

THE OLD WEST

A TALE OF THE OLD WEST

HARRY LEON WILSON

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

His face relaxed a little, and he concluded almost quickly.

"Was not Satan hurried from high heaven for resisting authority?" She pointed, caught him by the lapels of his coat and prettily tried to shake him.

"Now, now! stop it at once, and come to the house. I've been tending your father and mother, and I'm going to tend you. What you need is food. Your look is not healthy, but I prefer, full cheeks. Not another word until you have eaten every crumb I put before you."

With an air of captivation, faintly serene, she led him toward the house and up to the door, which she pushed open before him.

"Come softly, your mother may be still asleep—no, your father is talking—listen!"

"A feeble, quivering voice, rough with emotion, came from the inner room.

"Here, I tell you, is the prophecy of Isaiah to prove it, way back in 1813—"

He broke off, for the girl came leading in the son, who, as soon as he saw his white-haired old mother, his open book sitting beside the waste of woman on the bed, flew to them with a glad cry.

"She embraced him and smoothed and patted him, tremulously, feebly, with broken thanks for his safe return. Her hands were white as paper upon her pillow, her eyes shining with the joy of a great relief, while the father was seized with a fit of coughing so violently that he had to lean against the wall and hold his head with both hands.

"The girl had been pleading food upon the table.

"'Mrs. Joel,' she urged, 'you must eat—we have all breakfasted, so you must sit alone, but we shall watch you.'

She pushed him into the chair and filled his plate, in spite of his protests.

"And now we must be about our preparations for the journey. The time is short—who is that?"

It was Spruce who'd come. Outside, he was heard coughing and sneezing. The girl, who had risen in some confusion, stood blushing and embarrassed before him. The mother rose on her elbow on the opposite side.

"'This Capt. Girraway, laddie. Have no alarm—he has berried us. But for him we should have been out two days ago, without shelter and without care. He let us be housed here until you should come.'

She gave a knock at the door, but Joel stood with his back to it. The words of Seth Wright were running round through his mind. He was looking at Spruce.

"A mobocrat—our enemy—and you have taken favors from him—a minion of the devil!"—shrieked.

The girl looked up.

"He was kind; you don't realize that. He has probably saved their lives. Indeed, you must let him in and thank him."

"Not!"

The mother interposed hurriedly.

"Yes, yes, laddie! No one is coming now high-handed than we. They expelled all but us, and some have been killed. He is a minister of the devil, and he is here to do us harm. This one has been kind to us. Open the door."

"I dare not face him—I may not be able to see him. He only looks at me."

The knock was repeated more loudly. The girl went up to him and put her hands on his shoulders to draw him in.

"Be reasonable," she pleaded, in low tones, "and above all, be polite to him."

She put him gently aside and drew back the door. On the threshold smiled the young captain. His cap was doffed, and the minister greeted him easily on the hit of his sword. He stepped inside as one sure of his welcome.

Good morning, Miss Prudence, good morning, Mr. Rae, good morning, madam—good morning—"

He looked questioning at the stranger, Prudence, and then at the girl.

"This is Joel Rae, Capt. Girraway."

"You bowed, somewhat stiffly. Each was dark. Each had a face to attract women. But the captain was tall and with the world, neatly uniformed, well fed, clean-shaven, smiling, plain, to look upon, while the other was unshaven, hollow-cheeked, gaunt, roughly dressed, a thing that had been hunted and was now under ban. Each was at once sensible of the contrast between them, and each was at once affected by it: the captain to a greater extent, a more effective affinity; the other to a stouter degree.

"I am glad to know you have come, Mr. Rae. Your people have worried little, owing to the unfortunate circumstances in which they have been placed."

"I am obliged to you, sir, in their behalf, for your kindness to my father and mother and to Miss Corson here."

"You are a thousand times welcome, sir. Can you tell me when you will wish to cross the river?"

"At the very earliest moment that God and the mob will let us. To-morrow morning, if I like."

"That is not been agreeable to me, believe me—"

"Far less so to you, my father is sure; but we shall be content again when we can get away from all our whiggery, democracy, devilism, mobocracy—"

He spoke with rising tones, and the other flushed noticeably about the temples.

"I have your reasons ready to-morrow morning, then, Mr. Rae—at eight? Very well, I shall see that you are protected to the ferry. There are

set on going to the new Zion, but you will come with me, for you are a good man."

"Wait a moment!" He put a hand upon her arm as if to arrest her speech. "You dare me. Let me see your faith, as you have been deriding at his face, for it showed strength and bitterness and gentleness. All one look at me, and I was suffering. She put her hand upon his, from an instinct of pity. The touch recalled him.

"Now, the beginning," he spoke with aroused energy, a little wistful smile softening the strain of his face. "You were wise to give me food, else I could have advised this mystery. To the beginning, then: You, Prudence Corson, betrothed to me, have been buried in the waters of baptism and had your washings and anointings in the temple of the most high God. Is it not so? Your eyes were anointed that they might be quick to see, your ears that they might be apt at hearing, your mouth that you might with wisdom speak the words of eternal life, and your feet that they might be swift to run in the ways of the Lord. You accepted thereby the truth that the angel of God had delivered to Joseph Smith the sealing keys of power. You accepted the glorious articles of the new covenant. You were about to be sealed up to me for time and eternity. Now I am told—that is it—your father and mother have left the church, and because of what?"

