"OLGA CARLYN."

Synopsis.—Tom Shelby, a rancher, rides into the frontier town of Ponca looking for a good time after a long spell of hard work and loneliness on the ranch. Instead, he runs into a funeral-that of Dad Calkins, a retired army man of whom little is known. A girl, still in her teens, survives Calkins. McCarthy, a saloon keeper and Ponca's leading citizen, decides that the girl, now alone in the world, should marry. Shelby starts a hunt for eligible husbands and the minister goes to confer with the girl. She agrees to pick a husband from the score of men lined up in her home. To his con-sternation, she selects Shelby, who had gone along merely as a spec-tator. He declines the honor. Indigmant, the girl dismisses the as-semblage. Later Shelby goes back to make an explanation. She receives him good-naturedly. Leaving her, Shelby runs into two of the rejected suitors, and in a fight worsts them both. Angered at their remarks, he returns to the girl, determined to marry her, if she will have him. After his explanation she agrees to marry him.

CHAPTER V.

The Wedding. It was an exceedingly busy afternoon, so filled with details of preparation as to leave Shelby slight opportunity for reflection. He had never contemplated marriage, or imagined himself a benedict. He knew practically nothing as to the disposition and character of the girl or what she might require of himself. He had no conception that he loved her or that she felt any especial affection for him. His sudden action had been very largely influenced by his controversy with Cowan and she had quite frankly confessed that her choice of him rested entirely on the fact that he was not a resident of Ponca. There had been no mention of love between them, merely a business-like airangement, unmarked by the slightest sentiment. He was dimly aware that this made a poor foundation on which to build for future happiness.

This peculiar situation was driven home to him by a vivid recollection of what he was going to take her tothat desolate ranch out there on the Cottonwood. Could she be satisfied? tions?

He saw McCarthy and the preacher from Buffalo Gap, first telling them frankly the whole story and gravely pledging both to secrecy. Refusing firmly to receive a cent of the money which Mac promptly offered, he left these two to arrange all details for the wedding confident of their discretion and good judgment. There was no necessity for his seeing the girl again, and, indeed, he felt no inclination to do so. He even shrank from the thought of seeing her, and was profoundly thankful that everything was so completely understood between them as to make another conference entirely unnecessary, Satisfied upon this point, he devoted the time remaining at his disposal to purchasing the variety of articles made necessary by this sudden change in life. The buckboard was loaded until nothing remained unoccupied but the narrow seat, a huge box, packed full, occupying the rear portion, with bundies tied securely here and there about the vehicle, wherever they would ride safely. Over all these he stretched a tarpaulin to keep out the dust, strapping the latter firmly into place.

The solemn injunction to secrecy had prevented Ponca from making this occasion one of special celebration, but, nevertheless, rumor had been sufficiently busy so as to prevent any strictly private ceremony. The parlor of the hotel was already crowded with uninvited guests when he finally arrived and there was also an everflow meeting in the adjoining dining room. Shelby swore under his breath, but it was too late to protest outwardly, as the oride-to-be was already waiting his arrival at the foot of the stairs.

In spite of the doubts which had assailed him during the past few hours, the sight of her thus awaiting his coming, her eyes meeting his own frankly, sent a sudden thrill through his veins. She was chaperoned by the wife of the principal storekeeper and doubtless others among the few respectable women of Ponca had combined their taste and possessions to properly fit her out for the occasion. Just how the transformation had been accomplished Shelby, being a man woefully lacking in experience, did not know, but he was vividly aware of the change in her appearance and manner. She was dressed in gray, the outer garment plainly fashloned but fitting well, while a most becoming hat, rather coquettish in its shape, rested on soft, shining hair, fluffed out attractively, forming a most agreeable frame for the young face, the checks flushed with excitement. Shel-

by stood before her tongue-tled, unable to find words of greeting, painfully conscious of his own awkwardness. The embarrassment, however, was but for the instant, for the preacher had been waiting his entrance, eager to begin the ceremony.

