

Six Yards Of Yarn

By ALICE MACGOWAN

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The dust rose in choking clouds. The feet of the dancers thudded a dull accompaniment to the walling music which the Mexican sheep shearers drew from harp and guitar. One or two men were dancing with spurs on till a ripped dress and a shrill feminine protest excluded them from the floor.

It was a ranch dance at Billy Motlow's Bar 13 ranchhouse, and the ladies who graced the occasion, except Louise Morrison and Miss Willie Porter, the schoolteacher, were all married women. Their numerous progeny had been stowed in an adjoining room. Mrs. Billy, aware of what would be expected, had made a bed of blankets and comfortables along one wall. There the youngsters reposed, their bare toes sticking out toward the beholder.

Poor Gene McKnight leaned against a doorcase and watched the dancers. He was outcast from the whole festivity since he might not even speak to Louise Morrison. The girl looked pale, heavy eyed and unhappy. Her sister-in-law, Mrs. Zack Morrison, who rejoiced in the singularly felicitous nickname of "Chubb," a round faced, tight skinned, red cheeked, black beady eyed woman, dancing in the same set with Louise, kept a sharp lookout that McKnight got nowhere near her charge. She was bounding like a rubber ball through the figures, her small black eyes snapping with delight. She could afford to enjoy herself, for her attitude toward McKnight and her intentions concerning her husband's sister were matters well known and clearly understood by all present. The bachelor population of the county, disporting itself in the dance and pretty much all either actual or potential suitors of Louise, lent willing and valuable assistance.

Gene McKnight was the finest looking, best hearted and sweetest tempered six feet of masculinity on the whole Packsaddle range. He was an inspired



HE GAVE A GOOD STRONG PULL ON HIS END OF THE YARN STRING.

cattlemen and had come up rapidly from cow puncher, wagon boss, ranch boss, to have a nice bunch of cattle and a good ranch of his own. When lovely Louise Morrison, then only seventeen years old, came out to stay with her brother Zack on his Texas ranch, the Open M., she became at once in that community of eligible bachelors a belle and the possessor of many desirable suitors. Gene, whose ranch, the Lazy K., adjoined the Open M., soon made it plain that she had his heart, and the girl, artless and impulsive and with no vestige of the coquette in her makeup, allowed it to appear as plainly that her own was given to Gene in exchange.

The disappointed swains took their defeat as becomes men, and all would now have gone well for the lovers had it not been for Mrs. Chubb's only and adored offspring, Beauregard, a youth of some four summers, and, as Packsaddle declared to a man, "the orneriest brat that ever dragged his lariot round over the Texas Panhandle." The seemingly favorable fact of propinquity was what probably procured Gene's downfall, for, waxing familiar with the young man's personality, not to say his anatomy, Beauregard proceeded to practice upon him the methods pursued toward his mother, his cat and his toys.

Mrs. Chubb's darling had apparently decided in his infantile mind to destroy McKnight. The process having gone about as far as was safe—and much further than was comfortable—and no remonstrance being offered by the sweetly smiling Mrs. Chubb, McKnight firmly but kindly restrained the young cannibal from the actual demolition of his features.

It was enough—it was more than enough Mrs. Chubb never forgave this slighting behavior toward her cherished offspring. Indeed, the more she thought of the matter the bittier she waxed until McKnight was forbidden the house. Mrs. Chubb declared that she would rather hand Louise over to a horse thief than to a brute like Gene

McKnight, who would undoubtedly beat her since he would go so far as to cruelly mistreat a little child—and before its own mother's eyes!

Poor Gene thought of these things as he leaned against the doorway and looked on at the dance. Now, this doorway led to the room where the children were stowed. A yelp and a slight scuffle among them attracted his attention and appeared to suggest something. He glanced at Chubb Morrison. What if the plot which had just flashed into his mind offered not only a solution of his and Louise's troubles, but a chance to get even with this redoubtable matron and her ill tempered youngster, who had made Louise's life a burden ever since she came to the Open M.!

Gene hurried out to the corral, made certain arrangements there, then slipped back into the children's room, where he proceeded to connect all those bare and stubby toes one with the other at good, liberal distances by a firmly attached line of yarn. He first tried it thoughtfully and doubled it after doing so. "I don't want to exactly jerk their toes out," he muttered, "and yet the Lord knows—fer he made 'em—that 'twould serve most of 'em about right."

