

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 Stetson, 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 returning from the settlement. Bolduc escapes. Old Cy proposes to Ray that he remain in the woods with himself and Amzi and trap during the winter, and he concludes to do so. Others of the party return to Greenville, taking Chip with them. Chip starts to school in Greenville, and finds life unpleasant at Aunt Comfort's, made so especially by Hannah. Old Cy and Ray discover strange tracks in the wilderness. They penetrate further into the wilderness and discover the hiding place of the man who had been sneaking about their cabin. They investigate the cave home of McGuire during his absence. Bolduc finds McGuire and the two fight to the death, finding a watery grave together. Ray returns to Greenville and finds Chip waiting for him. Ray wants Chip to return to the woods with them, but she, feeling that the old comradeship with Ray has been broken refuses. When they part, however, it is as lovers. Chip runs away from Aunt Comfort's and finds another home with Judson Walker. She gives her name as Vera Raymond, Aunt Abby, Aunt Mandy Walker's sister, visits them, and takes Chip home with her to Christmas Cove.

CHAPTER XXII.—Continued.

"I was born close to the wilderness," she said, "and my mother died when I was about eight years old. Then my father took me into the woods, where I worked at a kind of a boarding house for lumbermen. I ran away from that when I was about 16. I had to; the reasons I don't want to tell. I found some people camping in the woods when I'd been gone three days and 'most starved. They felt pity for me, I guess, and took care of me. I stayed at their camp that summer, and then they fetched me home with them and I was sent to school. Somebody said something to me there, somebody who hated me. She had been pestering me all the time, and I ran away. Uncle Jud found me and took care of me until you came, and that's all I want to tell. I could tell a lot more, but I don't ever want those people to find me or take me back where they live, and that's why I don't tell where I came from. Then I felt I was so dependent on them—I was twitted of it—that it's another reason why I ran away. I wouldn't have stayed with Uncle Jud more than over night except that I had a chance to work and earn my board."

"But wasn't it unkind of you—isn't it now—not to let these people know you are alive?" answered Aunt Abby. "They were certainly good to you."

"I know that they were," returned Chip, somewhat contritely; "but I couldn't stand being dependent on them any longer. If they found where I was, they'd come and fetch me back; and I'd feel so ashamed I couldn't look 'em in the face. I'd rather they'd think I was dead."

"Well, perhaps it is best you do not," returned Aunt Abby, sighing; "but years of doubt, and not knowing whether some one we care for is dead or alive, are hard to bear. And now that you have told me some of your history, I will tell you a lifelong case of not knowing some one's fate. Many years ago my sister and myself, who were born here, became acquainted with two young men, sailor boys from Bayport, named Cyrus and Judson Walker. Cyrus became attached to me and we were engaged to marry. It never came to pass, however, for the ship that Judson was captain of,

with Cyrus as first mate, foundered at sea. All hands took to the two boats. The one Judson was in was picked up, but the other was never heard of afterward. In due time Judson and my sister Amanda married. He gave up a sailor's life, and they settled down where they now live. I waited many years, vainly hoping for my sweetheart's return, and finally, realizing that he must be dead, married Capt. Bemis. That all happened so long ago that I do not care to count the years; and yet all through them has lingered that pitiful thread of doubt and uncertainty, that vain hope that somehow and someday Cyrus may have escaped death and may return. I know it will never happen. I know he is dead; and yet I cannot put away that faint hope and quite believe it is so, and never shall so long as I live. Now you have left those who must have cared something for you in much the same pitiful state of doubt, and it is not right."

For one moment something almost akin to horror flashed over Chip. "And was he called—was he never—I mean this brother, ever heard from?" she stammered, recovering herself in time.

"Why, no," answered Aunt Abby, looking at her curiously, "of course not. Why, what ails you? You look as if you'd seen a ghost."

"Oh, nothing," returned Chip, now more composed; "only the story and how strange it was."

It ended the conversation, for Chip, so overwhelmed by the flood of possibilities contained in this story, dared not trust herself longer with Aunt Abby, and soon escaped to her room.