What occurred during the next few

moments was never wholly clear in Shelby's mind. He did mechanically whatever he was told, but without comprehension. He remembered walking between rows of curious faces, occasionally recognizing a familiar countenance, clear across that crowded parlor to the further wall, which seemed to be decorated profusely with sprays of evergreen. He seemed to recall that the girl joined him, standing at his left, and that she had advanced to his side guided by Dan Mc-Carthy. It was all vague, misty, uncertain, and the next moment all he saw was the fleshy figure of the Buffalo Gap preacher standing there immediately before him, his hands uplifted and his sonorous voice uttering words that sounded like a prayer. Then Dan came forward again and he felt her hand resting in his, realizing how soft and small it was. He remembered a question was asked him and he answered "yes" and then he seemed to hear her whisper a similar response. The preacher said something, using some strange words, and turning once to face the silent crowd pressing close in upon them; then he lifted his hands solemnly and Shelby caught the sentence, "I pronounce you husband and wife and whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

There was an explosion of breath. a faint clapping of hands, an instant buzz of tongues. He felt that he must have shaken hands with a thousand people; was pushed here and there by the efforts made to reach him and finally, bewildered, his mind in a whirl, found himself once more out in the hall, obsessed with a desire to escape. He possessed no idea as to what had become of the girl; no doubt she was somewhere back there in the crush, but he, at least, was free, and would wait for her to join him out-

He stood there alone, staring down at the team of broncos and the heavily Yet slowly it all came back and his mind began to arouse from blank stupor. His attention was attracted by the approach of a horseman troting steadily up the deserted street toward the hotel. The rider was a cavalry soldier in uniform, powdered with dust, his horse showing evidences of hard travel.

Shelby watched his coming curiously, his memory still lingering upon the scene within. The man drew up at the hotel, dropped his rein over the horse's head, swung stiffly to the ground and advanced up the steps. He glanced aside at Shelby's motionless figure, took a step toward the door and then wheeled suddenly.

"Say, ain't your name Shelby?" The dazed bridegroom turned and looked into the face confronting him, his mind snapping back into quick recognition.

"Sure. Well, thunder, you're Shaunessy of the Sixth. What're you doing here?"

The two clasped hands firmly.

"Thought I knew you, Tom, when first came up the steps, but wasn't quite sure till I got a side view. Must be six years since you left us, ain't it? What am I doing? Oh, they've shoved us up here from Arizona and I've been up at the Reservation watchin' 'em ghost-dance an' am headin' now for Collins to tell the old man the news, Some fun goin' to be pulled off presently."

"You mean the Sloux are goin' or rampage ag'in?"

"Sure thing, unless I miss my guess, an' I reckon I ought to know Injuns by this time. It'll either come this fall or next spring. I figure they'll never hold in over winter. Ol' Sittin' Bull has got the game in his hands an' you know that ol' devil, I reckon."

"I have reason to. Any troops up there?"

"No; the Injun agent don't believe there's goin' to be any trouble; says it's just a few young bucks who are raisin' h-l. He don't know what is goin' on. But I been among 'em an' the whole outfit is blood-mad. I seen two of their ghost-dances myself back in the hills an' I tell you they mean business. You livin' here now?"

"No, out on the Cottonwood." "What--north? Say, old man, that ain't goin' to be no healthy place fer a white, if those devils break loose; they'll make that country sure. Got

much of an outfit?"

"A bunch of cattle an' two herders." "Not enough to put up a fight. Well. if I was you, Tom, I'd run those cows over into the Bad Lands an' lie out there awhile. We'll get the Injuns, of course: but there is bound to be some I ran into an old friend o' mine in

to go in and get something to ent." He started to turn avay, but Shelby

halted him with a question. "How long you been in the army,

Pete?" "Twenty-two years,"

"And with the Sixth cavalry?" "Fifteen." "Did you ever know a sergeant

named Calkins?" "Jeff Calkins; he was my first 'top' after I joined; he left the service bout ten years ago. There was a shootin' scrape or somethin' down at Harker. Sorter ugly story, though I've forgotten just what it was all about now. Calkins got out o' that all right. but when his enlistment was up he quit; he didn't get on good with the men. Do you know whatever become of the ol' duffer?"

"He was buried here yesterdaykilled himself; left a daughter 'bout nineteen-

"The h-l he did! Jeff Calkins never was married; not before he left the army, anyhow, I know because I bunked with him nearly two years an' he told me a lot about himself. He wasn't no lady's man at all. Say. what the devil is goin' on here?"

"There's been a wedding." Shelby started to explain, but the outflowing throng cut his sentence in two, and the startled soldier, stepping back to get out of the way, was instantly swept aside, while the gang poured forth between, separating the two completely. The bridegroom found himself once more the center of fervent congratulations and only escaped by pushing a passage down the steps to where his outfit waited for departure. Some moments later she joined him, accompanied by her bodyguard, wearing a long duster which almost reached the ground and a close-fitting cap pulled down over her smooth hair. He silently helped her into the seat of the buckboard, joining her grimly and gathering up the reins in his fin-

"Now, then," he called, "a couple of you untle those brutes and jump. They're bad starters."

The broncos amply justified his prediction and the party went tearing down the main street, pursued by yells of enjoyment and cat-howls of derision, Shelby struggling with the reins in an endeavor to keep the maddened brutes off the sidewalks.

