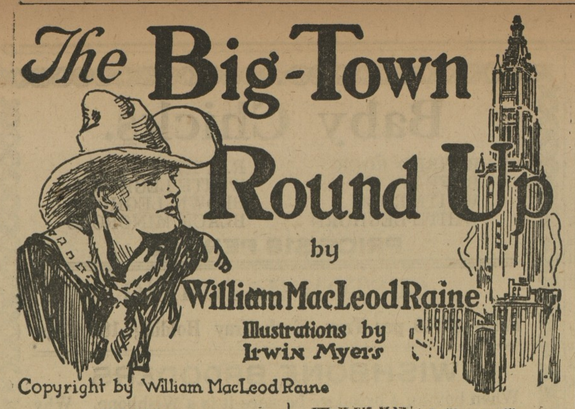

The Big-Town Round Up

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 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.

CHAPTER XV.—Bromfield pays Durand to "frame up" a meeting between Lindsay and a woman of evil reputation. The thug arranges to have Lindsay killed in a gambling house to which Bromfield is to take him. With the latter, Lindsay is present when the police raid the place. In the melee "Slim Jim" Collins, a follower of Durand, is hit with a chair, and killed. Bromfield escapes, but Lindsay is captured and accused of the killing.

CHAPTER XVI.—Beatrice refuses to believe Clay guilty. She suspects Bromfield and forces him to admit he was in the gambling house with Clay.

CHAPTER XVII.—Beatrice and her father visit Clay. He advises them to get into touch with a policeman he knows, named Muldoon, and seek evidence of the shooting in the gambling house.

CHAPTER XVIII.—Durand gets Bromfield to admit he killed Collins. With Muldoon, Beatrice visits the gambling house and finds evidence of shooting, which makes the killing of Collins a matter of self-defense.

CHAPTER XIX.—The Whitfords force Bromfield to admit the killing of Collins, and the clubman makes a confession to the police. Lindsay is released. Alarmed at the turn of affairs, Durand tells Whitford of the plot to discredit Lindsay. Beatrice authorizes her father to break her engagement to Bromfield, whose claim of self-defense is admitted and the case dismissed.

CHAPTER XX.—Bromfield threatens to be revenged on the Whitfords through a business deal. Lindsay compels him to stay away from a meeting at which it had been planned to wrest control of a rich property, the Bird Cage mine, from Whitford.

Clarendon ground his teeth impotently.

His guest continued to grin over the good stories of the old horse-trader. When he closed the book at last, he had finished it. His watch told him that it was twenty minutes to five. Bromfield's man was at the door trying to get in. He met Lindsay going out.

"No, I can't stay to tea today, Mr. Bromfield," the Arizonan was saying, a gleam of mirth in his eyes. "No use urging me. Honest, I've really got to be going. Had a fine time, didn't we? So long."

Bromfield used bad language.

CHAPTER XXI

In Central Park.

Johnnie burst into the kitchen, beaming. "We're gonna p'int for the hills, Kitty. Clay he's had a letter callin' him home."

"When are you going?"

"Thursday. Ain't that great?"

She nodded, absently. Her mind was on another tack already. "Johnnie, I'm going to ask Miss Whitford here for dinner tonight."

"Say, you ce'tainly get the best notions, honeybug," he shouted.

"Do you think she'll come?"

"Sure she'll come."

"I'll fix up the bestest dinner ever was, and maybe—"

Her conclusion wandered off into the realm of unvoiced hopes, but her husband knew what it was as well as if she had phrased it.

When Clay came home that evening he stopped abruptly at the door. The lady of his dreams was setting the table in the dining-room and chatting gayly with an invisible Kitty in the kitchen.

The delicate fragrance of the girl's personality went to Clay's head like wine as he stepped forward and shook hands. To see her engaged in this intimate household task at his own table quickened his pulse and sent a glow through him.

"You didn't know you had invited me to dinner, did you?" she said, little flags a-flutter in her cheeks.

They had a gay dinner, and afterward a pleasant hour before Clay took her home.

Neither of them was in a hurry. They walked through Central park in the kindly darkness, each acutely sensitive to the other's presence.

Her gayety and piquancy had given place to a gentle shyness. Clay let the burden of conversation fall upon her. He knew that he had come to his hour of hours and his soul was wrapped in gravity.

