse runs away with her. The beast is halted by Clay, and in the excitement the girl reveals the fact that she is the one whom he had saved from the steer in Arizona. Of course, Lindsay had known it all the time, but he had not supposed she remembered him. Clarence Bromfield is annoyed at the friendship between his fiancee and the Arizonan, and plans to discredit him.

"And of course we'd like him to know that we appreciate what he did for me," Beatrice added. She looked at Clay, and a pulse beat in her soft throat.

"I reckon he knows that," Lindsay suggested. "You must 'a' thought him mighty rude for to break away like you say he did."

"We couldn't understand it till afterward. Mr. Bromfield had slipped him a fifty-dollar bill and naturally he resented it." Miss Whitford's face bubbled with reminiscent mirth. She looked a question at Clay. "What do you suppose that impudent young scalawag did with the fifty?"

"Got drunk on it most likely."

"He fed it to his horse. Clary was furious."

"He would be," said the cattleman dryly, in spite of the best intentions to be generous to his successful rival. "But I reckon I know why yore grandstand friend in chaps pulled such a play. In Arizona you can't square such things with money. So far as I can make out the puncher didn't do anything to write home about, but he didn't want pay for it anyhow."

"Of course, Bromfield doesn't understand the West," said Whitford. "I wouldn't like that young puncher half so well if he'd taken the money."

"He didn't need to spoil a perfectly good fifty-dollar bill, though," admitted Clay.

"Yes, he did," denied Beatrice. "That was his protest against Clarendon's misjudgment of him. I've always thought it perfectly splendid in its insolence. Some day I'm going to tell him so."

"It happened in your corner of Arizona, Lindsay. If you ever find out who the chap was I wish you'd let us know," Whitford said.

"I'll remember."

"If you young people are going riding—"

"—We'd better get started. Quite right, Dad. We're off. Clarendon will probably call up. Tell him I'll be in about four-thirty."

She pinched her father's ear, kissed him on one ruddy cheek, then on the other, and joined Clay at the door.

They were friends again, had been for almost half an hour, even though they had not yet been alone together, but their friendship was to hold reservations now. The shadow of Clarendon Bromfield rode between them. They were a little stiff with each other, not so casual as they had been. A consciousness of sex had obtruded into the old boyish camaraderie.

After a brisk canter they drew their horses together for a walk.

Beatrice broke the ice of their commonplaces. She looked directly at him, her cheeks flushing. "I don't know how you're going to forgive me, Clay. I've been awf'ly small and priggish. I hate to think I'm ungenerous, but that's just what I've been."

"Let's forget it," he said gently.

"No, I don't want to forget—not till I've told you how humble I feel today. I might have trusted you. Why didn't I? It would have been easy for me to have taken your little friend in and made things right for her. That's what I ought to have done. But, instead of that—Oh, I hate myself for the way I acted."

Her troubled smile, grave and sweet, touched him closely. It was in his horoscope that the spell of this young Diana must be upon him.

He put his hand on hers as it rested on the pommel of the saddle and gave it a slight pressure. "You're a good scout, li'l' pardner."

But it was Beatrice's way to step up to punishment and take what was coming. As a little girl, while still almost a baby, she had once walked up to her mother, eyes flashing with spirit, and pronounced judgment on herself. "I've tum to be spanked. I broke Claire's doll an' I'm glad of it, mean old fing. So there!" Now she was not going to let the subject drop until she had freed her soul.

"No, Clay, I've been a poor sportsman. When my friend needed me I failed him. It hurts me, because—oh, you know. When the test came I wasn't there. One hates to be a quitter."

Her humility distressed him, though he loved the spirit of her apology.

"It's all right, Bee. Don't you worry. All friends misunderstand each other, but the real ones clear things up."

She had not yet told him the whole truth and she meant to make clean confession.

"I've been a miserable little fool." She stopped with a little catch of the breath, flamed red, and plunged on. Her level eyes never flinched from his. "I've got to out with it, Clay. You won't misunderstand, I know. I was jealous. I wanted to keep your friendship to myself—didn't want to share it with another girl. That's how mean I am."

