

SERIAL STORY

The Girl from Tim's Place

By CHARLES CLARK MUNN

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SYNOPSIS.

Chip McGuire, a 16-year-old girl living at Tim's place in the Maine woods is sold by her father to Pete Bolduc, a half-breed. She runs away and reaches the camp of Martin Frisbie, occupied by Martin, his wife, nephew, Raymond Stinson, and guides. She tells her story and is cared for by Mrs. Frisbie. Journey of Frisbie's party into woods to visit father of Mrs. Frisbie, an old hermit, who has resided in the wilderness for many years. When camp is broken Chip and Ray occupy same canoe. The party reach camp of Mrs. Frisbie's father and are welcomed by him and Cy Walker, an old friend and former townsman of the hermit. They settle down for summer's stay. Chip and Ray are in love, but no one realizes this but Cy Walker. Strange canoe marks found on lake shore in front of their cabin. Strange smoke is seen across the lake. Martin and Levi leave for settlement to get officers to arrest McGuire, who is known as outlaw and escaped murderer. Chip's one woods friend, Tomah, an Indian, visits camp. Ray believes he sees a bear on the ridge. Chip is stolen by Pete Bolduc and escapes with her in a canoe. Chip is rescued by Martin and Levi as they are returned from the settlement. Bolduc escapes. Old Cy proposes to Ray that he remain in the woods with himself and Anzi and trap during the winter.

CHAPTER X—Continued.

"That's also 'nother side to consider. Chip wants schoolin', 'n' she's got to study night 'n' day for the next eight months. If you go back with 'em, an' go gallivantin' round with her, ez you're sure to, it won't be no help to her. I've given you two all the chances fer weavin' the threads o' 'feetshun I could this summer, an' now let's you 'n' I turn to and make some money. I've asked your uncle 'n' aunt. They're willin', 'n' now, what do ye say?"

Few country boys with a love for trappin, such as Ray had, ever had a more alluring prospect spread before them. He knew Old Cy was right in all his conclusions, and almost without hesitation he agreed to the plan.

It was far-sighted wisdom on Old Cy's part, however, in not giving Ray time to reflect, else the magnet of Chip's eyes on the one hand, and eight months of separation on the other, would have proved too strong, and trap-setting and gum-gathering, with \$500 as reward, would have failed.

As it was, he came near weakening at the last moment when the canoes were packed and Angie and Chip came to take their seats in them.

He and his crude, rude, yet winsome little sweetheart had suffered a brief preliminary parting the evening previous. A good many sweet and silly nothings had been exchanged, also promises, and now the boy's heart was very sore.

Chip was more stoical. Her life at Tim's Place and contact with Old Tomah had taught her reserve, and yet when she turned for the last possible look at Old Cy and Ray, waving good-by at the landing, a mist of tears hid them.

Old Cy's face was also a study. To him these parting clouds were as the white ones hiding the sun; yet he felt their chill. His own life shadow was lengthening. He had now but a brief renewal of youth in the lives of these two, and then forgetfulness, as he knew full well, and yet he pitied them.

More than that, he had set his hand to guiding the bark of their young lives into the safe harbor of a home, and all feelings of his own subserved to that.

"Come, come, my boy," he said to Ray as the two turned away, and he noted the lad's sad face, "she's gone now, an' ye'd best ferget her fer a spell. Ye won't, I know, 'n' she won't; but ye'd best make believe ye do. This ain't no spot fer love-sick spells. We've got work to do, 'n' money to arn; ye've got the chance o' yer life now, an' me to help ye to it, so brace up 'n' look cheerful.

"Think o' what we got to do to git ready fer winter 'n' six foot o' snow. Think o' the traps we're goin' to set, an' the fun o' tendin' 'em. Why, girls ain't in it a minnit with ketchin' mink, marten, otter, an' now 'n' then a lynx or bobcat. Then when ye go back with a new suit 'n' money in yer

pocket, ye'll feel prouder'n a peacock, 'n' Chip a-smilin' at ye sweeter'n new maple syrup."

Verily Old Cy had the wisdom of age and the cheerfulness of morning sunshine.

All that day these wilderness-marooned friends worked hard. An ample stock of birch wood must be cut and split, a shed of poles to cover it must be erected alongside of the cabin, the hermit's log hut was to be divested of its fittings, which were to be removed to the new cabin which all were now to occupy.