She too sensed what was coming, and the sex instinct in her was on tiptoe in flight. She was throbbing with excitement. Her whole being longed to hear what he had to tell her. Yet she dodged for a way of escape. Silences were too significant, too full-pulsed. She made herself talk. It did not much matter about what.

"Why didn't you tell us that it was Mr. Bromfield who struck down that man Collins? Why did you let us think you did it?" she queried.

"Well, folks in New York don't know me. What was the use of gettin' him in bad?"

"You know that wasn't the reason. You did it because—" She stopped in the midst of the sentence. It had occurred to her that this subject was more dangerous even than silence.

"I did it because he was the man you were goin' to marry," he said.

They moved side by side through the shadows. In the faint light he could make out the fine line of her exquisite throat. After a moment she spoke. "You're a good friend, Clay. It was a big thing to do. I don't know anybody else except Dad that would have done it for me."

"You don't know anybody else that loves you as much as I do."

It was out at last, quietly and without any dramatics. A flash of soft eyes darted at him, then veiled the shining tendernes beneath long lashes.

"I've had an attack of common sense," he went on, and in his voice was a strength both audacious and patient. "I thought at first I couldn't hope to win you because of your fortune and what it had done for you. Even when I knew you liked me I felt it wouldn't be fair for me to ask you. I couldn't offer you the advantages you'd had. But I've changed my mind. I've been watching what money does to yore friends. It makes them soft. They flutter around like butterflies. They're paupers—a good many of them—because they don't pay their way. A man's a tramp if he doesn't saw wood for his breakfast. I don't want you to get like that, and if you stay here long enough you sure will. It's in my heart that if you'll come with me we'll live."

In the darkness she made a rustling movement toward him. A little sob welled up in her throat as her hands lifted to him. "Oh, Clay! I've fought against it. I didn't want to, but—I love you. Oh, I do love you!"

He took her lissom young body in his arms. Her lips lifted to his.

Presently they walked forward slowly. Clay had never seen her more lovely and radiant, though tears still clung to the outskirts of her joy.

"We're going to live—oh, every hour!" she cried to the stars, her lover's hand in hers.

* * * * * *

Johnnie felt that Kitty's farewell dinner had gone very well. It was her first essay as a hostess, and all of them had enjoyed themselves. But, so far as he could see, it had not achieved the results for which they had been hoping.

Clay came home late and next morning was full of plans about leaving.

"Two more days and we'll hit the trail for good old Tucson," he said cheerfully.

"Y'betcha, by jollies," agreed his bandy-legged shadow.

None the less Johnnie was distressed. He believed that his friend was concealing an aching heart beneath all this attention to impending details. As a Benedict he considered it his duty to help the rest of the world get married too. A bachelor was a boob. He didn't know what was best for him. Same way with a girl. Clay was fond of Miss Beatrice, and she thought a heap of him. You couldn't fool Johnnie. No, sirree! Well, then?

Mooning on the sad plight of these two friends who were too coy or too perverse to know what was best for them, Johnnie suddenly slapped himself a whack on the thigh. A brilliant idea had flashed into his cranium. It proceeded to grow until he was like to burst with it.

When Lindsay rose from breakfast he was mysteriously beckoned into another room. Johnnie outlined sketchily and with a good deal of hesitation what he had in mind. Clay's eyes danced with that spark of mischief his friends had learned to recognize as a danger signal.

"You're some sure-enough wizard, Johnnie," he admitted. "I expect you're right about girls not knowin' their own minds. You've had more experience with women than I have. If you say the proper thing to do is to abduct Miss Whitford and take her with us, why—"

"Onct in a while you got to play like you're gonna treat 'em rough," said Mr. Green sagely, blushing a trifle nevertheless.

"All right. I'll let you engineer this if I can make up my mind to it after I've milled it over. I can see you know what you're doin'."

The conspirators arranged details. Johnnie was the brains of the kidnaping. Clay bought the tickets and was to take charge of the prisoner after the train was reached. They decided it would be best to get a stateroom for the girl.

"We wantta make it as easy as we can for her," said Johnnie. "O' course it's all for her own good, but we don't figure to treat her noways but like the princess she is."

"Yes," agreed Clay humbly.