And now circumstances came trooping upon her: the shipwreck, which



Followed the Winding Stream.

she had heard Old Cy describe so often; the name she knew was really his; the almost startling resemblance to Uncle Jud in speech, ways, and opinions; and countless other proofs. Surely it must be so. Surely Old Cy, of charming memory, and Uncle Jud no less so, must be brothers, and now it was in her power to—and then she paused, shocked at the position she faced.

She was now known as Vera Raymond, and respected; she had cut loose forever from the old shame of an outlaw's child; of a wretched drudge at Tim's Place; of being sold as a slave; and all that now made her blush.

And then Ray! Full well she knew now what must have been in his heart that last evening and why he acted as he did. Hannah had told her the bitter truth, as she had since realized. Ray had been assured that she was an outcast, and despicable in the sight of Greenville. He dared not say "I love you; be my wife." Instead, he had been hurried away to keep them apart; and as all this dire flood of shame that had driven her from Greenville surged in her heart, the bitter tears came.

In calmer moments, and when the heart-hunger controlled, she had hoped he might some day find her and some day say, "I love you." But now, so soon, to make herself known, to tell who she was, to admit to these new friends that she was Chip McGuire with all that went with it, to have to face and live down that shame, to admit that she had taken Ray's first name for her own—no, no, a thousand times no!

But what of Old Cy and Uncle Jud, and their life-long separation?

Truly her footsteps had led her to a parting of the ways, one sign-board lettered "Duty and Shame," the other a blank.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Old Cy especially found life dull after Ray had gone. The hermit also appeared to miss him and became more morose than ever. He never had been what might be termed social, speaking only when spoken to, and then only in the fewest possible words. Now Old Cy became almost a walking sphinx, and found that time passed slowly. His heartstrings had somehow become entwined with Ray's hopes and plans. He had bent every

energy and thought to secure for Ray a valuable stock of furs and gum, and, as with his nature, felt a keen satisfaction in helping that youth to a few hundred dollars.

Now Ray had departed, furs, gum and all. He had promised to return with Martin and Angle later on, but of that Old Cy felt somewhat dubious, and so the old man mourned.

There was no real reason for it, for all Nature was now smiling. The lake was blue and rippled by the June breezes; trout leaped out of it night and morning; flowers were blooming, squirrels frisking, birds singing and nest-building; and what Old Cy most enjoyed, the vernal season was at hand.

Another matter also disturbed him—the whereabouts of McGuire and the half-breed, Pete Bolduc.

Levi had brought the information that neither had been seen nor heard of since the previous autumn; but that was not conclusive, and somehow Old Cy felt that a certain mystery had attached itself to them, and once we suspect a mystery, it pursues us like a phantom. He did not fear either of these renegades, however. He had never harmed them. But he felt that any day might bring a call from one or the other, or that some tragic outcome would be disclosed.

Another problem also annoyed him—who this thief of their game could be, and whether his supposed cave lair was a permanent hiding spot.

Two reasons had kept Old Cy from another visit to that sequestered lake during the fall trapping season: first, its evident danger, and then lack of time. But now, with nothing to do except wait for the incoming ones, an impulse to visit again this mysterious spot came to him.

He had, at the former excursion, felt almost certain that this unknown trapper was either McGuire or the half-breed. Some assertions made by Levi seemed to corroborate that theory, and impelled by it, Old Cy started alone, one morning, to visit this lake again. It took him until midday to carry his canoe, camp outfit, rifle, and all across from the stream to stream, and twilight had come ere he reached the lagoon where he and Ray had left the main stream and camped. Up here Old Cy now turned his canoe, and repairing the bark shack they had built, which had been crushed by winter's snow, he camped there again.

Next morning, bright and early, he launched his canoe and once more followed the winding stream through the dark gorge and out into the rippled lake again.

Here he halted and looked about. No signs of aught human could be seen. The long, narrow lakelet sparkled beneath the morning sun. The bald mountain frowned upon it, the jagged ledges just across faced him like serried ramparts, an eagle slowly circled overhead, and, best indication of primal solitude, an antlered deer stood looking at him from out an opening above the ledges.