Realizing how vital to their existence the canoes were, Old Cy had also planned a shelter of small logs for them on one side of the log cabin, that could be locked. Here the canoes not in use must be stored at once to guard against a night call from the malignant half-breed. His canoe had been taken along by Martin's party, to be left at Tim's Place, for even Hersey would have scorned to appropriate it.

There were dozens of other needs to prepare for during the next two months, all of which were important. An ample supply of deer meat must be secured, to be pickled and smoked. All the partridges they could shoot would be needed, and later, when south-bound ducks halted at the lake, a few of these would add to their larder.

In this connection, also, another need occurred to Old Cy. Trout could be caught all winter in the lake, but live bait must be had, and so a slat car to be sunk in some swift-running stream, which would hold them, must be constructed, also a scoop of mosquito net to catch them. These minnows were to be found now by the million in every brook, and forethought was Old Cy's watchword.

All these duties and details he discussed that first day with Ray, while they worked, for a purpose.

But the first evening here, with its open fire, yet empty seats, was the hardest to pass. In vain Old Cy enlarged upon the joys of trap-setting once more, and how and where they were to secure gum. In vain he described how deadfalls were built and where they must be placed, how many signs of lynx and wildcat he had seen that summer, and how sure they were to secure some of these valuable furs.

Ray's heart was not here. Far away in some night camp, Chip was thinking of him. He knew each day would bear her farther away. No word of



"Why Don't Ye Shave?"

her safe arrival could reach them now. Long months must elapse ere he and she could meet again, and in prospect they seemed an eternity.

"Come, git yer banjo, my boy," Old Cy ejaculated at last, seeing Ray's face grow gloomy. "Tune 'er up, an' play us suthin' lively. None o' them goody-goody weepin' sort o' tunes; but give us 'Money Musk' 'n' a few jigs. I'm feelin' our prospects are so cheerful, I'd like to cut a few pigeon-wings out o' compliment."

But Old Cy's hilarity was nearly all put on. He, too, felt the effect of the empty seats and missed every one that had gone, and Ray's jig tunes lacked their spirit. He essayed a few, and then quite unconsciously his fingers strayed to "My Old Kentucky Home," and Old Cy's feelings responded.

CHAPTER XI.

Chip's arrival in Greenville produced astonishment and gossip galore. It began when the stage that "Uncle Joe" Barnes had driven for 20 years started for that village. There were other passengers besides Martin, his wife, and Chip. The seats inside were soon filled, and Chip, seeing a coveted chance, climbed nimbly to a position beside the driver.

"Gee Whittaker," observed one bystander to another, as Chip's black-stockinged legs flashed into view, "but that gal's nimbler'n a squirrel 'n' don't mind showin' underpinnin'. I wished I was drivin' that stage. I'll bet she's a circus."

Uncle Joe soon found her a live companion at least, for he had scarce left the village ere she began.

"Your hosses are fatter'n Tim's hosses used to be," she said. "Do ye feed 'em on hay and taters?"

Uncle Joe gave her a sideways glance.

"Hay and taters," he exclaimed; "we don't feed hosses on taters down here. Where'd you come from?"

"I used to live at Tim's Place, up in the woods, 'n' we fed our hosses on taters, 'n' they had backs sharp 'nuff to split ye."

This time Uncle Joe faced squarely around.

"I know all about hosses," she continued glibly. "I used to take keer on 'em 'n' ride one plowin', an' I've been throwed more'n a hundred times when we struck roots, an' ye ought to 'a' heard Tim cuss. I used to cuss just the same, but Mrs. Frisbie says I musn't."

"Wal, I swow," ejaculated Uncle Joe, realizing that he had a "case." "What's your name, 'n' whar's Tim's Place?"

"My name's Chip, Chip McGuire, only 'tain't, it's Vera; but they allus called me Chip, an' Tim's Place is ever so far up in the woods. I runned away 'cause dad sold me, an' fetched up at Mrs. Frisbie's camp, 'n' she's goin' to eddicate me. My mother got killed when I was a kid, 'n' my dad killed 'nother one, too; he's a bad 'un."

Uncle Joe gasped at this gory tale of double murder, not being quite sure that the girl was sane.

"Hain't they ketched yer dad yet?" he queried.

