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Miss Charmyng—Don't you think I was made for a business woman?
Jack Hustler—No, I don't. I think you were meant for a business man.—Stray Stories.

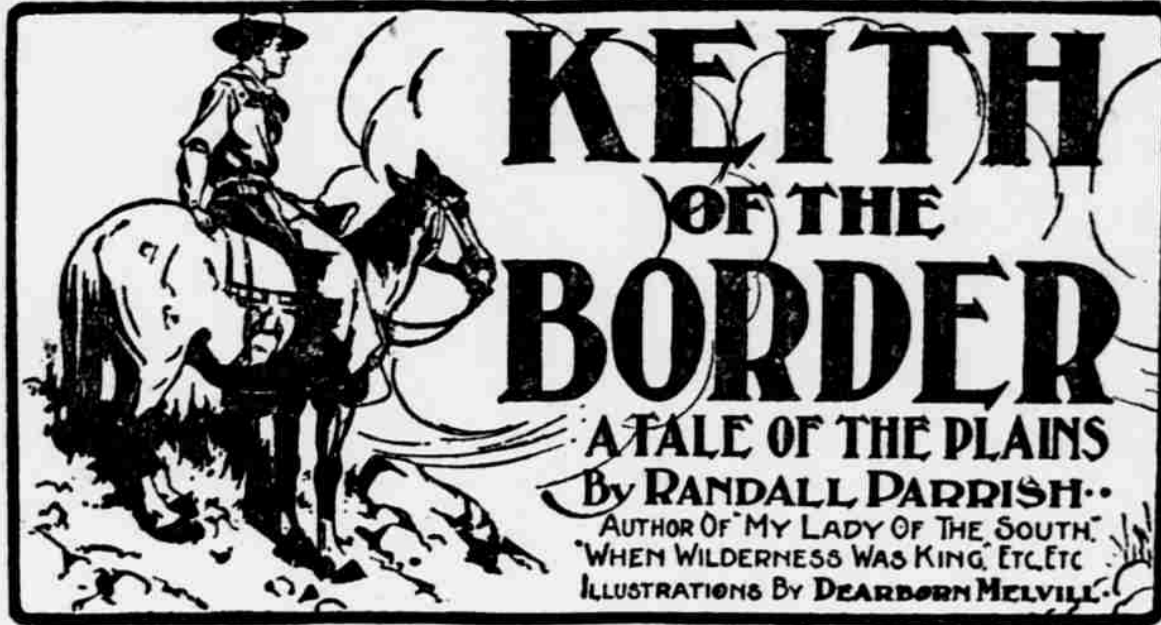
If a woman is a clever actress the chances are that her husband will find the chorus more interesting.

GRAND TO LIVE

And the Last Laugh Is Always the Best
"Six months ago I would have laughed at the idea that there could be anything better for a table beverage than coffee," writes an Ohio woman, "now I laugh to know there is."

"Since childhood I drank coffee freely as did the other members of the family. The result was a puny, sickly girl; and as I grew into womanhood I did not gain in health, but was afflicted with heart trouble, a weak and disordered stomach, wrecked nerves and a general breaking down till last winter, at the age of 38, I seemed to be on the verge of consumption."
"My friends greeted me with 'How bad you look! What a terrible color!' and this was not very comforting."
"The doctors and patent medicines did me absolutely no good. I was thoroughly discouraged."
"Then I gave up coffee and commenced Postum. At first I didn't like it, but after a few trials and following the directions exactly, it was grand. It was refreshing and satisfying. In a couple of weeks I noticed a great change."
"I became stronger, my brain grew clearer. I was not troubled with forgetfulness as in coffee times, my power of endurance was more than doubled."
"The heart trouble and indigestion disappeared and my nerves became steady and strong."
"I began to take an interest in things about me. Housework and home-making became a pleasure. My friends have marveled at the change and when they enquire what brought it about I answer Postum, and nothing else in the world." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a reason." Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.



SYNOPSIS.