"Guess I'm alone here!" exclaimed Old Cy, glancing around; "but if this ain't a picture worth rememberin', I never saw one. Wish I could take it with me into 't'other world; an' if I was sure o' findin' a spot like it thar, I'd never worry 'bout goin' when my time comes."

After a long wait, as if he wanted to observe every detail of this wondrous picture of wildwood beauty, he dipped his paddle, crossed the sheet of rippled water, and stepped ashore at the very spot where he and Ray had landed over eight months before.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, glancing around, "if that ain't a canoe, bottom up! Two, by ginger!" he added, as he saw another drawn out and half hid by a low ledge.

To this second one he hastened at once and looked into it.

It had evidently rested there all winter, for it was partially filled with water, and half afloat in it were two paddles and a setting pole. A gunny-cloth bag, evidently containing the usual cooking outfit of a woodsman, lay soaking in one end, a frying-pan and an ax were rusting in the other, and a coating of mould had browned each crossbar and thwart.

"Been here quite a spell, all winter, I guess," muttered Old Cy, looking it over, and then he advanced to the other canoe. That was, as he asserted, bottom up, and also lay half hid back of a jutting ledge of slate. Two paddles leaned against this ledge, and near by was another setting pole. All three of these familiar objects were brown with damp mould and evidently had rested there many months.

"Curis, curis," muttered Old Cy again. "I callated I'd find nothin' here, 'n' here's two canoes left to rot, 'n' been here all winter."

Then with a vague sense of need, he returned to his canoe, seized his rifle, looked all around, over the lake, up into the green tangle above the ledges, and finally followed the narrow passage leading to where he had once watched smoke arise. Here on top of this ledge he again halted and looked about.

Back of it was the same V-shaped cleft across which a cord had held drying pelts, the cord was still there, and below it he could see the dark skins amid the confusion of jagged stones.

Turning he stepped from this ledge to the lower one nearer the lake, walked down its slope, and looked about again. At its foot was a long, narrow, shelf-like projection, ending at the corner of the ledge. Old Cy followed this to its end and stepped down into a narrow crevasse.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, taking a backward step as he did so.

And well he might, for there at his feet lay a rifle coated with rust beside a brown felt hat.

Had a grinning skull met his eyes he would not have been more astounded. In fact, that was the next object he expected to see, and he glanced up and down the crevasse for it. None leered at him, however, and picking up the rusted weapon, he continued his search.

Two rods or so below where he had climbed the upper ledge, he was halted again, for there, at his hand almost, was a curious doorlike opening some three feet high and one foot wide, back of an outstanding slab of slate.

The two abandoned canoes had surprised him, the rusty rifle astonished him, but this, a self-evident cave entrance, almost took his breath away.

For one instant he glanced at it, stepped back a step, dropped the rusty rifle and cocked his own, as if expecting a ghost or panther to emerge. None came, however, and once more Old Cy advanced and peered into this opening. A faint light illumined its interior—a weird slant of sunlight, yet enough to show a roomy cavern.

The mystery was solved. This surely was the hiding spot of the strange trapper!

"Can't see why I missed it afore," Old Cy muttered, kneeling that he might better look within, and sniffing at the peculiar odor. "Wonder if the cuss is dead in thar, or what smells so!"

Then he arose and grasped the slab of slate. One slight pull and it fell aside.

"A nat'lral door, by hokey!" exclaimed Old Cy, and once more he knelt and looked in.

The bravest man will hesitate a moment before entering such a cavern, prefaced, so to speak, by two abandoned canoes, a rusty rifle, human head covering, each and all bespeaking something tragic, and Old Cy was no exception. That he had come upon some grewsome mystery was apparent. Canoes were not left to rot in the wilderness or rifles dropped without cause.

And then, that hat! Surely here, or hereabouts, had been enacted a drama of murderous nature, and inside this cavern might repose its blood-stained sequel.

But the filtering beams of light encouraged Old Cy, and he entered. No ghastly corpse confronted him, but instead a human, if cramped, abode. A fireplace deftly fashioned of slate occupied one side of this cave; in front a low table of the same flat stone, resting upon small ones; and upon the table were rusty tin dishes, a few mouldy hardtack, a knife, fork, and scraps of meat, exhaling the odor of decay. A smell of smoke from the charred wood in the fireplace mingled with it all. In one corner was a bed of brown fir twigs, also mouldy, a blanket, and tanned deerskins.