This done, he went back to his post at the doorway and gave a good strong pull on his end of the yarn string. There ensued a subdued growling in the room behind him which waxed and grew to a series of howls, in which every species of juvenile voice entreated for "Mommer!" "Maw!" "Mamma!" The din, flowing like a tidal wave over the music of the orchestra, reached the ears of Mrs. Chubb. She paused in her evolutions, flung up her head like a warhorse that sniffs the battle and bounced, as Gene afterward declared, with one mighty bounce clean into the middle of the struggling juvenility in the next room.

"And I reckon," he added always in telling the story, "that it was plumb time she should git thar, for them young uns was jest a-eatin' each other's heads off all simultaneous."

This was the last of his actual observations. As he turned toward the ballroom to find what chance the diversion gave him with Louise he met Billy Motlow's wife and the spouse of Nick Doyle both charging toward the children's room with fury written upon their countenances.

Fleeing silently, Gene found Louise near the outside door. With one sob she was in his arms in the semidarkness. "Now's our chance, sweetheart!" he whispered in the little ear he had just ardently kissed, and with her hand in his they escaped unobserved toward the corral.

And back in "the court of the children" the fight raged awfully. The men, great, easy going chaps in clumping cowboy boots, stood back in foolish helplessness while their wives pulled, jerked, thrust and screamed with shrill voices and blazing eyes.

Children were snatched and clawed back and forth (along with the exchange of much bitter reproach and invective), inquired of, violently rejected, the yarn weaving in and out and round and through, the youngsters spitting the air at every jerk, until some woman a little saner than the others discovered its existence and displayed it to the onlookers.

A sudden pause of amazement followed this revelation, and upon this abrupt stillness burst a very full explanation of both its authorship and its purpose, for there flashed across the lighted space outside the windows a stream of galloping ponies, followed and driven by a mounted man and a girl. Gene swinging his lariot and whooping joyously and Louise lending a willing hand and voice to the work.

And Zack Morrison's fognhorn tones were lifted: "Thar, now! Gene McKnight's done skipped with Lou while you all was a-foolin' here over this trick of his'n on the young uns. Stampeded the ponies too! They ain't a hoof left to chase 'em on, an' I'm glad of it!"

How He Joined the Church.

The story is told that on one of our missionary fields a native approached the missionary and declared that he wished to join the church. He was carefully examined, as is the custom, and answered satisfactorily most if not all of the questions put to him. Just before completing the examination the missionary asked the native if he had a wife. "Yes," he replied, "I have two." "Well," said the missionary, "we cannot receive you into the church if you have two wives. We are sorry, because you give a good account of yourself, but so long as you have two wives we cannot receive you into the membership of the church." Some time elapsed and the native appeared again before the missionary and stated that there was now no objection to his entering the church. The missionary said, "How about your second wife?" "Oh," replied the native, "that's all right. I have eaten her."—London Standard.

A Magisterial Logician.

A baillie of Glasgow was noted for the simplicity of his manners on the bench. A youth was charged before him with abstracting a handkerchief from a gentleman's pocket. The indictment being read, the baillie, addressing the prisoner, remarked, "I hae nae doot ye did the deed, for I had a handkerchief ta'en oot o' my ain pouch this verra week." The same magisterial logician was on another occasion seated on the bench when a case of serious assault was brought forward by the public prosecutor. Struck by the powerful phraseology of the indictment, the baillie proceeded to say, "For this malicious crime ye are fined seven and sixpence." The assessor remarked that the case had not yet been proved. "Then," said the magisterial logician, "we'll just mak' the fine 5 shillings."—London Tit-Bits.

MISS WIGGS' PRIZE STORY

(Copyright, 1902, by T. C. McClure.) "A letter for you, Miss Wiggs," said the postman, smiling.

Little Miss Wiggs extended a trembling hand.

She carefully cut the end of the envelope with the scissors and drew out the letter. It was very brief:

"The editors of The Story Magazine take great pleasure in presenting the enclosed check as payment of the prize offered for the best short story submitted in their recent contest."