According to program, carefully arranged by Johnnie, Beatrice rode down to the train with him and Kitty in their taxicab. She went on board for the final good-by and chatted with them in their section.

The chief conspirator was as easy as a toad in a hot skillet. Now that it had come down to the actual business of taking this young woman with them against her will, he began to weaken. His heart acted very strangely, but he had to go through with it.

"C-can I see you a minute in the next car, Miss Beatrice?" he asked, his voice quavering.

Miss Whitford lifted her eyebrows, but otherwise expressed no surprise.

"Certainly, Johnnie."

He led the way down the aisle into the next sleeper and stopped at one of the staterooms. Shakily he opened the door and stood aside for her to pass first.

"You want me to go in here?" she asked.

"Yes'm."

Beatrice stepped in. Johnnie followed.

Clay rose from the lounge and said, "Glad to see you, Miss Whitford."

"Did you bring me here to say good-by, Johnnie?" asked Beatrice.

The Runt's tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. His eyes appealed dumbly to Clay.

"Better explain to Miss Whitford," said Clay, passing the buck.

"It's for yore good, Miss Beatrice," stammered the villain who had brought her. "We—we—I—I done brought you here to travel home with us."

"You—what?"

Before her slender, outraged dignity Johnnie wilted. "Kitty, she—she can chaperoon you. It's all right, ma'am. I—we—I didn't go for to do nothin' that wasn't proper. We thought—"

"You mean that you brought me here expecting me to go along with you—without my consent—without a trunk—without—"

Clay took charge of the kidnaping. "Johnnie, if I were you I'd light a shuck back to the other car. I see I'll have to treat this lady rough as you advised."

Johnnie wanted to expostulate, to deny that he had ever given such counsel, to advise an abandonment of the whole project. But his nerve unexpectedly failed him. He glanced at Clay and fled.

He was called upon the carpet immediately on joining Kitty.

"What are you up to, Johnnie? I'm not going to have you make a goose of yourself if I can help it. And where's Mr. Lindsay? You said he'd meet us here."

"Clay, he's in the next car."

"You took Miss Beatrice in there to say good-by to him?"

"No—she—she's goin' along with us."

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Beatrice opened [illegible] the stateroom. She had taken off her hat and Clay was hanging it on a hook.

"Come in," she said cordially, but faintly.

Kitty did not quite understand. The atmosphere was less electric than she had expected. She stopped, taken aback at certain impressions that began to register themselves on her brain.

"Johnnie was tellin' me—"

"About how he abducted me. Yes Wasn't it dear of him?"

"But—"

"I've decided to make the best of it and go along."

"I—your father, Mr. Whitford—" Kitty bogged down.

Beatrice blushed. Little dimples came out with her smile. "I think I'd better let Clay explain."

"We were married two days ago, Kitty."

"What!" shouted the Runt.

"We intended to ask you both to the wedding, but when Johnnie proposed to abduct Miss Whitford, I thought it a pity not to let him. So we—"

Johnnie fell on him and beat him with both fists. "You daw-goned ol' scalawag! I never will help you git married again!" he shouted gleefully.

"Oh, Johnnie—Johnnie—you'll be the death of me!" cried Clay. "It'll never be a dull old world so long as you stay a bandit."

"Did you really advise him to beat me, Johnnie?" asked Beatrice sweetly. "I never would have guessed you were such a cave man."

Johnnie flamed to the roots of his hair. "Now, ma'am, if you're gonna believe that—"

Beatrice repented and offered him her hand.

"We'll not believe anything of you that isn't good, even if you did want to kidnap me," she said.

CHAPTER XXII

The New Day.

The slapping of the wind against the tent awakened Beatrice. She could hear it soughing gently through the branches of the live oaks. An outflung arm discovered Clay missing.

Her questing glance found him busy over the mesquite fire upon which he was cooking breakfast. She watched him move about, supple and light and strong, and her heart lifted with sheer joy of the mate she had chosen. He was such a man among men, this clear-eyed, bronzed husband of a week. He was so clean and simple and satisfying. As she closed the flaps she gave a deep sigh of content.

Every minute till she joined him was begrudged. For Beatrice had learned the message of her heart. She knew that she was wholly and completely in love with what life had brought her.

