

# PENNY of TOP HILL TRAIL

By BELLE KANARIS MANIATIS

Author of "AMARILLY OF CLOTHES-LINE ALLEY," "MILDEW MANSE," ETC.

I wrapped her up in it, and when I buttoned it around her chin, I did what I'd been aching to do since I first met her, but had slipped on my courage. She was looking down in a shy, little way she has—and I kissed her. When she lifted her eyes, there was such a surprised little look in them, I felt just as if I had hurt a baby.

"I didn't mean to do it," I said, but I couldn't help it. Will you forgive me?" "I'll forgive you," she said in a low voice after a moment, "but you mustn't—again."

"She meant it, so I didn't, but she let me hold her hand we sat quiet and watched the moon shine on the water."

"I asked her if she had a good time, and she told me it had been the most wonderful day of her life—different from all others."

"Honest?" I asked.

"She didn't answer, but looked off over the water, and I saw a tear on her cheek."

"Honest?" I said again.

"Yes," she said, "Honest, and I never knew before what it was to be honest."

"I didn't know what she meant, but we had got to Chicago now. It wasn't very late and I asked her should we go to Reilly's again and she said it would spoil the day. I thought so, too. On the way to where I'd left her the night before, there was a little park. We went in sat on one of the benches. It was only a little clump of trees, but it made a nice place to visit, because there was no one around. People in cities don't act like they were seasoned to outdoors except when it's hot weather."

"I was booked to leave the next morning, so I couldn't let any grass grow. I asked her to marry me."

"I wish you hadn't asked me," she said, and her voice sounded like there were tears in her eyes.

"Why?" I asked.

"I wish, she went on without taking any notice of me—just like she was talking to herself—that I dared to love a man like you."

"That was all I cared to know. For the ghost of a second I held her in my arms, but she slipped out of them and I saw her face was pale."

"You do love me!" I said.

"I do," she repeated after me. "A lot. If it was a little bit, I'd marry you, but I love you so much, I'll tell you why I can never marry you. You're the first man that ever treated me like I was white. I'm pretty bad, I know, but I am not so bad as to do you wrong."

"I told her I didn't know what she meant, but there was nothing in the world that should come between us."

"I tried to tell you tonight on the boat, when you asked me to tell you how much I had enjoyed the day, she went on just as though I hadn't spoken, when you said 'Honest.' But I couldn't. I was afraid to tell you I couldn't do anything honest."

"Then she told me she was a thief. She didn't try to make any excuses for herself, but when I heard her little hard luck story and knew what she'd been up against, I didn't wonder that she stole or committed any crime. She had had a regular Cinderella stepmother who had licked her when she was a kid because she took food from the pantry when she was hungry. The old hag called it stealing and warned the school teacher and the other kids got hold of it and of course you know what it does to any one to get a black eye. She had the name of a thief wished on her until she got to be one. She was expelled from school; put in a reformatory; ran away; stole to keep herself alive. Then they all took a hand at her—ministers, society girls, charitable associations; they gave her a bum steer and made her feel that she was a hopeless outcast, so she felt more at home with her vagrant class. The only person who had ever made her feel she wanted to be straight was a Salvation Army woman, but she had gone away and no one was left to care now."

"I didn't let her go any further. I told her I cared and I cared all the more since I had heard her story; and that she was honest, or she wouldn't have told me about herself. What did I care what she had been or done? Her life was going to begin right then with me. I couldn't budge her. I talked and pleaded, and at last she gave in—a little. She said she'd think it over and meet me at the little park in the morning, and then she'd talk some more about it."

"So we parted until morning came. But I made up my mind that if she wouldn't consent I'd simply kidnap her and bring her up to Mrs. Kingdon."

"I was on hand bright and early at the park next morning, and after a while a slovenly slip of a girl came up to me and asked my name. I told her. She gave me a note and then started off like a skyrocket, but I'm some spy myself, and I caught her and held her till I'd read the note. It was from her and she said she couldn't give me the worst of the bargain. That she was going to try hard to see if she could make good and live without stealing, and when she was sure she'd send word to me through Mr. Reilly, and, if I never heard, I could know she had failed, and for me to forget her."