"No, nor they won't," Chip rattled on, as if such killing were a daily occurrence in the woods. "He's a slick 'un, they say, an' now he's got Pete's money, he'll lay low."

"Worse and worse, and more of it," Uncle Joe thought.

"You must 'a' had middlin' lively times up in the woods," he said. "Did yer dad kill anybody else 'sides yer mother 'n' this man?"

"He didn't kill mother," Chip returned promptly; "he used to lick her, though, but she got killed in a mill, 'n' I wisht it 'ud bin him. I wouldn't 'a' bin an orfin then. Say," she added, as they entered a woods-bordered stretch of road, "did ye ever see spites here?"

"Spites," he responded, now more than ever in doubt as to her sanity, "what's them?"

"Why, they's just spites—things ye can't see much of 'ceptin' it's dark. Then they come crawlin' round. They's souls o' animals mostly, Old Tomah says. I've seen thousands on 'em."

Uncle Joe shifted his quid, turned and eyed the girl once more. First, a wild and wofully mixed tale of murder, and then spookish things! Beyond question she had wheels, and he resolved to humor her.

"Oh, yes, we see them things here now 'n' then," he said, "but it takes considerable lick to do it. We hain't had a murder, though, for quite a spell. This is a sorter peaceful neck o' woods ye're comin' to."

But Chip failed to grasp his quiet humor, and all through that 20-mile autumn day stage ride she chattered on like a magpie.

He soon concluded she was sane enough, however, but the most voluble talker who ever shared his seat.

"I never seen the beat o' her," he said that night at Phinney's store,—the village news agency,—"she clacked every minit from the time we started till we fetched in, an' I never called sich goin's on ez she told about cud ever happen. That was murder 'n' runnin' away, 'n' she got ketched 'n' carried off 'n' fetched back, 'n' a whole lot o' risky business. She believes in ghosts, too, sorter Injun sperits, 'n' she kin swear jist ez easy ez I kin. It seems the Frisbies hev kinder 'dopted her, 'n' I guess they'll hev their hands full. She's a bright 'un, though, but sich a talker!"

At Aunt Comfort's spacious, old-fashioned home, where Chip was now installed, she soon began to create the same impression. This had been Angie's former home, and her Aunt Comfort Day had been her foster mother.

This family, in addition to the new arrival, consisted of Aunt Comfort, rotund and warm-hearted; Hannah Pettibone, a well-along spinster of angular form and temper, thin to an almost painful degree, with a well-defined mustache; and a general helper on the farm, and a chore boy about Chip's age named Nezer, completed the list.

Once included in this somewhat diverse group, Chip became an immediate bone of contention. Aunt Comfort, of course, opened her heart to her at once; but Hannah closed hers, almost from the first day, and in addition she began to nurse malice as well. There was some reason for this, mainly due to Chip's startling freshness of speech.

"I thought ye must be a man wearin' wimmin's clothes, the first time I see ye," she said to Hannah the next day after her arrival, and without meaning offense. "It was all on account o' yer little whiskers, I guess. I never see a woman with 'em afore. Why don't ye shave?"

This was enough; for if there was any one thing more mortifying than all else to Hannah, it was her facial blemish, and a mention of it she considered an intentional insult.

From this moment onward she hated Chip.

Nezer, however, took to her as a duck to water, and her story, which he soon heard, became a real dime novel to him, and not content with one telling, he insisted on repetition. This was also unfortunate for—blessed with a vivid imagination and sure to enlarge upon all facts—he soon spread the story with many blood-curdling additions.

These stories, with Uncle Joe's corroboration, resulted in a direful tale believed by all. Neighbors flocked in to see this heroine of many escapades, villagers halted in front of Aunt Comfort's to catch a sight of this marvel, and so the wonder spread.

Angie was, of course, to blame. More impressed with the seriousness of the task she had undertaken than the need of caution, she had failed to tell Chip she must not talk about herself, and so a woefully distorted history became current gossip.

When Sunday came the village church was packed and Parson Jones marveled much at the unexpected increase of religious interest. He had heard of this new arrival, but when the Frisbie family with Chip, in suitable clothing, entered their pew, the cyanothere of all eyes, this unusual attendance was accounted for.

