

By D. M. AMSBERRY

BROKEN BOW. - NEBRASKA

LANGFORD of the THREE BARS

By KATE AND VIRGIL D. BOYLES

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SYNOPSIS.

George Williston, a poor ranchman, high-minded and cultured, searched for cattle missing from his ranch—the "Lazy S." On a wooded spot in the river's bed that would have been an island had the Missouri been at high water, he discovers a band of horse thieves engaged in working over brands on cattle. He creeps near enough to note the changing of the "Three Bars" brand on one steer to the "J. K." brand. Paul Langford, the rich owner of the "Three Bars," is informed of the operations of the gang of cattle thieves—a band of outlaws headed by Jesse Black, who long have defied the law and authorities of Kemah county, South Dakota. Langford is struck with the beauty of Mary, commonly known as "Williston's little girl." Louise Dale, an expert court stenographer, who had followed her uncle, Judge Hammond Dale, from the east to the "Dakotas," and who is living with him at Wind City, is requested by the county attorney, Richard Gordon, to come to Kemah and take testimony in the preliminary hearing of Jesse Black, Jim Munson, in waiting at the train for Louise, looks at a herd of cattle being shipped by Bill Brown and there detects old "Mac," a well known "oney" steer belonging to the employer of the "Three Bars" ranch. Munson and Louise start for Kemah. Crowds assemble in Justice James H. McAllister's court for the preliminary hearing. Jesse Black springs the first of many great surprises, waiving examination. Through Jake Sanderson, a member of the outlaw gang, he had learned that the steer "Mac" had been recovered and thus saw the uselessness of fighting against being bound over. County Attorney Gordon accompanies Louise Dale on her return to Wind City. While Williston stands in the light in his door at night a shot is fired at him. The house is attacked and a battle ensues between Williston and his daughter, on one side, and the outlaws on the other. The house is set on fire. As an outlaw raises his rifle to shoot Williston a shot from an unknown source pierces his arms and the rifle falls to the ground. All had come to Williston, but he and his daughter are captured and borne away by the outlaws. Jim Munson late at night heard the shots. He discovered the attack on Williston's house, hurried to the Three Bars ranch and summoned Langford and his brave men to the rescue. It was Langford who fired the shot which saved Williston's life. Langford rescues Mary from her captor. Langford takes Mary to the home of Mrs. White. Her arm has been broken by a shot. She grows delicious and receives medical attention.

CHAPTER XI.—Continued.

The long day wore along. Mother White was baking. The men would be ravenous when they came back. Many would stop there for something to eat before going on to their homes. It might be to-night, it might be tomorrow, it might not be until the day after, but whenever the time did come, knowing the men of the range country, she must have something "by her."

At last came the doctor and Gordon, driving up in the doctor's top-buggy, weather-stained, mud-bedaubed with the mud of last spring, of many springs. The doctor was a badly dressed, pleasant-eyed man, past middle age, with a fringe of gray whiskers. He was a sort of journeyman doctor, and he had drifted hither one day two summers ago from the Lake Andes country in this self-same travel-worn conveyance with its same bony sorrel. He had found good picking, he had often jovially remarked since, chewing serenely away on a brand of vile plug the while. He had elected to remain. He was part and parcel of the cattle country now. He was an established condition. People had learned to accept him as he was and be grateful. Haste was a mental and physical impossibility to him. He took his own time. All must perform acquiesce.

"You have worked yourself into a high fever, Miss Williston, that's what you've done," he said, with professional mournfulness.

"I know it," she smiled wanly. "I couldn't help it. I'm sorry."

Gordon drew up a chair and sat down by her, saying with grave kindness, "You are fretting. We must not let you. I am going to stay with you all night and soothe the goblins away."

"You are kind," said Mary, gratefully. "May I tell you when they come? If some one speaks to me they go away."

"Indeed you may, dear child," he exclaimed, heartily. He had been half joking when he spoke of keeping things away. He now perceived that these things were more serious than he knew.

The doctor administered medicine to reduce the fever, dressed the wounded arm, with Gordon's ready assistance, and then called in Mother White to prepare the bed for his patient; but he paused nonplussed before the weight of entreaty in Mary's eyes and voice.