"Where is she?" I asked the girl who was squirming like an eel.

"I dunno," she said. "She's left town."

"I don't believe it!" I said.

"Yes, she has," said the girl. "She pawned all her togs—that new white dress and the swell shoes and her new suit and hat to get money to make a getaway."

"I might as well have tried to hang on to a fish as to hold that slippery little street Arab. She broke away and ran. I was after her, but it was no use. She new the ins and outs of the alleys like a rat, and I lost her. You see, I didn't know my girl's last name. When I asked her she said: 'Call me Marta.' I didn't care about knowing her last name then, because I was so keen to give her my own name."

"I was just about crazy. I hunted all over the part of the city where I'd left her the first night. Then I went to see Reilly, but he didn't know who

she was. I made him see what it meant to me to find her, and he promised to try his best and to forward at once any letter that came to him. If I don't hear after a while, when work gets slack so you can spare me, I'm going to Chicago and go through it with a fine tooth comb. Reilly will help me follow every girl by the name of Marta that's ever lived there."

Kurt's eyes, full of definite pity and regret, turned to Jo as he broke the little pause that followed.

"She is doubtless a poor little stray of a girl and luck has been against her, but Jo, put all thoughts of marrying her away, just as she has. Wait—!" he hurried on, seeing the anger kindling in the lad's eyes—"if it were any other offense—But a thief! 'Once a thief, always a thief,' is the truest saying I know. Your love couldn't—"

"It didn't make any change in my feelings when she told me," said Jo stanchly. "She could steal anything I had."

"It might not change your feelings, but it should change your intentions. Do you mean you'd marry—?" Kurt had an incredulous expression on his face.

"In a second, if she'd have me. I'd buy her everything she wanted so she wouldn't have to steal."

"But after you were married and people found out what she was, you'd be ashamed—"

"Ashamed! I'd put my little thief on a throne, and whoever dared to try to take her off would get it in the neck. The car speeded up again. The man at the wheel saw the utter futility of further expostulation.

"I'll leave it to time and cow-punching," he thought sagely. "Time and work are the best healers, especially for the young. Preaching is of no avail."

Night came on. Jo looked up at a little lone star which was trying to make its light shine without a properly darkened background.

"That's a poor little orphan star—like her. I'll look for it every night now. I wish I hadn't blabbed to Kurt. He hasn't a nose for orange blossoms."

In the fortnight that followed, Jo worked indefatigably, but his heart and his thoughts were back in Chicago, except when now and then his eyes turned to a fertile little beauty spot valleyed between the hills. For here he had located an imaginary cottage—his cottage and hers. This mirage, of course, always showed a little slip of a girl standing in the doorway. To the surprise and dismay of his associates Jo the spender became Jo the saver that his dream might come true.

He offered on addendum to the revelation he had made to Kurt. They met often, but in ranch life discourse is not frequent, and Jo instinctively felt that his recital of Love's Young Dream had fallen upon unsympathetic ears, while the foreman, unversed in the language of Love, was mystified by the lad's silence.

Three weeks later the "man without a nose for orange blossoms" was again in town. As acting sheriff of the county he had dropped in to see the jailer.

"How's business, Bender? Any new boarders?" he asked.

"Yes; a gal run in for stealing. Didn't find the goods on her; but she's a sly one with the record of being a lifelong thief. She strayed up here from Chicago."

"What's her name?" he asked casually.

"Marta Sills."

"I wonder if it could be Jo's Marta," the acting sheriff thought suddenly. "She may have followed him up here."

He walked back to the hotel, trying to decide whether he should tell Jo. If she should prove to be his girl, her arrest up here should show him that his love hadn't worked the miracle he expected. Jo had been a little quiet since his return, but he gave no signs of pining away, and maybe if nothing revived his interest, it might die a natural death. The story Jo had told of the little waif had made a deep impression upon him, however.

"Poor little brat!" he thought. "What chance does her kind have? I suppose I ought to give her one. There is one person in the world who might reform her, and I'd put her in that person's charge if it weren't for wrecking Jo's life."