A warm smile lit his face. "I've sure enough found my friend again this mo'nin."

Her smile met his. Then, lest barriers fall too fast between them, she put her horse to a gallop.

As they moved into the park a snorting automobile leaped past them with

Her Troubled Smile, Grave and Sweet, Touched Him Closely.

muffler open. The horse upon which Beatrice rode was a young one. It gave instant signals of alarm, went sunfishing on its hind legs, came down to all fours, and bolted.

Beatrice kept her head. She put her weight on the reins with all the grip of her small, strong hands. But the horse had the bit in its teeth. She felt herself helpless, flying wildly down the road at incredible speed. Bushes and trees, the reeling road, a limousine, a mounted policeman, all flew by her with blurred detail.

She became aware of the rapid thud of hoofs behind, of a figure beside her riding knee to knee, of a brown hand taking hold of the rein close to the bit. The speed slackened. The horses pounded to a halt.

The girl found herself trembling. She leaned back in a haze of dizziness against an arm which circled her shoulder and waist. Memory leaped across the years to that other time when she had rested in his arms, his heart beating against hers. In that moment of deep understanding of herself, Beatrice knew the truth beyond any doubt. A new heaven and a new earth were waiting for her, but she could not enter them. For she herself had closed the gate and locked it fast.

His low voice soothed and comforted her.

"I'm all right," she told him.

Clay withdrew his arm. "I'd report that fellow if I had his number," he said. "You stick to yore saddle fine. You're one straight-up rider."

"I'll ask Mr. Bromfield to give you fifty dollars again," she laughed nervously.

That word "again" stuck in his consciousness.

"You've known me all along," he charged.

"Of course I've known you—knew you when you stood on the steps after you had tied the janitor."

"I knew you, too?"

"Why didn't you say so?"

"Did you expect me to make that grandstand play on the 'parada' a claim on yore kindness? I didn't do a thing for you that day any man wouldn't have done. I happened to be the lucky fellow that got the chance. That's all. Come to that, it was up to you to do the recognizing if any was done. It had worked out that you didn't know me, but once or twice from things you said I almost thought you did."

"I meant to tell you some time, but—well. I wanted to see how long you could keep from telling me. Now you've done it again."

"I'd like to ride with you the rest of yore life," he said unexpectedly.

They trembled on the edge of self-revelation. It was the girl who rescued them from the expression of their emotions.

"I'll speak to Clary about it. Maybe he'll take you on as a groom," she said with surface lightness.

As soon as they reached home Beatrice led the way into the library. Bromfield was sitting there with her father. They were talking over plans for the annual election of officers of the Bird Cage Mining company. Whitford was the largest stockholder and Bromfield owned the next biggest block. They controlled it between them.

"Dad, Rob Roy bolted and Mr. Lindsay stopped him before I was thrown."

Whitford rose, the color ebbing from his cheeks. "I've always told you that brute was dangerous. I'll offer him for sale today."

"And I've discovered that we know the man who saved me from the wild steer in Arizona. It was Mr. Lindsay."

"Lindsay!" Whitford turned to him. "Is that right?"

"It's correct."

Colin Whitford, much moved, put a hand on the younger man's shoulder. "Son, you know what I'd like to tell you. I reckon I can't say it right."

"We'll consider it said, Mr. Whitford," answered Clay with his quick, boyish smile. "No use in spillin' a lot of dictionary words."

"Why didn't you tell us?"

"It was nothin' to brag about."

Bromfield came to time with a thin words of thanks. "We're all greatly in your debt, Mr. Lindsay."

As the days passed the malicious jealousy of the New York clubman deepened to a steady hatred. A fellow of ill-controlled temper, his thin-skinned vanity writhed at the condition which confronted him. He was engaged to a girl who preferred another and better man, one against whom he had an unalterable grudge. He recognized in the westerner an eager energy, a clean-cut resilience, and an abounding vitality he would have given a great deal to possess. His own early manhood had been frittered away in futile dissipations and he resented bitterly the contrast between himself and Lindsay that must continually be present in the mind of the girl who had promised to marry him. He had many adventitious things to offer her—such advantages as modern civilization has made desirable to hothouse women—but he could not give the clean, splendid youth she craved. It was the price he had paid for many sybaritic pleasures he had been too soft to deny himself.

