

LANGFORD OF THE THREE BARS

BY KATE AND VIRGIL D. BOYLES

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"Jesse Black! I might have known. Who else bold enough to loot the Three Bars? But his day has come. Not a hair, nor a hide, nor a hoof, not tallow enough to fry a flapjack shall be left on the Three Bars before he repents his insolence."

"What will you do?" asked Williston.

"What will you do?" retorted Langford.

"If I can do it?" in the vague, helpless manner of the dreamer.

"Everything"—if you will," briefly. He snatched up his wide hat.

"Where are you going?" asked Williston, curiously.

"To see Dick Gordon before this day is an hour older. Will you come along?"

"Ye-es," hesitatingly. "Gordon hasn't made much success of things so far, has he?"

"Because you—and men like you—are under the thumb of men like Jesse Black," said Langford, curtly. "Afraid to peach for fear of antagonizing the gang. Afraid to vote



"Who Could J R Be?"

against the tools of the cattle thieves for fear of antagonizing the gang. Afraid to call your souls your own for fear of antagonizing the gang. Your 'on the fence' policy didn't work very well this time, did it? You haven't found your cattle, have you? The angel must have forgotten. Thought you were tainted of Egypt, eh?"

"It is easy for you to talk," said Williston, simply. "It would be difficult if your bread and butter and your little girl's as well depended on a scrawny little bunch like mine."

"Maybe," said Langford, shrugging his shoulders. "Doesn't seem to have exempted you, though, does it? But Black is no respecter of persons, you know. However, the time has come for Dick Gordon to show of what stuff he is made. It was for this that I worked for his election, though I confess I little thought at the time that proofs for him would be furnished from my own herds. Present conditions humiliate me utterly. Am I a weakling that they should exist? Are we all weaklings?"

A faint, appreciative smile passed over Williston's face. No, Langford did not look a weakling, neither had the professed humiliation lowered his proud head.

Langford strode to the door. Then he turned quickly.

"Look here, Williston, I shall make you angry, I suppose, but it has to go in the cattle country, and you little fellows haven't shown up very white in these deals; you know that yourself."

"Well?"

"Are you going to stand pat with us?"

"If you mean, am I going to tell what I know when called upon," answered Williston, with a simple dignity that made Langford color with sudden shame. "I am. There are many of us 'little fellows' who would have been glad to stand up against the rustling outrages long ago had we received any backing. The moral support of men of your class has not been what you might call a sort of 'on the spot' support, now, has it?" relapsing into a gentle sarcasm. "At least, until you came to the front," he qualified.

"You will not be the loser, and there's my hand on it," said Langford, frankly and earnestly, ignoring the latter part of the speech. "The Three Bars never forgets a friend. They may do you before we are through with them, Williston, but remember, the Three Bars never forgets."

Mary Williston, from her window, as is the way with a maid, watched the two horsemen for many a mile as they galloped away. She followed them with her eyes while they slowly became faint, moving specks in the level distance and until they were altogether blotted out, and there was no sign of living thing on the plain that stretched between. But Paul Langford, as is the way with a man, forgot that he had seen a beautiful girl,

and had thrilled to her glance. He looked back not once as he urged his trusty little mare on to see Dick Gordon.

CHAPTER III.

Louise.

It was raining when she left Wind City, but the rain had soon been distanced. Perhaps the judge was right when he said it never rained north or west of Wind City. But the judge had not wanted her to go. Neither had the judge's wife.