All through the afternoon while transacting the business that had brought him to town, his heart and his head were having a wrestling match, the former being at the disadvantage of being underworked.

"I'll get up and take a look at her," he suddenly decided. "Maybe I can tell from Jo's description whether she is his Marta or not."

On his way to the jail he was accosted by a big jovial man.

"Don't know where I can get an extra helper, do you Kurt? Simpson, my right hand, has gone back to Canada to enlist."

"How providential!" thought Kurt. "Why, yes; Mr. Westcott," he replied. "We're well up with our work, and I could spare Jo Gary for a few weeks."

"Jo Gary! May heaven bless you! When can I get him?"

"Going out home now?"

"Yes; on my way?"

"Stop at the ranch and take him along with you. Tell him I said so. It'll be all right with Kingdon."

Westcott renewed his blessings upon Kurt and drove on.

At the jail Kurt looked in on the latest arrival. She was sitting at a table in Bender's back office, her head bowed in her hands. There was something appealing in the drooping of her shoulders and in her shabby attire.

"Now Jo is disposed of, she shall have her chance, anyway," he decided. Without speaking to the girl, he sought Bender and they held a brief consultation.

## CHAPTER II.

"Aren't we going to stop at all, Mr. Sheriff Man?"

A soft, plaintive note in the voice made Kurt Walters turn the brake of an old, rickety automobile and halt

in the dust-white road, as he cast a sharply scrutinizing glance upon the atom of a girl who sat beside him. She was a dejected, dusty, little figure, drooping under the jolt of the jerking car and the bright rays of hills-lane sunshine. She was young—in years; young, too, in looks, as Kurt saw when she raised her eyes which were soft and almond-shaped; but old, he assumed, in much that she should not have been.

She had found it a long, hard ride across the plains, and the end of her endurance had been prefaced by frequent sighs, changes of position and softly muffled exclamations, all seemingly unnoted by the man beside her, whose deep-set eyes had remained fixed on the open space ahead, his slim, brown hands gripping the wheel, his lean, sinewy body bending slightly forward.

His senseness relaxed; a startled, remorseful look came into his eyes as he saw two tears coursing down her cheeks. They were unmistakably real tears—though, as he was well aware, they came from physical causes alone. Still, they penetrated the armor of unconcern with which he had girded himself.

"What for?" he asked curtly.

"What for!" she echoed, her mouth quivering into pathetic droops. "For rest, of course. You may be used to this kind of locomotion, but I'm not very well upholstered, and I'm shaken to bits. Fact is, I'm just all pegged out, old man. Have a heart, and stop for repairs. What's your rush, anyway? I can't get loose hereabouts, and I haven't anywhere to go, anyhow. Didn't mind getting 'took' at all, at all. How many more miles is it to the end of your trail? This is a trail, isn't it?"

"A great many miles," he replied, "and it was on your account more than any other that I was hurrying to get to the—"

"Jail," she answered surlily, as he hesitated.

"No," he said grimly. "I was going to take you home—for tonight, anyway."

"Home! Oh, how you startle me! I didn't know there was any of those home stuff places left except in the movies. I never was much stuck on home, so you needn't be afraid to call it 'jail' for fear of hurting my feelings."

"You can't work on my sympathy that way," he said coldly.

"Dear me!" she replied with a silly, little giggle. "I gave up trying to work the sympathy racket long ago. Honest, I've no longings for home. I feel sorry for anyone who's tied down to one. Why don't you kick over the traces and come off your trail and see what's on the other side of your hills? I'd hate to take root here. Say, Mr. Sheriff Man, you look a good sort, even if you have played your wits deaf and dumb for the whole of this awful ride. Let's sidetrack the trail and go—home—by moonlight."

His eyes remained rigid and relentless, but there was a slight twitching of his strongest feature, the wide, mobile mouth.

He looked at his watch.

"We can wait for a few minutes," he said in a matter of fact voice.

"Please, may I go out and stretch?" she asked pleadingly.

"Taking silence for consent, she climbed out of the car."