Jack Keith, a Virginian, now a border plainsman, is looking for roaming parties of savages. He sees a wagon team at full gallop pursued by men on ponies. When Keith reaches the wagon the raiders have massacred two men and departed. He searches the victims' finding papers and a locket with a woman's portrait. Keith is arrested at Carson City, charged with the murder, his accuser being a ruffian named Black Bart. A negro companion in his cell named Neb tells him that he knew the Keiths in Virginia. Neb says one of the murdered men was John Sibley, the other Gen. Willis Waite, formerly a Confederate officer. The plainsman and Neb escape, and later the fugitives come upon a cabin and find its occupant to be a young girl, whom Keith thinks is Hope, who he saw at Carson City. The girl explains that she is in search of a brother, who had deserted from the army, and that a man named Black Bart, who is a terrific rifle shot in the darkened room in which Keith is hiding, is the man who has kidnapped her. Hope joins in the escape. Keith explains his situation and the fugitives make for Fort Larned, where the girl is left with the hotel landlady. Miss Hope tells that she is the daughter of General Waite. Keith and Neb drift into Sheridan, where Keith meets an old friend, Dr. Willoughby. Black Bart has some plot involving the two. Hope learns that Gen. Waite, who was thought murdered, is at Sheridan, and goes there, where she is mistaken for Christie Maclaire, the Carson City singer. Keith meets the real Christie Maclaire and finds that Black Bart has convinced her that there is a mystery in her life which he is going to turn to her advantage. The plainsman tells Hope Waite of her resemblance to Christie Maclaire.

CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

Keith's eyes lifted to her face, his ears quick to detect the undertone in her voice.

"Interesting? yes, for I was seeking after information, and met with some success. As to the other question, I am not sure whether I admire the lady or not. She is bright, pretty, and companionable, and in spite of her profession, at heart, I believe, a good woman. But really, Miss Hope, I was too deeply immersed in my purpose to give her personality much consideration. Among other things we spoke of you."

"Of me? Why?"
"I told her something of our adventures together; of how both Hawley and I had been confused. She was anxious to learn who you were, but unfortunately, I have never, even yet, heard your name."

"You have not?"
"No; I left you at Fort Larned believing you Christie Maclaire—supposing it your stage name, of course—and was confirmed in this belief by finding in the holster of the saddle you had been riding an envelope bearing that address."

"I remember; it contained the note the man brought to me from Hawley; he had written it that way." She crossed the room, sinking down into a chair facing him. "And you have actually confused me with Christie Maclaire all this while? Have never known who I was?"

He shook his head.
"I told you to call me Hope; that is my name—I am Hope Waite."
"Waite!" he leaned forward, startled by the possibility—"not—not—"
"Yes," she burst in, holding out her hands, clasping the locket, "and this was my father's; where did you get it?"

He took the trinket from her, turning it over in his fingers. Little by little the threads of mystery were being unraveled, yet, even now, he could not see very far. He looked up from the locket into her questioning face.
"Did I not tell you? No; then it was an oversight. This was about the throat of one of the men I buried at Cimmaron Crossing, but—but, Hope, it was not your father's."

"I know," her voice choking slightly. "Mrs. Murphy found that out; that is why I am here. I heard my father come to Sheridan, and I wanted you to help me find him."

He was thinking and did not answer at once, and she went on in some alarm.
"Do you know anything about him, Captain Keith? Where is he? Why is he here? Don't be afraid to tell me."

He pressed the locket back into her hand, retaining the latter, unresisted, within his own.
"I have not seen your father, Hope, but he was certainly here a few days ago, for Fairbain met him. They were together in the army. I am going to tell you all I know—it seems to be a tangled web, but the ends must be somewhere, although, I confess, I am all at sea."

He told it slowly and simply, bringing forth his earlier suspicion, and how he had stumbled upon facts apparently confirming them. He related her father's robbery, his loss of valuable papers, and the conversation between Hawley and Scott which led to the suspicion that these same papers had fallen into the hands of the former, and were the basis of his plot. Hope listened, breathless with interest, her widely opened eyes filled with wonder. As he concluded speaking she burst forth:
"But I don't understand in the least,

Captain Keith. Why did this man Hawley send me to the Salt Fork?"
"He thought he was dealing with Christie Maclaire. He had some reason for getting her away; getting her where he could exercise influence over her."
"Yes—yes; but who is she?"
"That is what makes the matter so hard to unravel. She doesn't even know herself. Hawley is going to take advantage of her ignorance in this respect, and convince her that she is the person he wishes her to represent—but who is the person? If we knew that we might block the game."

