SELWOOD of SLEEPY CAT

by FRANK H. SPEARMAN

COPYRIGHT by CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
WNU SERVICE

CHAPTER X

Pardaloe Turns Diplomat.

General Roger wasted only till he was able to travel to go west with his location engineers. He said very little to Wentworth before he started; only that when he came back he would have a talk with Selwood.

Wentworth himself spent the week between Sleepy Cat and Thief River disturbed only and surprised by Selwood's resignation as superintendent of the freighting line. It required all of Wentworth's and Carrie's powers of persuasion to induce him to hold on till an acceptable successor could be found. Neither Doctor Carry, despite his blunt common sense, nor Went-worth, the long-headed master of frontier transportation, was capable of analyzing the mystery of the change that had come over Selwood. They wrongly surmised that his nervous moodiness was due to the fresh outbreak of his grievance against his grandfather; had they been as close to Selwood as Bill Pardaloe was, and as good an observer, they would have known that less than a hundred pounds of Sleepy Cat femininity had wrecked his good nature, his optimism, and his peace of mind.

When they saw him fated, with a ballons of wine, the recital of his family wrongs, they did not realize that he would likewise have been glad to drown all recollection of the last scene he ever expected to have with Christie Fyler. Bill Pardaloe, watching Selwood unobserved, first drew that to ask questions, but he himself had a soft spot in his heart for Christie, and though his duties no longer took him to the store, he knew Fyler's business was dwindling. Bill made it a point to drop around at times and see what he could see and hear what he could hear.

He always lounged into the store in the same manner—with the fingers of one hand negligently hooked over the belt of his hunter knife, stock at his hip, and with his arms free for action. Invariably, too, with his head poked inquiringly forward—which was his long nose well ahead of his entire body—with the corners of his mouth pulled down to suit his jovial, acute manner, and with his small, twinkling eyes wide open with suspicious gloom.

Such a man would hardly be expected to make much of a hit with Christie Fyler. Yet Bill Pardaloe came to stand higher in her favor than did Tracy of the helpless comfort; and of what his obstinacy might mean to her he had no inkling at all. Selwood—feelings, if there were, none of his own to have him. Bill, the old gambler proved adamant to every consideration, and, not only that, he grew more and more set against the proposals. "John," he exclaimed, rapt like a grizzly at bay, "are you running, too?"

"You know very well, Dave, there's a heap of difference between a well man's running and a wounded man's being carried out of the way of a fight."

"You going to stay?"

"There's no reason why I shouldn't."

"And fight?"

"Nobody will miss me if I do fight."

"If you stay, there's just one answer—you get killed," said Tracy. "Dash you, I know you better than you know yourself. Now, John, listen." The old man, gray, grizzled, unshaven, hollow-eyed, but stern, his fine-grained hair falling in a great mat over his wrinkled forehead, sat bolt upright on his cot. He tore open the breast of the coarse shirt he wore—the only garment he had grown—and pointed to an American flag, tattooed over his heart.

Selwood sat with the eyes of youth silently fixed on his country's emblem. Bill Pardaloe stepped closer in, leaned his neck forward, pulled off his tattered hat to get still closer, and peered dumbly at the tattooed breast.

Tracy spoke to Selwood. "John, I don't say I've never done anything to disgrace it," he went on, "but I fought for that old flag nigh three years. I tramped down the Peninsula with McClellan, and double-quicked back again; I stood, best I could, against Pickett at Gettysburg, with George Meade; I went up against the Bloody Angle in the Wilderness with Grant. It don't mean a continental to a lot of folks nowadays, but it means something to me yet. Does anything you've ever seen me do, John, look to you as if I'd run from a blessed parcel of Virginia crooks? I'll admit I'm no saint. I'm no preacher—"

"You're preaching right now, Dave."

"Then, d—n it, let me preach—but the worst I've ever done was to invite a man to back his luck against mine. I've played crooked with mine. I'll admit it, but no honest man can say I've ever stacked a deck against him—I took my chances same as he took his.