And what a staring-at Chip received! On the church steps a group of both young and old men had awaited her arrival and gazed at her in open-eyed astonishment. All through service she was watched, and not content with this, a dozen or so, men and women, formed a double line outside, awaiting the Frisbies' exit.

Angie also failed to understand the principal cause of this interest. Her last appearance at this church had been as a bride. Naturally that fact would produce some staring, and so the curious and almost rude scrutiny the family received was less noticed by her.

But Chip's eyes were observant.

"I don't like goin' to meetin'," she said, "an' bein' stared at like I was a wildcat. I seen 'em grinlin', too, some on 'em, when we went in, an' one feller winked to another. What ailed 'em?"

Her vexations, however, had only just begun, for Angie had seen and made arrangements with Miss Phinney, one of the village school teachers, and the next morning Chip was sent to school. And now real trouble commenced.

Not knowing more than how to read and spell short words, and unable to write, she, a fairly well developed young lady, presented a problem which was hard for a teacher to solve. To put her in the class where she belonged was absurd. She must sit with older girls, or look ridiculous. If she recited with the eight-year-old children, the result would be the same, and so a species of private tuition with recitations at noon or after school became the only possible course and the one her teacher adopted.

This also carried its vexations, for Chip was as tall as Miss Phinney, and a little larger. Not one of that band of pupils was over 12. To join in their games was no sport for Chip, while they, having heard about her thrilling experiences, with a hint that she wasn't quite right in her head, felt afraid of her.

"I feel so sorry for her," Miss Phinney explained to Angie, a week later, "and yet, I don't know what to do. She is so big the children won't play with her, or she with them. I am the only one with whom she will talk, and she seems so humble and so grateful for every word. I can't be as stern with her or govern her as I should, on account of her temper and size.

"Only yesterday I heard screaming at recess, and going out, I found that Chip had one of the girls by the hair and was cuffing her. It transpired that this girl had called her an Indian and asked if she had ever scalped anybody. I can't punish such a pupil, and I can't help loving her, so you see she is a sore trial."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Dog Jealousy.

There is a strong trait of jealousy in a dog's nature. A story is told of a Birmingham dog that had been a great pet in the family until the baby came. There was suspicion that he was jealous, but he could not be detected in any disrespect to the newcomer. It always happened, however, that when the dog was left alone with the baby the baby began to cry. No signs of trouble were ever to be seen upon entering the room, and the dog was always found sleeping peacefully before the fire. Finally one day a peep through the keyhole disclosed the canine rubbing his cold wet nose up and down the baby's back.—Outing Magazine.

Hymns as Exponents of Piety.

Said Henry Ward Beecher: "Hymns are the exponent of the innermost jewels which the church has worn, formed into amulets more potent against sadness and sorrow than the most famous charm of the wizard or magician. And he who knows the way hymns flowed, knows where the blood of true piety ran and can trace its vein and arteries to the very heart."

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Novel Trio.

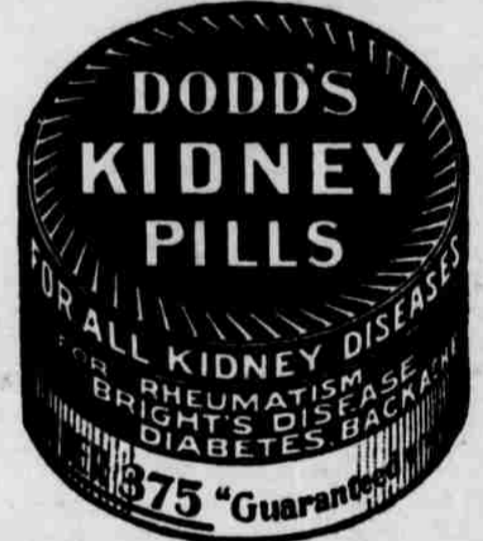
"Do you like ensemble music?" the city girl asked young Nathan Hobbs of Willowby, who was trying to entertain her at the church "social." Nathan looked bewildered.

"I mean do you enjoy hearing several instruments played together?" asked his new acquaintance, taking condescending pity on his ignorance.

"I guess I do," said Nathan, brightening at once, and speaking with enthusiasm. "Sy, you just wait till you hear Etta Willis on the organ with Ed Holmes playing the harmonica and Sadie James the triangle. It's great."—Youth's Companion.

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