Full 26 minutes, only day before yesterday, the judge had delayed his day's outing at the mill where the Jim river doubles right around on its tracks, in order to make it perfectly clear to her that it was absolutely outside the bounds of her duty, that it was altogether an affair on the side, that she could not be expected to go, and that the prosecuting attorney up there had merely asked her out of courtesy, in deference to her position. Of course he would be glad enough to get her, but let him get some one nearer home, or do without. It wasn't at all necessary for the court reporter to hold herself in readiness to answer the call of anything outside her prescribed circuit duties. To be sure she would earn a trifle, but it was a hard trip, a hard country, and she had much better postpone her initial journey into the unknown until the regular term of court, when he could be with her. He had then thrown his minnow seine over his shoulders, taken his minnow pail in one hand and his reel case and lunch box in the other, and walked out to the road wagon awaiting him at the gate, and so off to his frolic, leaving her to fight it out for herself.

The judge's wife had not been so diplomatic, not by any means. She had dwelt long and earnestly, and no doubt to a large extent truly, on the uncivilized condition of their neighbors up the line; the roughness of accommodations, the boldness and license of the cowboys, the daring and insolence of cattle thieves, and cunning and dishonesty of the Indians, and the uncouthness and viciousness of the half-breeds. She had ended by declaring eloquently that Louise would die of loneliness if, by God's good providence, she escaped a worse fate at the hands of one or all of the many evils she had enumerated. Yes, it was very evident Aunt Helen had not wanted her to go. But Aunt Helen's real reason had been that she held it so dizzily unconventional for her niece to go to that wild and unholy land alone. She did not actually fear for her niece's personal safety, and Louise more than half suspected the truth.

She had heard all the arguments before. They had little or no terrors for her now. They were the arguments used by the people back in her eastern home, those dear, dear people, her people—how far away she was!—when they had schemed and plotted so pathetically to keep her with them, the second one to break away from the slow, safe, and calm traditions of her kin in the place where generation after generation of her people had lived and died, and now lay waiting the great judgment in the peaceful country burying ground.

She had listened to them dutifully half believing, swallowed hard and followed her uncle, her father's youngest brother, to the "Land of the Dakotahs."

Now, that same dear uncle was a man of power and position in the new land. Only last November he had been reelected to his third term on the bench of his circuit with a big, heart-stirring majority. In the day of his prosperity he had not forgotten the little, tangle-haired girl who had cried so inconsolably when he went away, and the unaccountable horror in whose eyes he had tried to laugh away on that never-to-be-forgotten day when he had wrenched his heartstrings from their safe abiding-place and gone forth in quest of the pot of gold at the rainbow's end—the first of many generations. Tradition knew no other since his ancestors had felled forests and built homes of hewn logs. Now he had sent for Louise. His court reporter had recently left him for other fields of labor.

There was commotion among her people on receipt of the astounding proposition. She lived over again the dark days of the first falling. It might well be her uncle had exaggerated the dangers of life in the new land. It was great fun to shock his credulous relatives. He had surely written them some enormous tales during those 15 years and more. He used to chuckle heartily to himself at reading some of the sympathizing replies. But these tales were held in evidence against him now that he dared to want Louise. Every letter was brought out by Louise's dear old grandmother and read to her over again. Louise did not half believe them, but they were gospel truth to her grandmother and almost so to her father and mother as well. She re-

membered the old spirit of fun rampant in her favorite uncle, and while his vivid pictures took all the color from her sensitive face, deep down in her heart she recognized them for what they were worth. The letters were a strange medley of grasshoppers, blizzards and Indians. But a ten-dollar per diem was a great temptation over a five-dollar per diem, and times were pretty hard on the old farm. More than all, the inexplicable something that had led her uncle to throw tradition to the four winds of heaven, was calling her persistently and would not be denied.

The dear hero of her childhood was much changed to be sure; his big joints had taken on more flesh and he had gained in dignity of deportment what he had lost in ease of movement. His once merry eye had grown keen with the years of just judging. The lips that had laughed so much in the old days were set in lines of sternness. Judge Hammond Dale was a man who would live up to the tenets of his high calling without fear or favor, through good and evil report. Yet through all his gravity of demeanor and the pride of his integrity, Louise instinctively felt his kindness and loved him for it. The loneliness fell away from her and a measure of content had come in its place, until the letter had come from the state's attorney up in Kenah county:

My Dear Miss Dale, The eighteenth of August is the date set for the preliminary hearing of Jesse Black. Will you come and take the testimony? I am very anxious that the testimony be taken by a competent reporter and shall be grateful to you if you decide to come.