That was all. But a dozen pages of praise could not have pleased little Miss Wiggs more. It was not a large sum of money, to be sure, but to her it meant a great deal. Ever since that day three months before when she had mailed the story and the required subscription money she had waited and hoped with all the fervor of her little body.

There had been little sewing for her to do of late, and she had watched her income dwindle away with growing fear. She had never thought of trying to write till Cordelia Brown one day brought her a copy of The Story Magazine to read. Cordelia was seventeen years old now and well along in high school, but she had never forgotten Miss Wiggs' kindness of former days.

When the girl was gone, Miss Wiggs picked up the magazine. Almost the first page to meet her eyes was an advertisement offering a prize for the best short story submitted before a certain date. It was then that the idea of trying to write a story first occurred to Miss Wiggs.

She had a tale of the first settlers in her memory handed down from mother to daughter, as such stories are. Moreover, she possessed a good education, a clear mind and plenty of leisure. Nothing was more natural, therefore, than that Miss Wiggs should write a story.

In due time the story was completed. Miss Wiggs copied it in her best handwriting and, inclosing the dollar demanded as one of the conditions of the contest, mailed it to the magazine. Then she told Cordelia what she had done and even read her the first draft of the story.

When she had finished, Cordelia shook her head. "I am sorry, dear Miss Wiggs," she said gently, "but I am afraid the story will hardly suit them." Then, with all the kindness she could command, she explained to the woman the needs of the magazine. It used little else than love stories, she said, and for that reason the editors would scarcely take the trouble to examine manuscripts of another character.

"But why not try again?" she finished brightly. "Our subscription has expired, and you can send in our renewal with the story. Please do, Miss Wiggs."

So Miss Wiggs did try again. Somehow as she sat in the darkened parlor a plot came to her, an idea for a love story, unique, clever, interesting. She told it to Cordelia, and the girl clapped her hands joyously.

"Oh, it's ever so good, Miss Wiggs!" she said. And when the story was written and read to her she gave it exactly the same praise. And now the story had won the prize.

The back door opened softly, and Cordelia entered the house. It was some time before she discovered Miss Wiggs in the parlor. As the girl entered the room the woman looked up with a smile lighting her thin face.

"See, Cordelia," she said, with childish glee, "I won the prize."

Cordelia did not smile. Drawing a chair close to Miss Wiggs, she opened the magazine in her hand.

"I am going to read you a story," she said slowly, "that was printed several years ago."

Miss Wiggs smiled at the girl lovingly as she listened to the first few words. Then the smile gave way to a look of wonderment that in turn changed to one of pain. When the story was ended, she looked up at the girl with tears in her eyes.

"You don't think, Cordelia"—she began brokenly.

Cordelia sprang to her side and placed an arm caressingly around the woman.

"Dear Miss Wiggs," she said quickly, "perhaps it was merely a coincidence or it may be you once read this story and then forgot it till it came back to your memory, apparently an original idea."

They sat silently in the little parlor till twilight fell. Miss Wiggs bravely kept back the tears, but the hand that Cordelia held trembled constantly.

The postman's step sounded on the front porch, and Miss Wiggs opened the door for him. He handed her a long blue envelope.

"My story of the first settlers," she explained to Cordelia, noting the name of The Story Magazine on the envelope. She tore it open and slipped out the manuscript. A little note came with it. "Read it, Cordelia," she said. "My eyes are not very clear today."

"The editors of The Story Magazine," read Cordelia, "return the inclosed manuscript with much regret. Well had written and readable as it is, the plot is somewhat hackneyed, and for that reason the story is returned."

With a sudden suspicion Cordelia turned to the manuscript.

"Oh, Miss Wiggs," she cried, "it was your story of the old settlers that won the prize, after all. They have returned your love story."

Miss Wiggs smiled through her tears. "Cordelia," she said, "we won't have to write that letter returning the check to the publishers tomorrow morning. We will take a little outing instead."

LESLIE W. QUIRK.

Take Things As They Come

When you buy soda biscuit in a paper bag, take them as they come; stale—soggy—spoiled.

Don't blame the baker.
Don't blame the grocer.
Don't blame anyone but yourself.

When you buy Uneeda Biscuit look for the In-es-seal—the famous red and white trade-mark design that identifies the package which keeps them fresh—clean—good.

Credit the baker for baking them.
Credit the grocer for keeping them.
Credit yourself for buying them.