"Because of bad things, because of this doctrine they practice—this wickedness of spiritual wives, plural wives. Think of it, Joel—that I were your wife you might take an—"

"I need not think of it. Surely you know my love. You know I could not do that. Indeed I have heard at last that this doctrine is long gestated, is a true one. But I have been aware and am not yet learned in its mysteries. But this much I know—and it is the very cornerstone of my life: Peter, James and John ordained Joseph Smith here on this earth, and Joseph ordained the twelve. All other churches have been established by the wisdom or folly of man. Ours is the only one on earth established by direct revelation from God. It has a priesthood, and that priesthood is"

Darkness and Dawn

BY HARRY IRVING GREENE
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In the fullness of their lives there comes to many a man a day or a day or two when the dead weight of back-logged cares crushes the last hope and sends him with a weary, unsteady step to the brink, and half-fascinated by its awful beauty and horror, he stands there, silent deathly, while the icy sweat oozes down his brows and his limbs are like wind-thrashed reeds.

"So it came about that Kent stood looking from the back doorway of the warehouse into the early night. It was a long time since Kent had been happy, so long, in fact, that he sometimes doubted that he ever had been. Still, his experience was but the story of a man—bitterer than most men's, possibly—yet common-place enough to make the details unnecessary telling. Suffice to say, he had looked from sunset until dawn into the muzzle of his own gun, and now was telling himself that he had seen enough and would never do it again, and that he would have no more of it. It was not worth its suffering.

He turned up his collar and looked forward into the darkness. He had faced the empty street that led to the wharves he saw a woman who leaned forward and asked me to be his wife. 'Think of it!' he cried, 'I dared not say so, he looked at me so—I can't tell you how; but I said, 'I will have you.' You see, Prudence, I have had a revelation from God that it is lawful and right for a man to have as many wives as he likes. No one but the days of Abraham, so it shall be in these days. Accept me and I shall take you straight to the celestial city. But Brother, I have a wife, I marry you here, right now, and you can go home to-night and keep it secret from your parents if you like. Then I said, 'But I must have you.' You will be sated to marry me. You will then be absolutely sure of your celestial reward, for in the next world you will be a king, a prince, a ruler, a throne, and dominions, while Brother Joel is very young and has not been tried in the Kingdom. He may fall away and then you would be lost."

The man in him now was struggling with his faith, and he seemed about to succumb, but he went on excitedly.

"I said I would not want to do anything of the kind without deliberation. He urged me to have you, and I was trying to kiss me, and saying he knew it would be right before God; but I dare not say so. I would have taken it upon myself. He said, 'You know I have the keys of the Kingdom, and whatever I bind on earth is bound in heaven.' So he said, 'nothing ventured, nothing gained. Let me call Brother Brigham to seal us, and you shall be a star in my crown for ever.'

"Then he broke down and cried, for I was so afraid, and he put his arms around me. I pushed away, and after while I coaxed him to give me until the next Sabbath to think it over, promising on my life to say not a word to any person. He was satisfied with him, and he would be always sure, and at last when other awful tales were told about him here, of his sin and his crimes, I was told in the pulpit that he had been drunk, and that he did it to keep them from worshipping him as a God. I saw he was mad, common man, and I told my people everything, and soon my father was denounced for an apostate. Now, sir, what do you say?"

"When she finished he was silent for a time. Then he spoke, very gently, but with undoubted firmness.

"Prudence, dear, I have told you that this doctrine is new to me. Do not yet know its justification. But that I shall see it to be sanctified after I have had more time. I know as certainly as I know that Joseph Smith dug up the golden plates of Mormon and Moroni on the way to the mountains. I know the Lord moved him. It will be sanctified for those who choose it. I mean, you know I could never choose it for myself. But for other people, I question. I know only too well that eternal salvation for me depends upon my accepting manfully and unrepentantly the authority of the temple priesthood."

"But I know Joseph was not a good man."

"I believe with all my heart Joseph was good; but even if not—Joseph never pretended that he was anything more than a prophet of God. He said, 'I am a man like you.' And he called this a prophet?"

"And this awful journey into a horrid desert. Why must you go there? Why do you have to suffer? He hesitated a moment. 'I have been told that going to heaven is like going to mill. If your heart is good, the miller will never ask which way you came.'

"Child, child, some one has tampered with your mind."

He returned quietly.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER IV
A Fair Apoptosis.

She stood dumb and quick-breathed when the door had shut, she bending toward her with dark inquiry in his eyes. Before she spoke, he reviewed that under her nervousness some resolution lay stubbornly fixed.

"Let us speak alone," she said, in a low voice. Then, to the old people, "Joel and I will go into the garden, while he talks. Be patient."

"Not for long, dear; our eyes are itching for him."

"Only a little while," she



He bowed low over the hand she gave him, gracefully saluted the others, and was gone.

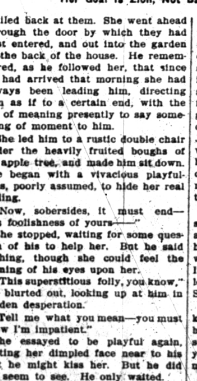
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