"Please don't," she cried out, in actual terror. "Oh, Mr. Gordon, don't let him! I see such awful things when I lie down. Please! Please! And Mr. Langford said I might sit up till he came. Mr. Gordon, you will not let him put me to bed, will you?"

"I think it would be better to let her have her way, Lockhart," said Gordon in a low voice.

"Maybe it would, Dick," said the doctor, with surprising meekness.

"I'll stay all night and I'll take good

care of her, Lockhart. There's Mother White beckoning to supper. You'll eat before you go? No, I won't take any supper now, thank you, mother, I will stay with Mary."

And he did stay with her all through the long watches of that long night. He never closed his eyes in sleep. Sometimes Mary would drop off into uneasy slumber—always of short duration. When she awakened suddenly in wide-eyed fright, he soothed her with all tenderness. Sometimes when he thought she was sleeping, she would clutch his arm desperately and cry out that there was some one behind the big cottonwood. Again it would be to ask him in a terrified whisper if he did not hear hoof-beats, galloping, galloping, galloping, and begged him to listen. He could always quiet her, and she tried hard to keep from wandering; but after a short, broken rest, she would cry out again in endless repetition of the terrors of that awful night.

Mrs. White and several of her small progeny breathed loudly from an adjoining room. A lamp burned dimly on the table. It grew late—12 o'clock and after. At last she rested. She passed from light, broken slumber to deep sleep without crying out and thus awakening herself. Gordon was tired and sad. Now that the flush of fever was gone, he saw how white and miserable she really looked. The circles under her eyes were so dark they were like bruises. The mantle of his misfortune was spreading to bring others besides himself into its somber folds.

The men were coming back. But they were coming quietly, in grim silence. He dared not awaken Mary for the news he knew they must carry. He stepped noiselessly to the door to warn them to a yet greater stillness and met Langford on the threshold.

The two surveyed each other gravely with clasped hands.

"You tell her, Dick. I—I can't," said Langford. His big shoulders drooped as under a heavy burden.

"Must I?" asked Gordon.

"Dick, I—I can't," said Langford, brokenly. "Don't you see?—if I had been just a minute sooner—and I promised."

"Yes, I see, Paul," said Gordon, quietly. "I will tell her."

"You need not," said a sweet clear voice from across the room. "I know, I heard. I think I knew all the time—"

His heart leaped with the joy of her soliloquy.

"You are wrong," he laughed, teasingly. "I slept on the floor; and a good bed it was, too. No, Miss Williston, I am not 'all in' yet, by any means."

In his new consciousness, a new formality crept into his way of addressing her. She did not seem to notice it.

"Forgive me for forgetting, last night," she said, earnestly. "I was very selfish. I forgot that you had not slept for nearly two days and were riding all the while in—our behalf. I forgot. I was tired, and I went to sleep. I want you to forgive me. I want you to believe that I do appreciate what you have done. My father—"

"Don't, don't, little girl," cried Langford, forgetting his new awe of her maidenhood in his pity for the stricken child.

"My father," she went on steadily, "would thank you if he were here. I thank you, too, even if I did forget to think whether or no you and all the men had any sleep or anything to eat last night. Will you try to believe that I did not forget wittingly? I was so tired."

When Langford answered her, which was not immediately, his face was white and he spoke quietly with a touch of injured pride.

"If you want to hurt us, Miss Williston, that is the way to talk. We women do not do things for thanks." She looked at him wonderingly a moment, then said, simply, "Forgive me," but her lips were trembling and she turned to the wall to hide the tears that would come. After all, she was only a woman—with nerves—and the reaction had come.

The sheriff and his party of deputies made a diligent search for Williston that day and for many days to come. It was of no avail. He had disappeared, and all trace with him, as completely as if he had been spirited away in the night to another world—body and soul. That the soul of him had really gone to another world came to be generally believed—Mary held no hope after the return of the first expedition; but why could they find no trace of his body? Where was it? Where had it found a resting place? Was it possible for a man, quick or dead, even west of the river in an early day of its civilization when the law had a winking eye, to fall away from his wonted haunts in a night and leave no print, neither a bone nor a rag nor a memory, to give mute witness that this way he passed, that way he rested a bit, here he took horse, there he slept, with this man he had converse, that man saw his still body borne hence? Could such a thing be? It seemed so.