Uneeda Biscuit

NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY

5¢

WEAK IN THE ALPHABET.

Some Letters That Men Can Never Learn to Make.

"Why is it that with some men some letters of the alphabet are harder to make than others and, in fact, that there are some letters that some men never learned how to make?" asked a young man who takes considerable interest in the matter of handwriting in the New Orleans Times-Democrat. "It is a rather singular fact that nearly every man outside of the experts is weak on one or more of the letters in the English alphabet. Sometimes the letter involved is a capital letter; sometimes it is of the smaller kind; sometimes it is one letter and sometimes another. In any event, you will find few men who are exempt from the failing referred to."

"I know of one man who in spite of the fact that he does a great deal of writing has never learned how to make a capital P. He simply makes a stagger at it, and, as a rule, the result of his efforts will look more like a small p than like the capital P. I know another man who can't make a small f to save his life. He can never get the lower part of the letter below the line. He makes it look like a clubfooted b instead of an f. There are others who, when they try to make the small b, give it the long shank, and it looks more like the letter f. It is rather singular that these traits should hang on to a man's writing for a lifetime, but they do it just the same, and if you make a few inquiries among your friends and acquaintances you will find that but few of them are exempt from this fault.

"It is very much like the habit of spelling certain words incorrectly. Many men who are rated as first class spellers pass through life without ever in a single instance spelling certain words correctly. It is due to habit largely. If you should ask them how to spell the word, they would tell you, but when they go to write it, that is quite different, and they will get it wrong every time. So they know, too, how certain letters should be made, but they simply can't put them down on paper. It is a curious but common fault."

ANIMAL ODDITIES.

Birds never eat fireflies and really seem to shun their vicinity.

North American reindeer usually select an old doe for their leader.

The temperature of a swallow's body is extraordinarily high, no less than 112 degrees F.

Cats and beasts of prey reflect fifty times as much light from their eyes as human beings.

The average lake trout lays 6,000 eggs each season, and the whitefish a greater number.

The female English viper does not lay eggs. She hatches them internally and brings forth her young alive.

Parrots are usually vegetarians, though the Kea parrots of New Zealand have developed a fondness for sheep.

Gardish, sunfish, basking sharks and dolphins all have the habit of swimming with their eyes above the surface of the water.

Your Signature.

"I should be pleased to exchange cards with you, Mr. Barrow," said Charles Willips, extending his. They had met for the first time. "I'm sorry I have no cards with me," said Barrow. "Allow me to write my address in your memorandum book." "Do you know that is a very dangerous thing to do?" Willips remarked. "It cost me \$240 once. I had the habit of carrying no cards and signing my name in a new friend's notebook, just as you are about to do in mine, always on a blank page. One day, after a convivial evening, I was presented with an I O U for that sum, duly signed by myself. It was impossible to dispute it. I had to pay up. But I have never since been so free with my autograph." "By George, I never thought of that!" cried Barrow. "Suppose you write my name down yourself."—New York Press.

A man never knows what a concession he has until asked to tell a lie to shield some one he never liked very well anyway.—Aitchison Globe.

Settling a Hotel Bill in Portugal.

In Portugal when the traveler asks for his bill the landlord pleasantly rubs his hands together and answers, "Whatever your excellency pleases to give."

"This will not do, for the traveler is sure to offer too little or too much and to be thought either a spendthrift or a niggard, so he has to make a speech, thank the landlord for his confidence and beg for a detailed statement.

Then the landlord, politely deprecating anything of the kind, is slowly persuaded to check off the various items upon the fingers of his hand, with a long argument before each successive finger is done with and doubled down.

"What does it come to?" asks the traveler, taking out his purse at last, when the hand and the account are closed.

"What, did his excellency not add up?"

His excellency having been incapable of this act of mental arithmetic, the addition is gone over again, from the little finger backward, with a finger or two perhaps representing forgotten items brought into account from the other hand.

The sum total is gladly paid, and host and guest are mutually content, the guest knowing that he has not been overcharged more than perhaps a thumb and two fingers.

Ancient Needlework.