The judge will tell you about our poor accommodations. Let me recommend to your consideration some good friends of mine, the Willistons, father and daughter. They live three miles northwest of Kenah. The judge will remember Williston, George Williston of the Lazy S. They are cultured people, though their way of living is necessarily primitive. I am sure you will like it better there than at our shabby little hotel, which is a rendezvous for a pretty rough class of men, especially at court time.

If you decide to come, Mary Williston will meet you at Velpen. Please let me know your decision. Very sincerely, RICHARD GORDON.

So here she was, going into the Indian country at last. A big state, South Dakota, and the phases of its civilization manifold. Having come so far, to refuse to go on seemed like turning back with her hand already on the plow, so with a stout heart she had wired Richard Gordon that she would go. But it was pretty hard now, to be sure, and pretty dreary, coming into Velpen knowing that she would see no one she knew in all the wide, wide world. The thought choked her and the impish demon, loneliness, he of the smirk and horns and devil's eyes, loomed leeringly before her.



Louise.

again. Blindly, she picked up her umbrella, suit case and rain coat.

"Homesick?" asked the kindly brakeman, with a consolatory grin as he came to assist her with her baggage.

She bit her lip in mortification to think she had carried her feelings so palpably on her sleeve. But she nodded honestly.

"Maybe it won't be so bad," sympathized the brakeman. His rough heart had gone out to the slim, fair-haired creature with the vague trouble in her eyes.

"Thank you," said Louise, gratefully.

There was a moment's bewilderment on the station platform. There was no one anywhere who seemed to be Mary—no one who might be looking for her. It was evening, too, the lone, some evening to those away from home, when thoughts stab and memories sap the courage. Some one pushed her rudely aside. She was in the way of the trucks.

"Chuck! None of your sass, my lad! There's my fist. Heft it if you don't put no stock in its looks. Git out of this, I say!"

The voice was big and convincing. The man wasn't so big, but some way he looked convincing, too. The truckman stepped aside, but with plucky temerity answered back:

"Get out yourself! Think you own the whole cattle country, jest 'cause you herd a few ornery, pink-eyed, slab-sided critters for your sake? Well, the railroad ain't the range, le' me tell you that. Jest you run your own affairs, will you?"

"Thanky. Glad to. And as my affairs is at present a lady, I'll thank you to just trundle this here railroad offspring to the back of 't here lady is it? Wasn't where I was educated. That's better. And ef you ain't satisfied, why, I belong to the Three Bars. Ever hear of the Three Bars? Ef I'm out, jest leave word with the boss, will you? He'll see I git the word. Yes, sir, you ol' hoss thief, I

belong to the Three Bars."

The encounter was not without interesting spectators. Louise's brakeman was grinning broadly at the discomfort of his fellow employe. Louise herself had forgotten her predicament in the sudden whirlwind of which she was the innocent storm center.

The cowboy with the temper, having completely routed the enemy to the immense satisfaction of the onlookers, though why, no one knew exactly, nor what the merits of the case, turned abruptly to Louise.

"Are you her?" he asked, with a perceptible cooling of his assertive bravado.

"I don't know," said Louise smiling fearlessly at her champion, though inwardly quaking at the intuition that had flashed upon her that this strange, uncouth man had come to take the place of Mary. "The boldness and license of the cowboys," her aunt had argued. There could be no doubt of the boldness. Would the rest of the statement hold good?

"I think maybe I am, though I am Louise Dale, the new court reporter. I expected Miss Mary Williston to meet me."