And she was amazingly, radiantly happy. What did motor cars or wine suppers or Paris gowns matter? They were the trappings that stressed her slavery. Here she moved beside her mate without fear or doubt in a world wonderful. Eye to eye, they spoke the truth to each other after the fashion of brave, simple souls.

Glowing from the ice-cold bath of water from a mountain stream, she stepped down the slope into a slant of sunshine to join Clay. He looked up from the fire and waved a spoon gayly at her. For he too was as jocund as the day which stood tiptoe on the misty mountain tops. They had come into the hills to spend their honeymoon alone together, and life spoke to him in accents wholly joyous.

The wind and sun caressed her. As she moved toward him, a breath of the morning flung the gown about her so that each step modeled anew the slender limbs.

Her husband watched the girl streaming down the slope. Love swift as old wine flooded his veins. He rose, caught her to him, and looked down into the deep, still eyes that were pools of happiness.

"Are you glad—glad all through, sweetheart?" he demanded.

A little laugh welled from her throat. She gave him a tender, mocking smile.

"I hope heaven's like this," she whispered.

"You don't regret New York—not a

"I Hope Heaven's Like This," She Whispered.

single, hidden longing for it 'way down deep in yore heart?"

She shook her head. "I always wanted to be rescued from the environment that was stifling me, but I didn't know a way of escape till you came," she said.

"Then you knew it?"

"From the moment I saw you tie the janitor to the hitching-post. You remember I was waiting to go riding with Mr. Bromfield. Well, I was bored to death with correct clothes and manners and thinking. I knew just what he would say to me and how he would say it and what I would answer. Then you walked into the picture and took me back to nature."

"It was the hitching-post that did it, then?"

"The hitching-post began it, anyhow." She slipped her arms around his neck and held him fast. "Oh, Clay, isn't it just too good to be true?"

A ball of fire pushed up into the crotch between two mountain peaks and found them like a searchlight, filling their little valley with a golden glow.

[THE END]

The Best Cosmetics.

Many years ago an old New England lady wrote out the following list of toilet articles and advised all women to acquire and use them:

First—Self-knowledge, a mirror showing the form in the most perfect light.

Second—Innocence, a white paint beautiful but easily soiled and requiring continual care to preserve its luster.

Third—Modesty, a rouge giving a delightful bloom to the cheeks.

Fourth—Contentment, an infallible

Fifth—Truth, a salve rendering the lips soft and delicious.

Sixth—Gentleness, a cordial imparting sweetness to the voice.

Seventh—Good humor, a universal beautifier.—Boston Transcript.

Living Without a Head.

Ants are really very long-lived, considering their minuteness. One of Sir John Lubbock's pet ants lived into her fifteenth year.

They are also tenacious of life after severe injury. Following loss of the entire abdomen, they sometimes live two weeks, and in one case a headless ant, carefully decapitated by aseptic surgery, lived for 41 days.

A carpenter ant, after being submerged eight days in distilled water came to life upon being dried, so that they are almost proof against drowning.

They can live for long periods without food; in one case the fast lasted nearly nine months.

CANNIBALS NOT ALL SAVAGES

Herman Melville Has Left on Record a Description of One Almost Lovable Individual.

Cannibals are not always the fierce warriors we imagine them to be. So at least Herman Melville tells us in Typee, that delightful story of the South seas. As an example of a gentle man-eater he mentions Marheyo, an eccentric old man at whose house he stayed during his four months of captivity among barbarians in the valley of Typee.

Frequently, says Mr. Melville, you might have seen Marheyo take a nap in the sun at noonday, or a bath in the stream at midnight. Once I beheld him eight feet from the ground in the tuft of a coconut tree, smoking, and often I saw him standing up to the waist in water engaged in plucking out stray hairs of his beard; he used a piece of mussel shell for tweezers; I remember in particular his having a choice pair of ear ornaments that were made from the teeth of some sea monster. He would alternately wear them and take them off at least 50 times in the course of a day; on each occasion he would go to and come from his little hut with all the tranquillity imaginable. Sometimes slipping the ornaments through the slits of his ears, he would seize his spear and go stalking beneath the shadows of the neighboring groves, as if he were about to meet some hostile cannibal knight. But he would soon return again and, hiding his weapon under the projecting eaves of the house, and rolling his clumsy trinkets carefully into a piece of tapa, would resume his more pacific operations as quietly as if he had never interrupted them.—Youth's Companion.