"Now, a parcel of Virginians threaten to hang you—I know, same's if you'd told me. I left the best of my life in health and strength down on the Jim river for the old flag—that's why I can't put up a man's fight today—" He bared his right breast. "There was a hole's eye in it which you could lay a hole's eye. "A Johnny Reb shell took that long, John—" He tore open, with fierceness, the shirt sleeve of his left arm—"a minie ball splintered that arm, John—you know it's no good. It wasn't that fight with Frank Sumner that did for me. I was close for in the Wilderness and came out with no health to earn a living, and here I am—and not sorry for it. Well, they can hang me. But it'll be done after I'm dead. And then," he muttered, with satisfaction, "you planted shrubbery, got to hang the old flag with me. I tell you again, I don't say I've never done nothing to disgrace it. I don't say I'm proud of winding up as a gambler. But things is as they is. And if this is my last stand—why, it's all right."

He reached his hand out toward the tent pole. "If me no gun, Jim—" With Selwood sitting in silence, Pardaloe lifted from the nail on which it hung by the scabbard an old Colt's army revolver. Tracy took it almost affectionately. "Leave this with me," he said, falling back on his frowsy pillow. "Bring me a couple dozen cartridges—that'll be all I need."

Selwood smiled. "Maybe you'll need, Dave," he said quite unflinchingly.

Selwood continued to smile; not mirthlessly, exactly, rather. He just studied the mumbling old gladiator—half toothless, bald low after many a stand and—stiffened in joint, frayed in nerve, caressing the old gun with a shaking hand, as perfectly he could with difficulty hold up his head, and with only the gray eyes flashing the old fire as he hurled defiance at his enemies—it was not a cheerful picture! No home to die in; no friends to be tender with his pain or patient with his irascibility; no wife's kiss to close the weary eyes—just a human derelict, cast by the storm and wave of civilization on its uttermost shore. Selwood was Dave Tracy.

"What you looking at me that way for, John?" demanded the old gambler peevishly.

"Nothing, Dave, nothing—just thinking. I'll be back again." He rose as he spoke. Pardaloe peered—for if in farewell—at Tracy and flushed his way outside. "See here," explained to the defaulter Selwood by his honest interest, told him the whole story of the shooting of Carey, and Selwood and herself that event. "It's what's going to be said—it's what has been said," trembled Christie, grieved and resentful. "If he had even been killed, Dave, I'd say, he said himself," she murmured in final reproach, "that it was his own fault. He was just a common gambler."

"Common gambler!" Tracy's favorable opening. "Yeah it," he thundered, "I'm no more a gambler than Napoleanbus, 'he ain't no common gambler. There's no man on the frontier knows it better than you, John. I'm a game of poker all night—if he wants to play it—but I'm no gambler, John. It. And why he can't talk up to you, John—or more don't—check up to him with you—that's why. I tell y' he's a common gambler, and I'll be dogdated such things."

Selwood, in fact, was another word, and Pardaloe went away not exactly disappointed. He had not failed his favorite young man in Sleepy Cat or hurt him by extolling his technical talent.

Selwood slept later than usual that day. After breakfast he went to the dining-room, he went down to the store, where Carpy Fyler had opened and took him to the doctor's office in the hotel. There he sat with closed lips in Selwood in serious confab. "I'll be sorry, John," he said, concluding a contemptuous remark of Selwood's, "to see you go, but you'll be sorry if Vigilante talk here, different times. But this time it isn't going to stop with talk. This town's got the worst reputation in the mountains."

"Whom are they going to shoot it up with?" demanded Selwood contemptuously. "These old Indian traders—Roubideau, Van Tassbel, Otto Kiechlunch—and that outfit of gamblers and horse-thieves? Carry, I don't want to tell you it's a man's job to clean our Bannock town. I'm not going to run up. Clean it up—I've no objection."