Both sat silent, striving to figure out some reasonable explanation.
"Do you know of any special papers your father carried?" he asked.
"No; none outside his business agreements."
"Has any one ever disappeared connected with your family? Did you have an older sister?"
"Fred and I were the only children. Why should you ask that question?"
"Because something of that nature would seem to be the only rational explanation. Your brother must have told Hawley something—some family secret—which he felt could be utilized to his own advantage. Then he saw your picture, and was immediately reminded of the remarkable resemblance between you and Christie Maclaire. Evidently this discovery fitted into his plan, and made it possible for him to proceed. He has been trying ever since to get an interview with the woman, to sound her, and find out what he can do with her. He has written letters, sufficiently ex-

bring him here. He would tell you whatever it was he told Hawley, and that will give us the clue."
He picked up his hat from the table, but she rose to her feet, holding forth her hands.
"I cannot thank you enough, Captain Keith," she exclaimed frankly. "You are doing so much, and with no personal interest—"
"Oh, but I have."
The long lashes dropped over the brown eyes.
"What do you mean?"
"That I have a personal interest—in you, Hope."
She stood silent, her bosom rising and falling to rapid breathing.
"You don't mind my calling you Hope? I haven't got used to Miss Waite yet."
Her eyes met his swiftly.
"Of course, not. Such ceremony would be foolish after all you have done for me. Do—do you call her Christie?"
He laughed, clasping her hands closer.
"I assure you no—she is strictly Miss Maclaire, and," solemnly, "shall be to the end of the chapter."
"Oh, well, I didn't care, only that was what you called her when you were telling me what she said. Are you going?"
"Yes, to find Fred; the sooner we can get this straightened out, the better."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A Mistake in Assassination.
Let his future be what it might, Jack Keith would never again forget



Keith Saw the Man Go Down in a Heap.

plect to make it clear his scheme is based upon a will drawn, as he claims, by Christie's grandfather. No doubt by this time he has fully convinced the girl that she is the rightful heiress to property—as he stated to Scott—valued at over a million dollars. That's a stake worth fighting for, and these two will make a hard combination. He's got the papers, or claims to have, and they must be the ones stolen from your father. I have been trusting you might know something in your family history which would make it all plain."

"But I do not," decisively. "You must believe me; not so much as a hint of any secret has ever reached me. There are only the four of us, Father, Mother, Fred, and I. I am sure there can be no secret; nothing which I would not know. Perhaps, if I could see Miss Maclaire—"
"I am convinced that would be useless," he interrupted, rising, and pacing across the floor. "If Hawley has convinced her of the justice of the claim, he will also have pledged her to secrecy. He is working out of sight like a mole, for he knows the fraud, and will never come to the surface until everything is in readiness. I know a better way; I'll find Fred, and

the girl who held the door open for his passage with one hand, her other clasped in his. Interested before, yet forcing himself into indifference now that he knew who she really was, the man made full surrender. It was a struggle that kept him from clasping the slender figure in his arms, and pouring forth the words of tenderness which he sternly choked back. This was neither the time, nor the place, yet his eyes must have spoken, for Hope's glance fell, and her cheeks grew crimson.

"I do not need to pledge you to return this time, do I?" she questioned, her voice trembling.
"No," he answered, "nor any time again."
The hall was deserted, but a few men loitered in the office. Keith recognized none of the faces, and did not stop to make any inquiries of the clerk. It was growing dark, the lights already burning, and from the plashing of drops on the window, it must be raining outside. Hawley would surely have ended his call upon Miss Maclaire long before this, and left the hotel. However interesting his communication might have proven, she must still find her evening engagement at the Trocadero, and would require time

for supper and rest. As to the result of that interview there could be little doubt. Providing the gambler possessed the proper papers he would have small difficulty in convincing the girl that she was indeed the one sought. Keith had probed sufficiently into her mind to feel assured that her inclination was to side with Hawley. Under all the circumstances this was natural enough, and he did not blame her.