"Do you want a drink?" he asked, as he poured some water from an improvised thermos bottle into a traveling cup.

"Thanks for those first kind words," she exclaimed, taking the cup from him and drinking eagerly.

"Why didn't you say you were thirsty?" he asked in a resentful tone, without looking at her. He had, in fact, studiously refrained from looking at her throughout the journey.

"I'm not used to asking for anything," she answered with a chuckle. "I take what comes my way. 'Taking' is your job, too, isn't it?"

"To hell with my job!" he broke out fiercely. "I'd never have taken it if I knew it meant this."

"It's your own fault," she retorted. "It wouldn't have been 'this' if you hadn't been so grouchy. We could have had a chummy little gabfest, if you hadn't been bungling holes in the landscape with your lamps all the way."

He made no response but began to examine the workings of his car.

"Does the country furnish it to you?" she asked. "It doesn't seem as if you'd pick out anything like this. Was it 'made in America?' Funny outfit for a cowboy country, anyway."

"Get in," he commanded curtly. "We must be away."

"Oh, please, not yet," she implored. "It's so awful hot, and I won't have all this outdoors for a long time, I suppose. I see there's a tidy little bit of shade yonder. Let's go there and rest awhile. I'll be good; honest, I will, and when I get rested, you can hit a faster gait to even up. I get tired just the same as honest folks do. Come, now, won't you?"

In a flash she had taken advantage of this oasis of shade that beckoned enticingly to the passer by.

He followed reluctantly.

"This is Heaven let loose," she said, looting luxuriously against the trunk of a tree. "You're the only nice sheriff man that ever run me in."

He sat down near her and looked gloomily ahead.

"Cheer up!" she urged, after a short silence. "It may not be so bad. Any one would think you were the prisoner instead of poor little me."

"I wish I were," he said shortly.

She looked at him curiously.

"Say, what's eating you, anyway? If you hate your job, what did you take it for?"

"It was forced on me. I'm only sworn in as acting sheriff for the county until the sheriff returns."

"How long you been 'it'?"

"Two weeks. You're my second-in-command."

"Who was the first?"

"So Long Sam."

She sat upright.

"Are you the man who caught So Long Sam? Every one has been afraid to tackle him. I'd never have thought it of you!"

"Why?" he asked curiously, not profiting against the masculine enjoyment of hearing himself analyzed in spite of his reluctance to talk to her. "Do I seem such a weakling I couldn't take one man?"

"No; you look like you'd take a red-hot stove if you wanted to; but they said—Say, is your maiden name 'Kurt'?"

"No! It can't be."

"Why not?"

"Because they called the man who took So Long Sam, 'Kind Kurt.' You haven't been over-kind to me till just lately. Whirling me over sands in that awful fore-shortened car."

"It must be better," he said dryly, "than the kind you've been used to."

"You mean the jail jitney. Do you know, they never yet put me in one. Always conveyed me other ways. Weren't so bad to me either. I guess maybe your heart is in the right place or you wouldn't have let me rest and given me the drink, even if you did wait till the eleventh hour. Can't you look pleasant like you were going to sit for a picture to give to your best girl instead of posing for 'Just Before the Battle, Mother?' You look so sorry you came."

"I am," he said angrily. "I guess 'Kind Kurt' is a blanket blank fool, as some people say. I've been a lot kinder to you than you know. When I heard of your case and Bender pointed you out to me and said 'he'd got you locked up, I thought you were one of the many young city girls who go wrong because they have no chance to know better. The kind bred in slums, ignorant, ill-fed—the kind who never had a fair show. So I resolved that you should have one. Bender wanted you out of town with the surety that you would never come back."

"I felt sorry for you. I offered to take you off his hands and bring you out here among the hills, where the best woman in the world would teach you to want to be honest. Do you suppose I'd have done it if I'd known the kind you are—a bright, smart brat who is bad because she wants to be, and beats it? There is no hope for your kind."

It was the longest speech the acting sheriff had ever made. He had been scarcely conscious that he was talking, but was simply voicing what had been in his thoughts for the last half hour.