"I can't say all's in my mind, John, without betraying confidences. But things is set. This is Saturday night, and on Saturday night, as you know, every cattle-thief and horse-thief from Calabasas comes to town for a spree. Tonight they'll all get full, and they won't many get out. They're going to finish with every blackleg in Sleepy Keeper, bad man and gambler in this town within the next twenty-four hours—that's exactly what's coming."

Selwood bent a piercing look on his interrogator. "Does that include me, Doc?"

"There's no objection to the way you've run your place, John—if yours was the only place or the other places were like yours. And you'll have friends among the Vigilantes, anyway. You, then, re taing starts there won't be no fire lines drawn, John, you know that," continued the doctor, trying to convey his warning inoffensively, "and there may be mistakes when the torch gets going. My advice is for you to pull out till this thing blows over, and come back when you feel like it."

Selwood rose as to end the talk. Carpy had seen him angry more than once, but never had he seen the mild-mannered storekeeper enraged. His language so violent that he would have been ashamed of it in cooler moments, he expressed his opinion of all Vigilantes in general and Bannock City Vigilantes in particular. Carpy tried to interrupt, tried to listen, tried to calm him down—all was useless.

"Dash it, John," he exclaimed at length, testy himself, "if I'm nothing else, I'm your doctor—hold on."

"I expect to hold on," retorted Selwood rudely. "Tell your Vigilantes they'll find me on the hill. And tell 'em to come 'fixed,' for some of 'em will stay there with me."

"But here's another thing I want to think of, John," continued Carpy, who was pertinacious. "What about Dave Tracy in all this? You'd have your fight—you'll damage some Vigilantes; maybe—most likely—get killed yourself, and maybe get damaged yourself. Even supposing you make your getaway, what about Dave? That's helpless. How should you feel, John, if Dave was dragged out and strung up with that river bunch? Don't you owe it to Dave to get him out of this way before this thing begins?"

The suggestion struck like a blow to Selwood. It struck home. Selwood had forgotten his wounded partner. His mind worked fast. He looked at Carpy—but not with the resentment. "You're right," he said tersely. "I'll get Dave into the clear. But I'll be back on the hill by the time your friends get started."

He rose, very angry, to go; then he turned suddenly on the doctor. "There's one thing I'll ask of you, Doc; while I'm getting Dave away, I don't have to put up with a row from Christie Fyler—"

"John, I'll see to that! I'll see her, dang me, if I don't!"

Selwood was not a man to let his wrath against one person endure long. Most of all, the helpless confusion of Carpy, like a mischievous child on a wilful horse, forced him to consider what must be done to save the old man. Carpy could know better than Selwood what would be let alone. Selwood knew that he was the men on both sides of the town who knew what was under way; that would be no quarter for anybody—for himself, for Pardaloe, for Tracy, for more than one personal score to even up, and, maybe, for Christie Fyler if there would be, in that mob, personal scores to even up between women and that Carpy's warning could not be disregarded.

Selwood had been in the habit for some time of visiting Tracy in the back room of the store, but he knew better than Selwood what would be let pass. Selwood, therefore, kept away from the men on both sides of the town and knew that no matter what they said would be no quarter for anybody—no mercy for anybody but himself, and, of course, to regret, to wish he had been more kind to Christie—trouble out.

Selwood was not allowed gravely, "it ain't no use our boatin' around the bush. There's trouble 'tween two and three hundred men, and you're interrupted—it was all one. Pardaloe was in a woman's last weapon—tears. This afternoon Selwood went to the store and talked to the same state, but it cleared the atmosphere. Pardaloe addressed by his honest interest, told him the whole story of the shooting of Carey, and Selwood and herself that event. "It's what's going to be said—it's what has been said," trembled Christie, grieved and resentful. "If he had even been killed, Dave, I'd say, he said himself," she murmured in final reproach, "that it was his own fault. He was just a common gambler."