With only a little more than two weeks of freedom before her, Beatrice made the most of her days. For the first time in her life she became a creature of moods. The dominant ones were rebellion, recklessness and repentance. While Bromfield waited and fumed she rode and tramped with Clay. It was not fair to her affianced lover. She knew that. But there were times when she wanted to shriek as dressmakers and costumers fussed over her and wore out her jangled nerves with multitudinous details. The same hysteria welled up in her occasionally at the luncheons and dinners that were being given in honor of her approaching marriage.

It was not logical, of course. She was moving toward the destiny she had chosen for herself. But there was an instinct in her, savage and primitive, to hurt Bromfield because she herself was suffering. In the privacy of her room she passed hours of tearful regret for these bursts of fierce insurrection.

Ten days before the wedding Beatrice wounded his vanity flagrantly. Clarendon was giving an informal tea for her at his rooms. Half an hour before the time set, Beatrice got him on the wire and explained that her car was stalled with engine trouble two miles from Yonkers.

"I'm awf'ly sorry, Clary," she pleaded. "We ought not to have come so far. Please tell our friends I've been delayed, and—I won't do it again."

Bromfield hung up the receiver in a cold fury. He restrained himself for the moment, made the necessary explanation, and went through with the tea somehow. But as soon as his guests were gone he gave himself up to his anger. He began planning a revenge on the man who no doubt was laughing in his sleeve at him. He wanted the fellow exposed, discredited and humiliated.

But how? Walking up and down his room like a caged panther, Bromfield remembered that Lindsay had other enemies in New York, powerful ones, who would be eager to co-operate with him in bringing about the man's downfall. Was it possible for him to work with them under cover? If so, in what way?

Clarendon Bromfield was not a criminal, but a conventional member of society. It was not in his mind or in his character to plot the murder or mayhem of his rival. What he wanted was a public disgrace, one that would blare his name out to the newspapers as a lawbreaker. He wanted to sicken Beatrice and her father of their strange infatuation for Lindsay.

A plan began to unfold itself for him. It was one which called for expert assistance. He called up Jerry Durand, got him on the telephone, and made an appointment to meet him secretly.

To Be Continued

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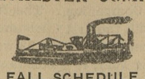

FALL SCHEDULE

(Weather and Ice Permitting.)

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER LINE

Effective Nov. 2, 1922.

Steamer will leave Baltimore Thursdays at 7 a. m. for Tolchester, Betterton, Havre de Grace and Port Deposit, arriving at Tolchester at 9 a. m.; at Betterton at 10.30 a. m., at Havre de Grace at 11.45 a. m., at Port Deposit at 1.15 p. m.

Returning to Baltimore the same day, leaving Havre de Grace at 12.30 p. m., Port Deposit at 1.30 p. m., Betterton at 3.30 p. m., Worton Manor at 4.30 p. m., Tolchester at 5.15 p. m., arriving in Baltimore about 7.15 p. m.

SASSAFRAS RIVER LINE

Effective Nov. 4, 1922.

Steamer will leave Baltimore Saturdays at 2.45 p. m., for Tolchester, Worton Manor, Betterton and Fredericktown, arriving at Tolchester at 4.45 p. m., at Worton Manor at 5.45 p. m.; at Betterton at 6.45 p. m., at Fredericktown at 7.45 p. m.

Returning to Baltimore Mondays, leaving Fredericktown at 7.00 a. m., Betterton at 8.15 a. m., Worton Manor at 9.15 a. m., Tolchester at 10 a. m., arriving in Baltimore about 12 noon.

TOLCHESTER SPECIAL SATURDAYS.

Effective Nov. 4, 1922.