"Then you are her," said the man with renewed cheerfulness, seizing her suit case and striding off. "Come along. We'll git some supper afore we start. You're dead tired, more'n likely. It'll be moonlight so't won't matter if we are late a-gittin' home."

"Court reporter? I'll be doggone!" muttered the brakeman. "The new girl from down east. A pore little white lamb among a pack of wolves and coyotes, and homesick a'ready. No wonder! I'll be takin' you back to-morrow. I'm thinkin', young lady."

He didn't know the "little white lamb" who had come to help Paul Langford and Dick Gordon in their big fight.

CHAPTER IV.

"Maggot."

An hour prior to this little episode Jim Munson had sauntered up to the ticket window only to find that the train from the east was 40 minutes late. He turned away with a little shrug of relief. It was a foreign role he was playing—this assumption of the duties of a knight in dancing attendance on strange ladies. Secretly, he chafed under it; outwardly, he was magnificently indifferent. He had a reputation to sustain, a reputation of having yet to meet that which would lower his proud boast that he was afraid of nothing under the sun, neither man nor devil. But he doubted his ability so to direct the point of view of the Boss or the Scribe or the rest of the boys of the Three Bars ranch, who were on a still hunt for his spot of vulnerability.

The waiting room was hot—unbearably so to a man who practically lived in the open. He strolled outside and down the tracks. He found himself wishing the train had been on time. Had it been so, it—the impending meeting—would now have been a thing of the forgotten past. He must needs fortify himself all over again. But sauntering down the track toward the stockyards he filled his cob pipe, lighted it, and was comforted. He had a 45-minute reprieve.

The boys had tried most valiantly to persuade him to "fix up" for this event. He had scorned them indignantly. If he was good enough as he was—black woolen shirt, red neckerchief and all—for men, just so was he good enough for any female that ever lived. So he assumed a little swagger as he stepped over the ties, and tried to make himself believe that he was glad he had not allowed himself to be corrupted by profers of blue shirts and white neckerchiefs.

He was approaching the stockyards. There was movement there. Sounds of commands, blows, profane epithets, and worried bawlings changed the placid evening calm into noisy strife. It is always a place interesting to cowmen. Jim relegated thoughts of the coming meeting to the background while he leaned on the fence, and, with idle absorption, watched the loading of cattle into a stock car. A switch engine, steaming and spluttering, stood ready to make way for another car as soon as the present one should be laden. He was not the only spectator. Others were before him. Two men strolled up to the side opposite as he settled down to musing interests.

"Gee!" he swore gently under his breath, "ef that ain't Bill Brown! Yep, it is, for a fact. Wonder what he's a shippin' now for?" He scrambled lightly over the high fence of the pen.

"Hullo, there, Bill Brown!" he yelled, generally, making his way as one accustomed through the bunch of reluctant, excited cattle.

"Hullo yourself, Jim! What you doin' in town?" responded the man addressed, pausing in his labor to wipe the streaming moisture from his face. He fanned himself vigorously with his drooping hat while he talked.

"Gal huntin'," answered Jim, soberly and despondently.

"Hell!" Brown surveyed him with astonished but sympathetic approbation. "Hell!" he repeated. "You don't mean it, do you, Jim, honest? Come, now, honest? So you've come to it, at last, have you? Well, well! What's comin' over the Three Bars? What'll the boys say?"

He came nearer and lowered his voice to a confidential tone. "Say, Jim, how did it come about? And who's the lady? Lord, Jim, you of all people!" He laughed uproariously.

"Aw, come off!" growled Jim, in petulant scorn. "You make me tired! You're plumb loney, that's what you are. I'm after the new gal reporter. She's due on that low-down, ornery train. Wish—it was in kingdom come. Yep, I do, for a fact."

"Oh, well, never mind! I didn't mean anything," laughed Brown, good-

Louisville

From the Courier.

Will Ossenkop and John Elliott returned Wednesday from a hunting trip up near Central City where they bagged thirteen geese and 93 ducks.