However, the steep ascent of the bluff brought the plunging animals to their senses and by the time they had surmounted the ridge and struck the prairie trail leading across the upland they were willing enough to slow down to the swift trot they were accustomed to take on long journeys. Shelby loosened his grasp on the leather and rested back in the seat, venturing a side glance at his companion. She was still gripping the iron rail for safety, but evidently felt no fear.

"Mean devil, that bronco," said Shelby, feeling the necessity of speech and flecking his whip lash at the buckskin, whose evil eye was peering maliclously backward, "worst horse I ever owned. The Kid back there seems to be some bronco puster and I'll let him try his luck when we get out to the ranch. I got some outlaws there." behind through the cloud of dust.

"Who is he? One of your men?" "Well, I just hired him down at Ponca. Seems to be a mighty good rider. His name is Macklin, but everybody calls him 'Kid.' "

"Somehow I don't just like him." "Oh, he's harmless enough."

"Perhaps so, but I have that feeling about him just the same."

Shelby made no answer and they rode on in silence through the circling dust. He felt awkward and embarrassed, unable to think of anything to say to keep up conversation and intensely conscious of the peculiar situation in which they found themselves.

Occasionally he stole a surreptitious glance aside at her, but her eyes were averted as though in avoidance, gazing out over the dull vista. To Shelby this quietness on her part, this half turning from him seemed particularly ominous. She was doubtless sorry already at her choice; this drear expanse which they rode was more than she expected to encounter-she was dreading already an approach to the Cottonwood. He had been a fool to even dream that he could ever satisfy her in such surroundings. Well, it was not too late to turn back. He would talk with her and learn the truth.

He drove steadily forward, endeavoring to formulate some pleasant opening sentence, his mind inevitably drifting back to that late conversation with Shaunessy and the doubts it had awakened. Ought he to permit her to become exposed to a possible Indian attack? Was it not plainly his duty to explain fully the exact situation? And then that other mat ter relative to Old Calkins? Surely it was her place to make that clear? He straightened up, clearing his

voice, and she glanced about, disturbed from revery by his action. "How dismal it all is," she said. as he failed to speak, "and yet the

very silence and loneliness has a charm. Is it like this out on the Cottonwood?" "No, not exactly. It's lonely enough, but that is broken country with something to rest the eyes on.

am afraid, though, you're goin' to be awfully sorry." "Really, I don't," honestly. don't mind being alone at all. I've always been alone, so that won't

hurt." "But this is different," he insisted stubbornly. "Besides, I heard something back there in Ponca that makes me think I had no business bringing

"What was that?" "Why, just before we come away

you along at all."

been up in the Sloux reservation, watchin' 'em ghost-dance, and he says the bucks up there are goin' to raise Ned before long, an' there ain't no troops anywhere around sufficient to hold 'em. It's Ol' Sittin' Bull who is stirrin' 'em up."

"But surely they could never get down here?"

"Not to Ponca-no; they wouldn't go in that direction. But they'd be mighty liable to come raidin' down the Cottonwood. That's what Shaunessy said; he told me I'd better run my stock over into the Bad Lands. and lie out for awhile, till the soldiers



"Somehow I Don't Just Like Him."

got the devils rounded up again. I been thinkin' ever since I ought to tell you about it, so, if you thought best we could turn around an' take you back to Ponca."

"And then what would you do?" "Me? Why go on o' course an' take care o' the cattle. "Tain't lie first time I've seen Indians."

"Then I am going with you," she said firmly. "I am not the least afraid. I wonder if you have an extra

rifle out there?" "Sure," he said, grinning. "I sorter like that kind o' talk, little girl. Can

you shoot?" "Some; I'll show you when we get out there. Anyway, please don't turn back on my account. I heard in Ponca that the Sloux were ghost-dancing, but I didn't think about their coming down the Cottonwood. Dad said they were getting ugly, but I don't know where

he heard it." This unexpected mention of Calkins stirred Shelby to ask a further question. She was going on with him, that was evident, and the mystery between them must be cleared away.

"What was your name?" he asked soberly. She glanced up into his face.

prised at the abrupt question, "My name! Why, don't you know?" "I never heard of it; seems sorter odd, maybe, but I never did."

"It is Olga." "Olga—Olga what?"

"Why, Shelby, I suppose," "No, I didn't mean that. Of course, it's Shelby now, but what was it be fore today? "Twasn't Calkins." The smile had deserted her lips and

her eyes were very serious. "Just what do you mean, please?