"Common gambler!" Tracy's favorable opening. "Yeah it," he thundered, "I'm no more a gambler than Napoleanbus, 'he ain't no common gambler. There's no man on the frontier knows it better than you, John. I'm a game of poker all night—if he wants to play it—but I'm no gambler, John. It. And why he can't talk up to you, John—or more don't—check up to him with you—that's why. I tell y' he's a common gambler, and I'll be dogdated such things."

Selwood, in fact, was another word, and Pardaloe went away not exactly disappointed. He had not failed his favorite young man in Sleepy Cat or hurt him by extolling his technical talent.

Selwood slept later than usual that day. After breakfast he went to the dining-room, he went down to the store, where Carpy Fyler had opened and took him to the doctor's office in the hotel. There he sat with closed lips in Selwood in serious confab. "I'll be sorry, John," he said, concluding a contemptuous remark of Selwood's, "to see you go, but you'll be sorry if Vigilante talk here, different times. But this time it isn't going to stop with talk. This town's got the worst reputation in the mountains."

"Whom are they going to shoot it up with?" demanded Selwood contemptuously. "These old Indian traders—Roubideau, Van Tassbel, Otto Kiechlunch—and that outfit of gamblers and horse-thieves? I don't want to tell you it's a man's job to clean our Bannock town. I'm not going to run up. Clean it up—I've no objection."

"I can't say all's in my mind, John, without betraying confidences. But things is set. This is Saturday night, and on Saturday night, as you know, every cattle-thief and horse-thief from Calabasas comes to town for a spree. Tonight they'll all get full, and they won't many get out. They're going to finish with every blackleg in Sleepy Keeper, bad man and gambler in this town within the next twenty-four hours—that's exactly what's coming."

Selwood bent a piercing look on his interrogator. "Does that include me, Doc?"

"There's no objection to the way you've run your place, John—if yours was the only place or the other places were like yours. And you'll have friends among the Vigilantes, anyway. You, then, re taing starts there won't be no fire lines drawn, John, you know that," continued the doctor, trying to convey his warning inoffensively, "and there may be mistakes when the torch gets going. My advice is for you to pull out till this thing blows over, and come back when you feel like it."

Selwood rose as to end the talk. Carpy had seen him angry more than once, but never had he seen the mild-mannered storekeeper enraged. His language so violent that he would have been ashamed of it in cooler moments, he expressed his opinion of all Vigilantes in general and Bannock City Vigilantes in particular. Carpy tried to interrupt, tried to listen, tried to calm him down—all was useless.

"Dash it, John," he exclaimed at length, testy himself, "if I'm nothing else, I'm your doctor—hold on."

"I expect to hold on," retorted Selwood rudely. "Tell your Vigilantes they'll find me on the hill. And tell 'em to come 'fixed,' for some of 'em will stay there with me."

"But here's another thing I want to think of, John," continued Carpy, who was pertinacious. "What about Dave Tracy in all this? You'd have your fight—you'll damage some Vigilantes; maybe—most likely—get killed yourself, and maybe get damaged yourself. Even supposing you make your getaway, what about Dave? That's helpless. How should you feel, John, if Dave was dragged out and strung up with that river bunch? Don't you owe it to Dave to get him out of this way before this thing begins?"

The suggestion struck like a blow to Selwood. It struck home. Selwood had forgotten his wounded partner. He mind worked fast. He looked at Carpy—but not with the resentment. "You're right," he said tersely. "I'll get Dave into the clear. But I'll be back on the hill by the time your friends get started."

He rose, very angry, to go; then he turned suddenly on the doctor. "There's one thing I'll ask of you, Doc; while I'm getting Dave away, I don't have to put up with a row from Christie Fyler—"

"John, I'll see to that! I'll see her, dang me, if I don't!"