WERE ONE IN MISFORTUNE

Guests of Forgetful Man Had Somewhat Peculiar Introduction, but It Turned Out Right.

A certain gentleman in London used to entertain a great deal. Every Friday night, writes Mr. G. B. Burgin in his "Memoirs of a Clubman," he would invite us to meet some celebrity at his house. Sometimes, however, the gentleman would forget and ask two social lions for the same evening; then something amusing might happen.

One night a bronzed and bearded solitary man, very much bored, was sitting on a divan in the charming Japanese room at the end of the host's suite. Another bronzed and bearded man entered and sat down close to him. For a time they watched the crowd in silence through the Japanese curtains.

"I say," one said to the other at last, "I've just come from Africa and don't know a soul here."

"Same with me," the first replied promptly and pulled a card out of his pocket. "I'm invited to meet a silly ass named——."

The other man puled a similar card out of his pocket. "That's my name," he said and grinned delightedly. "I'm invited to meet a silly ass named——."

"I'm that silly ass. Come out with me and have some supper."

And they went off arm in arm.

Where Birds Go to Die.

It is often regarded as remarkable that so few dead birds are found in the country. What, we are often asked, becomes of the thousands of birds that must die annually. A little reflection will show that there is no great mystery in the matter. As death draws near all wild creatures, with the singular exception of shrews, seek the deepest seclusion, and in our fields and woodlands there are innumerable nooks and recesses where the tiny bodies would evade attention. A correspondent recently stated that he found in a hollow tree no less than the remains of 200 sparrows. Again, in the country, rapacious beasts—rats, stoats and weasels—are for ever on the prowl, ready to pick up anything in the way of a meal that may fall by the wayside.

Crosses on Lithuanian High Roads.

One thing that particularly attracts the attention of the traveler in Lithuania are the crosses on the high roads. Mostly in carved wood, they are of gigantic dimensions. In some provinces there is a cross for every mile of highway, in addition to a number of crosses on the fields or in the corners of streets in villages. In every cross there is a deep niche containing one or more icons and perpetually burning oil lamps, the flame of which is kept alive through a vow taken by some family from time immemorial. As the roads are not lighted, the lights on the crosses serve the same purpose to the winter traveler, when the roads are buried in deep snow, that does the lighthouse to a ship.

These crosses are said to contain the complete history of Lithuania from the early part of the Fourteenth century, when it accepted Christianity.

Chinese Ideas About Goldfish.

That the finer kinds of goldfish are raised from the eggs of the silk moth is a popular fallacy among many Chinese. According to this belief the silk moth lays its eggs on a brick or tile, and this is placed in shallow water and exposed to the sun. In several days they hatch out minute larvae and are fed on pond slime, developing rapidly into gorgeous goldfish. Great care has to be used in the preparation of the water, but the process may be aborted by an intervening thunderclap, which sometimes makes such havoc with the eggs that they hatch out frogs or scorpions instead of the much desired goldfish.

Of Merciful Nature.

Wealthy Citizen—A great big, able-bodied man like you ought to be ashamed to ask a stranger for money.

Tramp—I know I ought; but, mister, I'm too kind-hearted to knock you on the head and take it from you.

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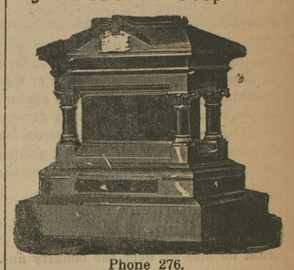

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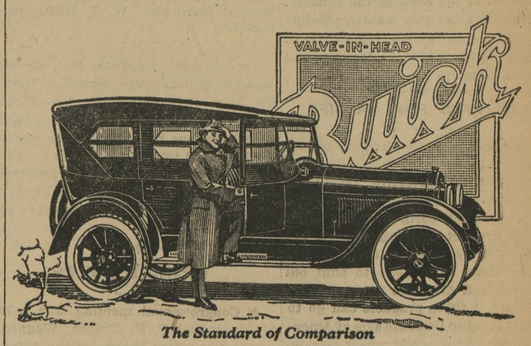

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