Mabel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Chris. Wirth, who suffered a severe stroke of appendicitis last week, was taken to a hospital at Omaha Wednesday to undergo an operation.

Miss Barnhardt returned from the hospital at Omaha Thursday evening and left at once for her home at Brownsville where she will remain until she regains her former health.

W. J. Rau, formerly Burlington station agent at this place, but later at Utica, has resigned his position with the road and accepted a position as cashier of the Manley State bank.

The stork visited the home of Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Williams on Wednesday, March 18, and left a bouncing baby boy. Mart can't quite understand why the wise old bird couldn't have arrived a day earlier so the youngster could have been named Patrick.

Mrs. Julius Krecklow died at her home in Murdock Saturday night, March 14, after an illness of but a few hours with pneumonia. The funeral occurred from the German Lutheran church Tuesday at 2 p. m. Deceased was but 28 years of age. Besides a husband she leaves three small children.

Do Not Crowd the Season.

The first warm day of spring bring with them a desire to get out and enjoy the exhilarating air and sunshine. Children that have been housed up all winter are brought out and you wonder where they all came from. The heavy winter clothing is thrown aside and many shed their flannels. Then a cold wave comes and people say that grip is epidemic. Colds at this season are even more dangerous than in mid-winter, as there is much more danger of pneumonia. Take Chamberlain's Cough Remedy, however, and you will have nothing to fear. It always cures, and we have never known a cold to result in pneumonia when it was used. It is pleasant and safe to take. Children like it. For sale by F. G. Fricke & Co.,

Elmwood

From the Leader-Echo.

A daughter was born to Mr. and Mrs. Frank Zoz, Monday, March 9th.

J. G. Stark was confined to his home the first of the week with a severe attack of neuralgia.

Just at time of going to press, last evening word was received here of the death of Fred Schewe, at Murdock.

Mrs. Hardnock who was operated on for appendicitis at the Munger hospital a few weeks ago was able to return to her home Saturday.

Three of Henry Frisbee's children, two boys aged 11 and 13 and a little girl aged 3, are down with typhoid fever. Miss Sealy, a nurse from Lincoln, is caring for them.

Dr. Neely was called over to Murdock Tuesday in consultation with Dr. Jones to see Mr. Schewe, who recently suffered a stroke of apoplexy. His condition is very serious.

Elmwood talent put on "A Cheerful Liar" at Murdock Thursday evening of last week. They played to a \$50 house, and their work was well received and greatly appreciated.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Schlanker, residing four miles southeast of Elmwood, are down with the smallpox. Mr. Schlanker is quite sick, but the disease with Mrs. Schlanker is very mild.

The Degree of Honor is preparing a home talent play entitled, "Milly the Quadroon," or "Out of Bondage," to be given in the opera house April 25th. Watch for further announcements.

We are sorry to hear that Mrs. Wm. Atchison has suffered a relapse and is again very sick with typhoid fever. The Atchison family is surely having their share of sickness. The Leader-Echo hopes for Mrs. Atchison's early recovery.

Best Healer in the World.

Rev. F. Jtarbird, of East Raymond, Maine, says: "I have used Bucklen's Arnica Salve for several years, on my old army wound, and other obstinate sores, and find it the best healer in the world. I use it too with great success in my veterinary business." Price 25c. at F. G. Fricke & Co., drug store.

Nehawka

From the Register.

Andrew Pittman who has been quite ill for the past two weeks is reported to be improving to some extent.

Miss Florence Todd returned from her California trip on Sunday morning, having enjoyed a delightful winter in the land of flowers and sunshine.

James Rainey, the auburn haired proprietor of the Union livery barn, was in Nehawka on Monday. He is suffering from a badly poisoned face, contracted while handling tame hay.

Charles S. Stone left on Sunday for the southwest part of Texas on the Mexico and Orient railroad where he will probably invest in some of the lands offered for sale by the State of Texas.