(To Be Continued.)

CHAPTER XII. Waiting.

The man found dead the night the Lazy S was burned out was not easily identified. He was a half-breed, but half-breeds were many west of the river, and the places where they laid their heads at night were as shifting as the sands of that rapid, ominous, changing stream of theirs, which ever cut them off from the world of their fathers and kept them bound, but restless, chafing. In that same land where their mothers had stared stolidly at a strange little boatload tugging up the river that was the forerunner of the ultimate destiny of this broad north-west country, but which brought incidentally—as do all big destinies in the great scheme bring sorrow to some one—wrong, misunderstanding, forgetfulness, to a once proud, free people now in subjection.

At last the authorities found trace of him far away at Standing Rock, through the agent there, who knew him as of an ugly reputation—a dissipated, roving profligate, who had long since squandered his government patrimony. He had been mixed up in sundry bad affairs in the past, and had been an inveterate gambler. So much only were the Kemah county

authorities able to uncover of the wayward earthly career of the dead man. Of his haunts and cronies of the period immediately preceding his death, the agent could tell nothing. He had not been seen at the agency for nearly a year. The reprobate band had covered its tracks well. There was nothing to do but lay the dead body away and shovel oblivion over its secret.

In the early morning after the return of the men from their unsuccessful man hunt, Gordon, gray and haggard from loss of sleep and from hard thought, stepped out into the kitchen to stretch his cramped limbs. He stumbled over the figure of Langford prone upon the floor, dead asleep in utter exhaustion. He smiled understandingly and opened the outdoor quietly, hoping he had not aroused the worn-out boss. The air was fresh and cool, with a hint of autumn sharpness, and a premature Indian summer haze, that softened the gauntness of the landscape, and made the distances blue and rest-giving. He felt the need of invigoration after his night's vigil, and struck off down the road with long strides, in pleasant anticipation of a coming appetite for breakfast.

Thus it was that Langford, struggling to a sitting posture, rubbing his heavy eyes with a dim consciousness that he had been disturbed, and wondering drowsily why he was so stupid, felt something seeping through his senses that told him he did not do well to sleep. So he decided he would take a plunge into the cold artesian pond, and with such drastic measures banish once and for all the elusive yet all-pervading cobwebs which clung to him. Rising to his feet with unusual awkwardness, he looked with scorn upon the bare floor and accused it blindly and bitterly as the direct cause of the strange soreness that beset his whole anatomy. The lay of the floor had changed in a night. Where was he? He glanced helplessly about. Then he knew.

Thus it was, that when Mary languidly opened her eyes a little later it was the boss who sat beside her and smiled reassuringly.

"You have not slept a wink," she cried, accusingly.

"Indeed I have," he said. "Three whole hours, I feel top-top."

"You are fibbing," she said. "Your eyes look so tired, and your face is all worn."

NEBRASKA POINTERS STATE NEWS AND NOTES IN CONDENSED FORM. THE PRESS, PULPIT AND PUBLIC

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The cases of smallpox at Gretna have disappeared and no new developments are recorded.

Columbus had fifteen saloons last year, and applications are in for the same number this year.

Mrs. Anna Maxwell for thirty-one years matron of the Nemaha county poor farm died last week.

The Paddock hotel block in Beatrice has been sold to Telford & Watson, two Chicago capitalists.

With mumps and scarlatina pretty much out of the way Gu'de Rock is now having a tussel with chicken pox.

Sutherland has for sometime been advocating a water works system, and now the authorities are about to favorably act.

A preacher at Utica who denounced women who attend kingsingtons was pounced upon by three irate husbands and badly beaten.

A petition in involuntary bankruptcy has been filed in federal court against Faugler I. Munneke, a dry goods merchant of Pawnee City.

The ladies' auxiliary society to the Young Men's Christian association of Fremont has swelled the membership to 500 and expects to soon increase it to 1,000.

Daniel Freeman, the first homesteader in Nebraska, was brought to his home in Gage county from Oklahoma on a stretcher. He is quite sick, but his condition is not serious.

A refrigerating plant to cost about \$1,600 will be bought by the board of public lands and buildings for the penitentiary. This cost will not include power or a motor to operate it.