He glanced into the bar-room as he passed, not in any anticipation, but merely from the vigilance which becomes second nature upon the frontier. Hawley stood leaning against the bar, where he could see any one passing through the hall. The eyes of the two men met, but the gambler never moved, never changed his attitude, although Keith noted that his right hand was hidden beneath the skirts of his long coat. The plainsman drew back, facing his enemy, until he reached the outer door. There was a sneer on Hawley's dark sinister face like an invitation, but a memory of the girl he had just left, and her dependence upon him, caused Keith to avoid an encounter. He would fight this affair out in a different way. As the door opened and he slipped forth into the gloom, he brushed against a man apparently just entering. The gleam of light fell for an instant upon the face of the other—it was Scotty with the red moustache.

They had been watching for him then—what for? Hawley on the inside, and this man Scott without, were waiting to determine when he left the hotel; would probably dog his footsteps to discover where he went. Keith loosened his revolver, so as to be assured he could draw quickly, and slipped back into the shadow of the steps, his eyes on the door of the hotel. There was a cold, grizzly rain falling, the streets almost deserted, appearing sodden and miserable where the lights shone forth through saloon windows. One or two men, seeking supper, coat collars turned up and hats drawn low over their eyes, climbed the rickety steps and went in, but no one came out. Perhaps he was mistaken as to the purpose of those fellows; they may have desired merely to know when he left, or Scott's return just at that moment might have been an accident. To be sure, the hotel possessed a back exit, but he could not cover both ends of the building, and must take his chances. It was too wet and disagreeable to remain crouched there, now that it was evident there was no intention of following him. With hand on the butt of his gun, suspicious and watchful, yet with scarcely a faster beat to his heart, Keith straightened up, and began splashing his way through the mud down the street. He knew where Willoughby would be most likely found at this hour—with cronies at the "Tenderfoot"—and he meant to discover the boy, and make him confess to Hope the truth. Matters had now reached a point where longer delay was dangerous.

Sheridan was seemingly dead, the long street silent, gloomy, black, except for those streams of saloon light shining across pools of water. A few wanderers ploughed through the muck, dim uncertain shapes appearing and vanishing in the gloom. He had gone a block and over, the struggle against the elements leaving him forgetful of all else, when a man reeled out of some dimly lit shack to his right, and staggered drunkenly forward a few feet in advance. He could barely distinguish the fellow's outlines, giving little thought to the occurrence, for the way was unusually black along there, the saloon opposite having shades drawn. Suddenly a flash of red fire spurted into the night, with a sharp report. It was so close at hand it blinded him, and he flung up one arm over his eyes, and yet, in that single instant, he perceived the whole picture as revealed by the red flame. He saw the man in front go down in a heap, the projection of the building from behind which the shot came, the end of a wagon sticking forth into the street which had concealed the assassin. The blinding flash, the shock of that sudden discharge, for a moment held him motionless; then he leaped forward, revolver in hand, sprang around the end of the wagon, and rushed down the dark alley between two buildings. He could see nothing, but some one was running recklessly ahead of him, and he fired in the direction of the sound, the leaping spurt of flame yielding a dim outline of the fugitive. Three times he pressed the trigger; then there was nothing to shoot at—the fellow had faded away into the black void of prairie. Keith stood there baffled, staring about into the gloom, the smoking revolver in his hand. The sound of men's voices behind was all that reached him, and feeling the uselessness of further pursuit, he retraced his way back through the narrow passage.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

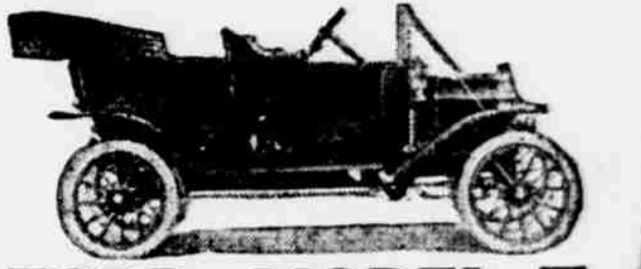
Love understands love; it needs no talk.—F. R. Havergal.

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