Steamer will leave Baltimore for Tolchester at 7.00 a. m. and 2.45 p. m.

Steamer will leave Tolchester for Baltimore at 9.00 a. m. only.

For further information apply to agents at different wharves, or

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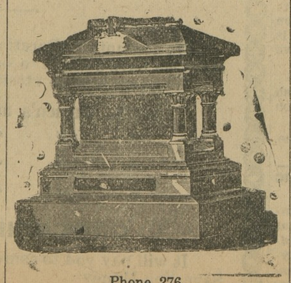

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ORDER OF PUBLICATION

Hulbert P. Townsend and Martha W. Townsend
versus
Clifton C. Townsend, Russell L. Townsend, Etta Townsend Bishop and James E. Townsend

In the Circuit Court for Kent County, Maryland, In Equity No. 2183.

The object of this suit is to procure a decree for the sale of certain property in Kent County, Maryland, and distribute the proceeds of sale among those entitled thereto.

The Bill states that John Henry Porter, late of Kent County, deceased, was, in his life time, and at the time of his death, seized and possessed, in fee simple, of all that tract of land situate, lying and being in Quaker Neck, Kent County, Maryland, on the east side of the public road leading from Pomona to Quaker Neck wharf, adjoining the lands of Isaac R. Leaverton, Richard Strong and others, containing 171 acres of land, more or less, which was conveyed to the said John Henry Porter by William W. Beck, Attorney, by deed dated December 16, 1902, recorded in Liber J. T. D. No. 7, Folio 311, etc.

And also all that tract of land on the south side of the public road leading to Cliff City Wharf, in Quaker Neck, and adjoining Dolly Taylor and C. C. Brown (formerly Schreiber property) containing about 12 acres of land, more or less.

2. That being so seized the said John Henry Porter, departed this life on or about the day of May, 1903, leaving a last will and testament, which said will has been admitted to probate by the Orphans Court for Kent County, and is recorded in the office of Register of Wills in Wills Book, C. S. H., No. 1, Folio 81.

3. That by said will the said John Henry Porter devised and bequeathed unto his daughter, Henriette J. Townsend all his property for life; and after her death he devised the residue of his property to grandchildren, Myrtle Townsend, Hulbert Townsend, Clifton Townsend and Russell Townsend, and any other child or children born as tenants in common, as per certified copy of will filed and marked "Plaintiffs Exhibit No. 1."

4. That the said Henriette J. Townsend departed this life on or about the 11th day of April, 1922. The said child, Myrtle Townsend, having predeceased her, unmarried, leaving the following children, Hulbert Townsend, Clifton C. Townsend, Russell L. Townsend and Etta Townsend.

5. That the said Hulbert P. Townsend intermarried with Martha Walls, both of whom are still living, are of full age, and reside in Kent County, Maryland.

6. That the said Clifton C. Townsend, single, resides in Los Angeles, California, and is over 21 years of age.

7. That the said Russell L. Townsend, single, is of fult age, and resides in Kent County, Maryland.

8. That the said Etta Townsend intermarried with James E. Bishop, both of whom are still living, are of full age, and reside in Washington, D. C.

9. That the above described real estate is not susceptible of division among the parties interested without material loss and injury to them, and that in order to make division it will be necessary to sell the same and divide the proceeds among those entitled thereto.

That the said Clifton C. Townsend, Etta T. Bishop and James E. Bishop are non-residents.

It is thereupon, this 13th day of October, 1922, ordered by the Circuit Court of Kent County, Maryland, In Equity, that the plaintiff, by causing a copy of this order to be inserted in some newspaper, published in said Kent County, once in each of four successive weeks before the 13th day of November, 1922, giving notice to the said defendants, Clifton C. Townsend, Etta T. Bishop and James E. Bishop, of the object and substance of this Bill, warning them to appear in this court in person or by solicitor, on or before the 27th day of November next to show cause, if any they have, why a decree ought not to be passed as prayed.

True Copy:

ROBERT R. AYRES, Clerk.

Test:

ROBERT R. AYRES, Clerk.

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