Selwood was not a man to let his wrath against one person endure long. Most of all, the helpless confusion of Carpy, like a mischievous child on a wilful horse, forced him to consider what must be done to save the old man. Carpy could know better than Selwood what would be let alone. Selwood knew that he was the men on both sides of the town who knew what was under way; that would be no quarter for anybody—for himself, for Pardaloe, for Tracy, for more than one personal score to even up, and, maybe, for Christie Fyler if there would be, in that mob, personal scores to even up between women and that Carpy's warning could not be disregarded.

Selwood had been in the habit for some time of visiting Tracy in the back room of the store, but he knew better than Selwood what would be let pass. Selwood, therefore, kept away from the men on both sides of the town and knew that no matter what they said would be no quarter for anybody—for himself, for Pardaloe, for Tracy, for more than one personal score to even up, and, maybe, for Christie Fyler if there would be, in that mob, personal scores to even up between women and that Carpy's warning could not be disregarded.

Selwood had been in the habit for some time of visiting Tracy in the back room of the store, but he knew better than Selwood what would be let pass. Selwood, therefore, stepped aside, touched his hat, and hurried on his own errand. Later that night, with his heart beating harder, he began to feel nervous and to question himself and, of course, to regret. Their eyes, his smiles nodded and met secret way, had met. It was only an instant, but the picture came back to him now of a sad expression in Christie's eyes—a hurt look, until she took up and realized that she had run into Selwood; and then her eyes had quickly dropped, and her head on.

It was his fault, he told himself. He had not even hesitated—he might have done that first time he spoke, but cursed his stiffness and contemptible pride for not having given her even an opportunity at such a time—a time propitious for a reconciliation possibilities for them both as well as for Sleepy Cat. But she must not come to meet her over again; still, his vanity would not allow him to turn back, while Christie was reproaching herself for not making the quick advance she wanted to make and now felt it had been her place to make that way as the only mark's fire in the world that meant anything to her and, unhappily, passed on. Little reckoning of when and where they should meet again.

Selwood quite knew that his mission to Tracy would not fail. He sat down on a ramp stool beside his friend, and after a few conventional pleas, quietly informed the comfort of his visit with an abrupt question. "Dave, I'm off. Do you figure you've got in our Sleepy Cat plans? Whatever it is," he continued, as Tracy disclaimed any equitable interest in the hall that Selwood had paid for, "I'll trade you out in the forest grant. You're mine, for your interest up at Sleepy Cat.

Tracy was taken aback. "What you tryin' to do?" he asked presently.

"Get out," said Selwood definitely, "the hall's mine and the mine's yours. Is it a go?"

"Why, if you want it that way, yes —sir."

"All right. That's settled. Carpy," continued Selwood, "thinks this place is getting too noisy for you, Dave.

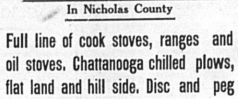
(Continued on Page 7)

Most Complete Line Of Hardware In Nicholas County

Full line of cook stoves, ranges and oil stoves, Chattanooga chilled plows, flat land and hill side. Disc and peg tooth harrows. Plow repairs

Wm. Howard & Son

flop at The PALACE HOTEL 6th and VINE



A home hotel—comfortable, large, airy rooms. Clean and economical. A safe place for your wife or daughter.

CINCINNATI, O.

ARE YOU READY FOR SPRING?

Our Cleaning Service will refresh and make wearable for several months, clothes you are ready to discard

Suits, 2pc. - - - $1.25
Suits, 3pc. - - - $1.50
Hats, - - - - - $ .75

Lexington Laundry Co.
Robert Mann, Agent
We ship our laundry on Tuesday Deliver Friday

Nationally Known Brands in All Our Stores

Astounding Values!.

Compare our consistently Low Prices—Our Service and our High Quality Nationally Famous Foods.

QUAKER MAID UNIT

Instant or Regular

Quaker Oats

3 Pkgs. 25c

Coffees Reduced!