"How old is this best woman in the world?" asked the girl, seemingly unconcerned in his summing up of her case. "Is she your sweetheart or your wife? If she is either one, you'd better take me back to Bender, or spill me out on the plains here. She won't be real glad to try to reform a young, good looking girl like me. I am good looking, honest, if I was slicked up a little."

He looked away, an angry frown on his lean, strong face. She gazed at him curiously for a moment, and then laid a slim, brown hand on his arm.

"Listen here, Kurt," she said. "You were right in what you thought about me never having had a fair show. Everything, everyone, including myself, seems to have been against me. I was born with 'taking' ways. I couldn't live them down. Lately things have been going wrong awfully fast. I've been sick and no one acted as if I were human up to a short time ago. I didn't know that was why you took me from Bender's jail. Honest, I'm not so bad as I talk."

He looked at her skeptically. Her eyes, now turned from him, were soft, feminine and without guile. He wouldn't let himself be hoodwinked.

"No; there's no excuse for you," he declared emphatically. "You are educated. You could have earned an honest living. You didn't have to steal."

"No," she said slowly and thoughtfully. "I didn't have to."

"Then why do you? Bender told me you had a life long record of pilfering. Is he long? Kind Kurt, I am young—only 22."

"He said you'd been given a chance over and over again, but that you were hopeless. I—think you are."

"I think so, too," she acknowledged with a little giggle that brought back his scorn. "You've got a white elephant on your hands, Kurt. What are you going to do with me?"

"There's only one thing I can do, now," he said glumly. "Carry out a bad bargain. I'll see it through."

"Oh, Mr. Britling!" she murmured sotto voce.

"What did you say?"

"Nothing. Traveling libraries evidently don't hit this trail. What is it the trail to, anyway? Your house?"

"To Top Hill Tavern."

"Gee! That sounds good. A tavern. I hope it's tiptop as well as tophill. How did you come to build a hotel way off here? Summer boarders? Will there be dances?"

"Top Hill Tavern," he said coldly, "is the name of a ranch—not mine. The owners live there."

"And does she, the best woman in the world, live there?"

"We must start now," he said, rising abruptly and leading the way to the car.

"I should think," remarked the girl casually after his fourth ineffectual effort to start the engine, "that if she owns a ranch she might buy a better bug wagon than this."

He made no reply, but renewed his futile attempts at starting, muttering words softly to the wheels.

"Don't be sore, Kurt. I can't help it because your old ark won't budge. I didn't steal anything off it. Wouldn't it be fierce if you were marooned on the trail with a thief who has a life long record?"

He came around the car and stood beside her. His face was flushed. His eyes, of the deep set somber kind that grow larger and come to the surface only when strongly moved, burned with the light of anger.

"Did anyone ever try whipping you, I wonder?"

"Sure," she said cheerfully. "I was brought up on whippings by a step-mother. But do you feel that way toward me? You look like a man who might strike a woman under certain provocation, perhaps; but not like one who would hit a little girl like me. If you won't look so cross, I'll tell you why your 'mobile' won't move."

He made no reply, but turned at the brake.

"Say, 'bb,' she continued tantalizingly, "whilst you are a-lookin', just cast your lamps into the gasoline tank. That man who 'fired' it didn't put a widow's might in."

Unbelievably he followed this lead.

"Not a drop, damn it!"

"The last straw with you, is it? I'm not to blame, though. If you think I stole your gasoline, just search me. How far are we from your tiptop tavern?"

"To be Continued Next Week"

Liberty Hall, El Paso, Tex., built as a public meeting place in the new courthouse, is to be converted into a world market as a means of reducing the high cost of living.

## "BAYER CROSS" ON

### GENUINE ASPIRIN



"Bayer Tablets of Aspirin" to be genuine must be marked with the safety "Bayer Cross." Always buy an unbroken Bayer package which contains proper directions to safely relieve Headache, Toothache, Earache, Neuralgia, Colds and pain. Handy tin boxes of 12 tablets cost but a few cents at drug stores—larger packages also. Aspirin is the trade mark of Bayer Manufacture of Monoacetic-acidester of Salicylicacid—Adv.