Robert Townsley, who will be remembered by many people of Nehawka, we understand has joined the regular army and has gone to the Philippines. He sailed for the land of the brown man last week.

Grandfather McBride fell from his chair last Thursday evening and bruised himself pretty badly. He was unable to rise and it required help to get him up again. He is feeling some better but was hurt pretty bad on account of extreme age.

J. M. Stone returned from Oklahoma Friday morning after being in the promising state all winter. Lester we understand let him come home on a visit only, and says that he is going to keep him down there. Evidently it agrees with him for he is in excellent health.

M. D. Pollard left Tuesday for his home in Bennington, Vermont, after a month's visit among friends and relatives. "Cully" enjoyed himself immensely and if his automobile garage was here instead of at Bennington the Missouri Pacific would never have hauled him away. Malcolm H. and Dr. Walker accompanied him as far as Omaha.

No Use To Die.

"I have found out that there is no use to die of lung trouble as long as you can get Dr. King's New Discovery," says Mrs. J. P. White of Rushboro, Pa. "I would not be alive today only for that wonderful medicine. It loosens up a cough quicker than anything else, and cures lung disease even after the case is pronounced hopeless." This most reliable remedy for coughs and colds, lagrippe, asthma, bronchitis and hoarseness, is sold under guarantee at F. G. Fricke & Co. drug store. 50c. and \$1.00 Trial bottle free.

Dr. Jensen Appointed

Dr. J. S. Anderson of Seward has been appointed secretary of the state board of veterinary medicine and surgery for a term of three years. Dr. H. Jensen of Weeping Water has been appointed secretary to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Dr. H. L. Ramacciotto of Omaha.

Notice to Our Customers

We are pleased to announce that Foley's Honey and Tar for coughs, colds and lung troubles is not affected by the National pure food and drug law as it contains no opiates nor other harmful drugs, and we recommend it as a safe remedy for children and adults. F. G. Fricke & Co.

Proposition Ought to Make Good

John W. Crabill is the father of a scheme which as a novel way of getting a crowd of people in the city on Saturday afternoon ought to make good, and we think it will when properly gotten into working order. The idea, it like this: That the merchants, any number, but the more the better, are to contribute one dollar weekly to a purse, which shall be deposited with one of their number and a different one each week. A check for the same will be issued, and given some one, made payable to bearer; this man to circulate among the crowd, from two until four o'clock, and the first person who shall ask him for the check will receive it, and it will be cashed by the merchant with whom the money is deposited. With twenty-five of the merchants joining the association it would make the check worth twenty-five dollars per week to the party getting it and the advertising would extend over a period of six months.

Cause of Stomach Trouble

When a man has trouble with his stomach you may know that he is eating more than he should or of some article of food or drink not suited to his age or occupation, or that his bowels are habitually constipated. Take Chamberlain's Stomach and Liver tablets to regulate the bowels and improve the digestion and see if the trouble does not disappear. Ask for a free sample. Sold by F. G. Fricke and company.

Home Will be in Good Hands

Dr. J. A. Haggard has been appointed superintendent of the Masonic home at Plattsmouth and his wife has been named as matron of the same institution. They expect to leave the latter part of the month for Plattsmouth to assume charge of the institution. Both are well suited for the position and the home will be in good hands and the inmates well cared for.—Nebraska City News.

Good for everybody

Mr. Norman R. Coulter, a prominent architect, in the Delbert Building San Francisco says: "I fully endorse all that has been said of Electric Bitters as a tonic medicine. It is good for everybody. It corrects stomach, liver and kidney disorder in a prompt and efficient manner and builds up the system." Electric Bitters is the best spring medicine ever sold over a druggist's counter; as a blood purifier it is unequalled. 50c. at F. G. Fricke & Co., drug store.

Itch cured in 30 minutes by Woolford's Sanitary Lotion. Never fails. Sold by Gering & Co., Druggists.