Some of the oldest needlework extant was found in Egyptian and Egyptian-Roman tombs—a rough sort of flaxen cloth, like the bath toweling of our own day. It has loops of wool worked with some kind of needle, raised on one side of the stuff only, and a kind of tapestry partly woven and partly outlined in needlework. The mummies which an insatiable modern curiosity has disturbed are wrapped in linen, as less liable than woolen cloth to the ravages of moth, and the art of weaving the flax that grew so plentifully on the banks of the Nile was probably learned by the Israelites during their sojourn in Egypt.

Ezekiel speaks of "fine linen with brozedered work from Egypt." Linen seems the natural ground and foundation of all embroidery. It often lasts longer than the work itself, can be cleaned and will not fray or wear out, as do more costly silks and satins.—London Spectator.

An Old Recipe.

Here is a recipe for the bite of a mad dog taken from the "Universal Magazine of Knowledge," published by John Hinton at the King's Arms in Newgate street, London, May, 1753: "Take the youngest shoots of the elder tree, peel off the outside rind, then, scraping off the green rind, take two handfuls of it, which simmer a quarter of an hour in five pints of ale. Strain it off and when cold put it in bottles. Take half a pint, make warm the first thing in the morning and the last at night and be sure to keep yourself warm; also bathe the part affected with some of the liquor warmed, the dose to be repeated the next new or full moon after the first. It is good for cattle as well as the human species."

Whims of a Horse.

The better the horse the more spirit he has. The disposition of an Arab hunter is thus described by Sewell Ford in "Horses Nine": No paragon, however, was Pasha. He had a temper, and his whims were as many as those of a schoolgirl. He was particular as to who put on his bridle. He had notions concerning the manner in which a currycomb should be used. A red ribbon or a bandanna handkerchief put him in a rage, while green, the holy color of the Mohammedan, soothed his nerves. A lively pair of heels he had, and he knew how to use his teeth.

The Credit They Give You.

"What is success?" asked the man with a liking for the abstruse. "Success," answered the cynical friend, "is something that impels your old acquaintances to smile significantly and remark, 'A fool for luck.'"

Comparisons.

Miles—That fellow Puffem reminds me of a bass drum.

Giles—Hand it to me slowly. I'm troubled with ingrowing nerves.

Miles—He makes a lot of noise, but there's nothing in him.

WRESTLING WITH RUSSIAN.

The Traveler Wanted a Towel and Finally Got It.

A. H. Savage Lander, in his book of travel, "Across Coveted Lands," relates an amusing railway incident that occurred in Russia while he was en route to Persia.

"Unable to get at my towels packed in my registered baggage and ignorant of the Russian language," he says, "I inquired of a polyglot fellow passenger what was the Russian word for towel, so that I could ask the guard for one. 'Palatiensi,' said he, and I repeated 'palatiensi, palatiensi, palatiensi,' so as to impress the word well upon my memory. Having enjoyed a good wash and a shampoo and dripping all over with water, I rang for the guard, and, sure enough, when the man came I could not recollect the word. At last it dawned upon me that it was 'palatinski,' and 'palatinski' I asked of the guard. To my surprise the guard smiled graciously, and, putting on a modest air, replied, 'Palatinski niet, paruski' (I do not speak Latin, I speak only Russian), and the more I repeated 'palatinski,' putting the inflection now on one syllable, then on the other, to make him understand, the more flattered the man seemed to be, and modestly gave the same answer.

"This was incomprehensible to me until my polyglot fellow passenger came to my assistance. 'Do you know what you are asking the guard?' he said in convulsions of laughter. 'Yes, I am asking for a palatinski—a towel!' 'No, you are not!' and he positively went into hysterics. 'Palatinski means 'Do you speak Latin?' How can you expect a Russian railway guard to speak Latin? Look how incensed the poor man is at being mistaken for a Latin scholar! Ask him for a palatiensi, and he will run for a towel!'

"The man did run on the magic word being pronounced and duly returned with a nice clean palatiensi, which, however, was of little use to me, for I had by this time got dry by the natural processes of dripping evaporation."

Fiendish Revenge.

The burglar softly opened the door of the suburbanite's sleeping apartment, slipped inside and searched the room thoroughly, but found nothing worth stealing.

"I'll get some satisfaction out of him, anyway!" he said.

Thereupon he set the alarm clock on the bureau for the hour of 3 and softly departed.—Chicago Tribune.



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