8 O'clock 3 lbs. 85c
Red Circle The Choice of Millions Lb. 29c
Bokar Quality Supreme Lb. 37c
Lb. 40c

Fancy Cove—
Oysters 2 Tall Cans 25c
Sunnyfield—
Pancake Flour 3 Reg. Pkgs. 25c

Edelweis Malt Syrup Large Can 39c
Red Beans 2 Med. Cans 15c
Hershey's Cocoa 1-lb. Can 25c
Purity Flour 24-lb. Sack $1.06

Friday and Saturday Only
Prunes Fancy Med. Santa Clara Size Lb. 10c
Old Dutch Cleanser Can 6c
Cigarettes Lucky-Strike—Piedmont Chesterfield—Camel Carton $1.21
Fatimas $1.85 Carton

Fresh Goods—Close Stores—Courteous Service

DODGE BROTHERS MOTOR CAR

Facts that Draw Crowds and Sway Buyers

Little wonder Dodge Brothers Motor Cars today are seconded such widespread and enthusiastic commendation—

Smart new body lines and attractive color combinations—

A new seating arrangement that provides still more roominess and comfort—

A new clutch, simple, sure, silent—

Softer pedal action, easier gear shifting—

Quieter acceleration, still greater steering ease—

Two-stage engine suppression—and smoother performance—

New, silent-type muffler—

Greater dependability and durability made still more pronounced by vital betterments in body construction and in the propeller shaft, differential and axles.

Add to these the new five-bearing chrome vanadium crankshaft, with its remarkable improvement in engine performance, the excellent new starting and lighting system and many other recent betterments, and you understand well why convex proclaim today's car—

"The finest Dodge ever built!"

Touring Car ..... $ 914
Coupe 980
Special Sedan 1070

Main Street Garage

We Also Sell Dependable Used Cars

LAST CALL! SALE ENDS MARCH 26

We are entering the last few days of our great sale with prices that will bring this great selling event to a smashing climax, like the last scene of the Opera which brings the vast audience to its feet in frenzied enthusiam. We are not urging our customers to buy a thing because its cheap, but when a low price accompanies quality, style and value, then indeed it is time to act and act quickly. And that reminds us--

SPRING COATS AND DRESSES

New Spring Coats, In The Very Latest Models, At Prices Ranging from $10.95 to $19.95 and Spring Dresses, in Rayon, Crepes and Flat Crepes, at $4.95 to $13.65 are examples of Low Prices Accompaning Quality, Style and Value.

Saturday Is The Last Day

Act Now And Save Money

SHOES FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Another example of Quality, Style, Value and Low Price--will be found in our Line of Shoes for All The Family. Children's Shoes, worth as high as $3.00 at $1.69 and we have Three Lots of Bargain Table Pumps and Oxfords at $1.95 $2.69 and $3.49. This is the best assortment of Shoe Specials we have ever had.

When you enter the door, you will find the counters piled high with wanted merchandise, offered at these ridiculously low prices because we never want to carry merchandise from one season to another.

Brayfield Dry Goods Co.

(Continued from Page 6)

All those squatters coming in, and the clatter they make. He says you'll do better out under the pines a few miles up river, and I've got things arranged to get you up there today. The weather's settled now, and I've got time to move you—what do you say we start today?"

"I know where I'm comfortable, better than Carry does. I'll stay here."

Selwood, with patience, continued to dwell on the advantages of country life. But the old miner resisted all blandishments, and in the end his patience gave out first. "Look here, John," he exclaimed with a snap of temper, "you're beating your head like a bush, like these crooked Sleepy Cat lawyers. I know what's going on, if I am fat on my back. The Vigilantes are ready to move. What did you get the idea I was afraid of Vigilantes?"

Selwood shrugged his shoulders. "Where did you get the idea I thought you were?"

"Well, you're trying to ship me out of town—you and Carpy. Now, John, I'm no gambler's flat—not for all the Vigilantes in the Rocky mountains."

As Tracy uttered his declaration, Bill Pardaloe, like a huge camel, stuck his head within the tent.