The cave was of oval, irregular shape, barely high enough for Old Cy to stand upright. Across its roof, on either side of the rude chimney, a narrow crack admitted light, and as he looked about, he saw in the dim light another doorlike opening into still another cave. Into this he peered, but could see nothing.

"A queer livin' spot," he muttered at last, "a reg'lar human panther den. An' 'twas out o' this I seen the smoke come. An' here's his gun," he added, as, more accustomed to the dim light, he saw one in a corner. "Two guns, two canoes, an' nobody to hum," he continued. "I'm safe, anyhow. But I've got to peek into that other cave, sartin sure," and he withdrew to the open air.

A visit to a couple of birches soon provided means of light, and he again entered the cave. One moment more, and then a flaring torch of bark was thrust into the inner cave, a mere crevasse not four feet wide, and stooping, as he now had to, Old Cy entered and knelt while he looked about.

He saw nothing here of interest except the serried rows of jutting slate, across two of which lay a slab of the same—no vestige of aught human, and Old Cy was about to retreat when his flare burning close to his finger tips unnoticed, caused him to drop it on the instant, and drawing another from his pocket he lit it while the flame lasted in the first one.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Countess Dancing for a Living.

A great sensation has been created throughout Sweden by the appearance on the stage as a dancer in national costume of the little Countess von Nordenfelt, who is only 12 years old, and whose family, through continued misfortune, has fallen into evil ways. According to a German newspaper the little titled dancer will before long appear at German, French and English theaters. She is receiving the magnificent salary of \$350 a week.

NO SYMPATHY FOR PRODIGAL.

New York Man Tells How He Would Have Treated Him.

"I went to hear Dr. Hillis' sermon on the Prodigal Son last Sunday night," said an enthusiastic Brooklyn man to a practical New Yorker, "and I tell you he made a brand new point on the parable of the Prodigal Son."

"What was that?" asked the New York man.

"It was about this matter of helping along a man who had made a mistake. His idea was that after a man had reformed it wasn't fair to hark back to the time when he was all wrong. Dr. Hillis said it was wrong to mock by referring to a man's past. For example, he put it in this way: Finally, the night of the feasting on the fatted calf was past, and the next morning had come—the morning after. There is always the morning after. The affairs of the farm work must be taken up again. The same routine must go on. The time had now come for the elder brother, who was the boss, to set the younger brother to work; he must assign the prodigal son to his duties as he would have them to do in the future. So, he could say to him: 'Go feed the horses,' or, 'Go tend the sheep,' or, 'Go milk the cows,' but not a word must he say about the swine. The prodigal had been tending swine. The elder brother must not mention the swine; not a word about the swine. Anything but that."

"I don't know about that," said the practical New Yorker. "There are two ways of looking at it. I think if I had been the elder brother, I should have said: 'Now, look here! You drew your patrimony like a hog; you went off by yourself and blew it like a hog; you have come home on the hog; now it's up to you to go out and mind the hogs.'"

And the Brooklynite laughed in spite of himself.—The Sunday Magazine.

Statesman's Confessions.

For all his caustic wit, Thomas B. Reed of Maine was as tender of heart as large of frame. He was not much of a hunter. "I never shot but one bird in my life," he once confessed. "I spent a whole day doing that. It was a sandpiper. I chased him for hours up and down a mill stream. When at last I potted him and held him up by one of his poor little legs, I never felt more ashamed of myself in all my life. I hid him in my coat-pocket for fear somebody would see how big I was and how small the victim, and I never will be guilty again of the cowardice of such an unequal battle."—Woman's Companion.

Chivalrous Man.

A father and mother, with six children, spent a holiday at the seaside. Immediately on arrival they set about looking for cheap lodgings.

At length they came to a notice of a "furnished room to let" and made inquiries.

"Oh, yes," said the landlady in answer to the father's question; "it's here the room is to let, but there's only one bed in it."

"Oh, that's all right," replied the father; "we're used to roughing it. The wife and bairns will sleep on the floor."—The Tatler.

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