### Reached Limit of Endurance.

Bobby's usual early morning chatter was suppressed to permit father to sleep. Unable to keep the silence longer, he burst out: "My mouth's tired—I gotta talk now."

### GREEN'S AUGUST FLOWER

In the good old summer time when fruits of all kinds are getting ripe and tempting, when cucumbers, radishes and vegetables fresh from the garden are too good to resist, when the festive picnic prevails and everybody overeats and your stomach goes back on you, then is the time for "August Flower," the sovereign remedy for tired, overworked and disordered stomachs, a panacea for indigestion, fermentation of food, sour stomach, sick headache and constipation. It gently stimulates the liver, cleanses the intestines and alimentary canal, making life worth living. Sold everywhere. Adv.

### Dry-Cleaning, as It Were.

"Like my new bathing suit?"

"Yes."

"It's waterproof."

"That so? Is that an advantage?"

"Yes. I can go in bathing now and not get wet."

### \$100 Reward, \$100

Catarrah is a local disease greatly influenced by constitutional conditions. It therefore requires constitutional treatment. HALL'S CATARRH MEDICINE is taken internally and acts through the Blood on the Mucous Surfaces of the System. HALL'S CATARRH MEDICINE destroys the foundation of the disease, gives the patient strength by improving the general health and assists nature in doing its work. \$10.00 for any case of Catarrah that HALL'S CATARRH MEDICINE fails to cure. Druggists 75c. Testimonials free. F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio.

### WILD ANIMALS VISIT BANFF

Deer and Bears So Tame That They Are Everyday Sights in Canadian Village.

Although Banff is a hustling village during the summer, and is thronged with tourists, wild deer from the mountains are to be seen daily on the streets, and at night stately elk leap from the roads into the bushes to escape approaching automobiles. If a Banff cottager expects to eat his own "garden truck," he builds a deer-proof fence around his patch. The grounds of Brett hospital are open from the street, and the other night half a dozen deer made a raid upon the flower garden. Banff is the capital of Rocky Mountain park, and shooting game within the park limits is forbidden by law. The deer, being unmolested, have become very tame, and even a bear now and then pays a friendly visit to the village. Not long ago a bicyclist, speeding down one of the side streets at night, hit a lark object, and turned a somersault or two before he hit the macadam. Sitting up, he looked around and discovered a bear hitting the trail for some as fast as four legs could carry him. Although tame and somewhat obtrusive, the deer, elk and bear do not relish too close an acquaintance with man, and have proved themselves to be not only picturesque but perfectly safe neighbors.—Canadian News Letter.

### What She Wanted to Know.

The Income Tax Man—Is there anything you don't understand, madam?

Mrs. Grabbitz—Yes. In listing my income am I entitled to deduct the dollar a week I allow my husband out of his salary for carfare and lunches?

### The Result.

"Who are generally the winners at a tea fight?" "There aren't any. It is always a drawn battle."

## DISCOURAGED

### Mr. Reuter Was Almost Helpless From Kidney Trouble, But Doan's Made Him Well.

"I was in terrible shape from kidney trouble," says Dr. Reuter, North St., West Chicago, Ill. "I couldn't stoop because of the awful pains in my back and the steady, dull misery almost drove me frantic. I had to be helped out of bed mornings, the pains across my kidneys were so bad and nobody knows the agony I went through. I couldn't do anything and was almost helpless; it seemed I would never get well. At times everything in front of me grew dark and I couldn't see for several minutes. I perspired profusely and I was thirsty all the time. The urine passed far too often and burned like scalding water. The passages were scanty and I had no control over them."



"For two years I suffered, trying medicine after medicine without relief. I was just about discouraged and didn't think I would ever be able to work again. Hearing about Doan's Kidney Pills I used them and four boxes cured me. My kidneys became normal, my back got well and strong and all the other troubles disappeared. Sworn to before me."

JAS. W. CARR, Notary Public.  
Get Doan's at Any Store, 60c a Box  
**DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS**  
FOSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.

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