At a regular meeting of the town board the petition of T. A. Clements to convert the village of Wilber into a city of the second class was laid on the table. Nothing further will be done in the matter.

Jennie Braf of Leigh has been reported by the deputy state food commissioner for prosecution on a charge of selling unbranded cheese. Cheese in packages is subject to the same branding regulations as package butter.

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The town board of Valentine, through their chairman, W. S. Barker, applied to Congressman M. P. Kinkaid last December for the north-west quarter and the north half of the southwest quarter of 30-34-27, then a part of the Fort Niobrara military reservation, to be granted to Valentine for the purpose of using the land as a site for a reservoir and a dam for water to furnish power to pump water and run electric light system.

Mr. Barker has received a message that congress has granted his request and that the land (240 acres) comes to Valentine without the payment of a dollar.

The foundation for the new Catholic church at Fairbury has been completed, and now the remainder of the work will go briskly forward.

The Guthrie boys, who farm the land lying to the north and west of Exeter cemetery, had put out some fire to help clean off some of the trash which had accumulated. The wind went suddenly from southwest to north and blew a gale. The fire took up across the corn stubble and from there to the cemetery, going like a race horse and burning everything clean as if went, doing much damage.

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ATTRACTIONS FOR STATE FAIR.

Contract Signed With Liberator's Military Band and Opera Company. Secretary Mellor and Chairman Cook, on behalf of the State Board of Agriculture, signed up contracts for Liberator's Military Band and Opera Concert company of New York City as the main musical attraction for the state fair, August 31 to September 4. This band consists of sixty people, eighteen of whom are opera singers from the Metropolitan Grand Opera company.

Liberator was the originator of presenting to the public Rossini's "Stabat Mater" and other operas with full vocal score and will present this wonderful production with solos, duets, quartets and chorus numbers with his band at the fair.

"The securing of this attraction has brought forth the necessity for an auditorium or music hall on the fair grounds," said a state officer, "and we confidently expect from the progressive managers of our state fair that some sort of a building capable of seating 4,000 or 5,000 people will be erected in time for use when the gates open to the public on August 31. A management which can put \$23,000 out of funds made by the association into permanent improvements on these fair grounds in one year can build a good, comfortable place to enjoy such meddlesome attractions as this."

WOULD CARVE LINCOLN STATUE Omaha Man Will Do the Work for \$12,000.

Lincoln.—Xavier Stadler of Omaha has offered to outline the Lincoln statue. His offer is as follows: "Concerning the Lincoln statue to be erected on the capitol grounds I wish to state that I could furnish the model and carve the statue out of one of the blocks of Tennessee marble which are lying on the grounds for the sum of \$12,000.

"About eight years ago I proposed to carve the statue at my own expense and risk, being satisfied that the legislature would sooner or later approve and accept my work and pay me the price it was worth. I was unable to obtain the permission to use the marble, however, nobody seeming to be willing to take the responsibility and let me go on with the work."

A Popular Game. "Where have yez been this evenin'?" asked O'Riley of O'Toole.

"Sure, I have been playing 'Bridget whist,'" said O'Toole.

"Bridget whist? an' how do yez play that?"

"I sit in the kitchen wid Bridget, an' ate pie an' cake an' chicken, an' whin Bridget hears the missus comin' she says 'whist.'"

Lewis' Single Binder straight 5c cigar made of rich, mellow tobacco. Your dealer or Lewis' Factory, Peoria, Ill.

It isn't easy to fool the man who knows himself.

Two Girls Burn to Death. Daughters of A. Hoff of Shickley Die in Burning Barn.

Shickley.—After making desperate efforts to rescue her two daughters from a burning barn Mrs. A. Hoff, wife of a farmer living near this place, was compelled to listen to their agonized screams as they were burned to death. The two girls attempted to light the carriage lamps. It is supposed that one of the lamps exploded.

Students Suspended. Eight students, two of them young women, were peremptorily suspended from Wesleyan university on Thursday afternoon by Curator Moore, who is also treasurer of the institution, because they did not heed his orders to vacate a tennis court on the college campus. The tennis players claim that they got permission to use a part of the campus for a court.