Have you heard something?" "Well, yes. This here soldier Shaunessy has been in the army a long while; he was fifteen years in the Sixth cavalry. Now I happened to learn, accidentally from McCarthy, that Old Calkins was once a sergeant in that outfit, so naturally I asked Shaunessy if he ever knew him."

"And did he?" "Sure; they were bunkles once an' he said Jeff Calkins never was married an' didn't have no daughter."

"Well, dld I ever say I was his daughter?"

"No, o' course you didn't. I never asked, but everybody thought you must be. What was the old man to you, anyhow? I reckon I got a right to know."

"You certainly have, but I cannot tell you very much. Frankly, I don't know. I could not explain even how I came into his care. That sounds strange, perhaps, but it is true. I wasn't much of a girl when he got me first and I've scarcely been out of his sight since. we asked him a thousand times, but he never would explain. Once he said it would come out all right after awhile. It seemed to anger him for me to ask questions, so, at last, I stopped."

"That's mighty queer. Did he ever tell you what your real name was?" "Oh, yes; there wasn't any secret about that-it was Carlyn."

"Olga Carlyn," he repeated the words slowly. "Sorter Norwegian-Irish, ain't it? That story sounds rather funny to me." "My idea is he was hiding me from

someone; trying to keep me from being found. I decided that was why he moved about from place to place and always lived in such poverty and alone. I believe he had money or could always get some when needed. Then he seemed to be afraid all the time and watching for something to happen."

"And you don't have no recollection whatever of either your father or

mother?" Mother; me may have dled when I was a baby, but I can remember my father, although I never

killin' first, unless I'm crazy. I've got the army, named Shaunessy. He'd | saw him very often. He was a tall man with iron-gray bair and mustache; once I saw him in uniform."

> "An officer, likely." "I think so. I was at school then and I am sure the lady principal called him colonel. I never lived with him, but always at some school, first one and then another. I am sure I was in St. Louis when Calkins came for me and took me away. That is actually everything I know about it; since then we've just moved around from place to place."

They fell into silence and rode on thus for hours, seldom speaking, each engrossed in their own thoughts. Toward sundown they came into a more rolling country, with patches of green grass, and the trail wound in and out among shallow depressions, yielding greater variety of scenery. Just before dark they toiled up over a high ridge and from the summit looked for some distance down the valley of the Cottonwood. The trail ran slantingly down the side of the bluff, zigzagging here and there in search of easier passage, and it was necessary to descend slowly. Consequently it was an hour after dark when they flually drove up to a small cabin surrounded by trees, a bundred feet back from the stream, and the driver announced their arrival.

CHAPTER VI.

A Blow of Treachery.

It was a desolate home-comingthe great stars overhead, the tinkle of distant water, the silence and blackness all about, and the dim outline of the cabin barely visible amid the surrounding trees. The girl held her breath with lips pressed tight, staring around into the vague shadows and permitted Shelby to gently swing her between the wheels to the ground, Some way the strong grasp of his hands brought back to her a sense of courage.

"Is-is there no one here?" she asked, afraid to venture a step in the gloom. "It is terribly dark."

"I'll remedy that in a minute," he said, pretending a cheerfulness he was far from feeling. "Hev there, Kid, stake out yer horse, and come here and hold these brones until I light up inside. Don't move, Olga; there is a steep bank just beyond. I'll only be gone a minute."

"But where is your herder?"

"Out with the cattle, probably; he doesn't sleep here, and had no idea when I would be back. Now hang on tight to these reins, Kid, and I'll help you presently. Would you rather go with me, Olga?"

"Yes," she said, her voice trembling slightly in spite of every effort at control, "I would rather not be left out here."

"All right; this is the path; don't be afraid. I won't let you stumble, Now, one step up; that's it."



"A Bit Tough Looking, I Suppose."

He flung open the unsecured door, and stepped into the dense blackness of the interior. She could see nothing, but heard him rummaging about, and finally caught the tiny gleam of a match. The next instant this had become the flame of an oil lamp, and the whole interior of the room became revealed in the yellow flicker. In spite of every attempt to steady herself, her heart gave a sudden throb, and she clutched at the door for support. This was even worse than she had pictured.

"A bit tough looking, I suppose," Shelby said with a hasty glance about. "Sorter surprise, this bringin' a wife back with me. Never reckoned on any such thing, or I'd a cleaned the shack up a bit. However, I'll straighten things around in a jiffy, as soon as I show the Kid the corral. Here's a chair to sit in." and he dumped its load on the floor. "You ain't afraid to wait here, are you?"

"Oh, no; I will be all right. You need not hurry."

Struck down from behind.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Clear Field.

"Ah, here is a letter from the old

"What does it say?" "Come home your tailor is dead."-Pearson's Weekly.

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