

The Prairie Prince By W. B. COURTNEY

GOOD-BY to old comrades—Sheridan gives Buffalo Bill a dangerous mission—Giving the Grand Duke Alexis some thrills—Fêted in Chicago—Lionized in New York—Back to the Buckskins—On the stage—Saved by Milligan—Dream days in Rochester—A terrible blow—The Sioux are on the warpath!—Custer's last fight—Yellow Hand and Bill start a duel to the death.

FOR nearly four years, crowded chock-a-block with the adventures that try men's souls, Bill Cody had scouted the danger trails for the Fighting Fifth Cavalry.

To the "bluecoats," as the regular army soldiers were called by the Indians, Bill was an idol. He had never failed them in an extremity. With his glossy brown hair tumbling about his shoulders in the wind as he rode out ahead of a column on Buckskin Joe or Powder Face, Bill was a warrant to the men in the ranks of a march safe from ambush, certain of its destination.

To the officers of the Fifth Bill had become greatly attached and they to him. General Carr, in particular, had formed a deep and abiding affection for his handsome young chief of scouts. And the friendship of men who have fought shoulder to shoulder, suffered side by side, drunk elbow to elbow, is as no other friendship on earth.

Thus it was a disconsolate scout who bade his old friends adieu as they clambered into the cars that were to roll them on their long way to Arizona.

"Cheer up, Bill," was General Carr's parting word. "I've a notion that Sheridan has better things in mind for you than swallowing alkali dust and Apache lead. Perhaps he's fetching some more nabobs out to hunt, and wants you to guide them. You know, he likes to show you off."

Bill Won't Risk New York

GENERAL CARR'S prediction harked back to a glamorous event that autumn in which Bill had played a main part.

In September General Sheridan had brought out a distinguished party of wealthy sportsmen to enjoy the fine and exciting hunting around Fort McPherson—fine, because the post was in the center of the best Western big-game country; exciting because it was girded

by hostile Indians to whom a sportsman's scalp was as desirable as a soldier's.

Sheridan had told off Bill to guide the hunt because he wanted to thrill his friends with authentic frontier character and life. The general knew Bill not only best typified the romantic Wild West that the railroads were erasing, but that, more, he marked the last of the line of great scouts from Daniel Boone, through Lewis and Clark, to Kit Carson.

Then, too, no living leather pounder could run down the shaggy herds as well as Bill; nor smell redskins so far as he. This latter ability was all-important because of the value collectively and per scalp, of Sheridan's party: James Gordon Bennett, owner of the New York Herald; General Anson Stager of the Western Union Telegraph Company; Charles Wilson, editor of the Chicago Evening Journal; Lawrence R. and Leonard W. Jerome; Carroll Livingston; Major J. G. Hecksher; General Fitzhugh; General H. E. Davies; Captain M. Edwards Rogers; Colonel J. Schuyler Crosby; Samuel Johnson; General Rucker, and Dr. Asch.

General Sheridan gave Bill a glowing introduction to the party—nearly every name of which was prominent in the social halls and financial marts of the East.

With the first notes of the bugle at five on the opening morn of the great hunt Bill rose eagerly. He was to guide a "nobby and high-toned outfit." So he pridefully put on a little Western style—a new suit of light buckskin, trimmed along the seams with fringes of the same material; a crimson shirt, handsomely ornamented on the bosom, and a dashing sombrero. Then, mounted on a gallant-stepping horse, as white as north prairie snowdrifts, and with his rifle, old Lucretia Borgia, in the crook of one arm, Bill presented himself to the hunters.

"You look first rate, Bill," said General Sheridan.

"I feel first rate," grinned Bill.

For ten grand days Bill gave those sporty slickers the show and the time of their lives. O' days he led them to thrilling chases of buffalo and antelope, jackass rabbit and wild turkey. He showed them prairie dog villages. He showed them squaw men. He gave them brave chills by pointing out the blanket-punctuated war signals of distant red-skin camp fires. O' nights around the blazing deadwood logs he regaled them with yarns of his earlier adventures, before the steel came.

The huntsmen were enchanted. They had not only found their guide to be a mild, agreeable, well-mannered man, quiet and retiring in disposition, but a veritable picture of romantic manhood as well.

James Gordon Bennett of the New York Herald knew the value of color in character. He invited Bill to visit him in the East.

"Not on your life!" said Bill in dismay.



Bill puts on style to meet grand dukes and such

"Why not?"

"If I ever got broke in New York, I'd never make the westward trail!"

Bennett chuckled—and went off home, cherishing an enthusiasm that took shape in the pages of the Herald in descriptions of the hunt and, in particular, of its dashing guide.

Then, a few weeks later, had come the shift of the Fifth Cavalry, with Bill Cody the sorrowing guide they left behind them.

It was New Year's Day of 1872 before Bill definitely found out that General Carr's surmise was accurate. General Forsythe and Dr. Asch of Sheridan's

staff then suddenly turned up at McPherson, and there was a stir about the post, for it was rumored that something big was afoot.

Bill was promptly summoned and told that the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia was visiting the United States and had expressed a wish to hunt buffalo.

"The general figured," said Surgeon Asch, "that the old Fifth didn't need you half as much to chase Apaches as we need you here to whoop things up for his highness. He must kill some buffaloes—with the grace of God and Buffalo Bill, if not his own marksmanship!"

"I see," laughed Bill. "Well, there's plenty of buffalo running hereabouts lately. Along the Red Willow, sixty miles yonder, they're a black blizzard, sir. If you'd like, I'll take you over there and we can settle on a place for a camp."

Bill had in mind a pleasant little knoll in the valley of the Red Willow. The commissioners approved it on sight.

"Now, Bill," said General Forsythe, "there's something else that General Sheridan wants you to do. It'll be as dangerous and tricky a job as ever you've tackled."

"Out with it, sir."

"Well-l-l-l—the general wants his royal guest to see as much as possible of the real wild life of the West. So he wants you to go to the camp of Spotted Tail, chief of the Sioux, and try to induce him not only to remain peaceable while the grand duke is hereabouts—but to come to the duke's camp with about one hundred of his braves to exhibit war dances and buffalo hunting."

"The devil you say, sir! The Sioux make dangerous playfellows!"

"The general is counting on your help to keep them in line. Furthermore, Spotted Tail has permission this winter for his tribe to hunt buffalo up the Republican River country—"

"I know. I reckon they're somewhere on Frenchman's Fork, about a hundred and fifty miles from McPherson."

"They ought to be well disposed."

"Spotted Tail, yes. He is one of my friends. But I have many enemies among the Sioux, and I'm afraid it would be impossible for me to get through to Spotted Tail's tepee before his young men would kill me."

"Will you try?"

"Yes!"

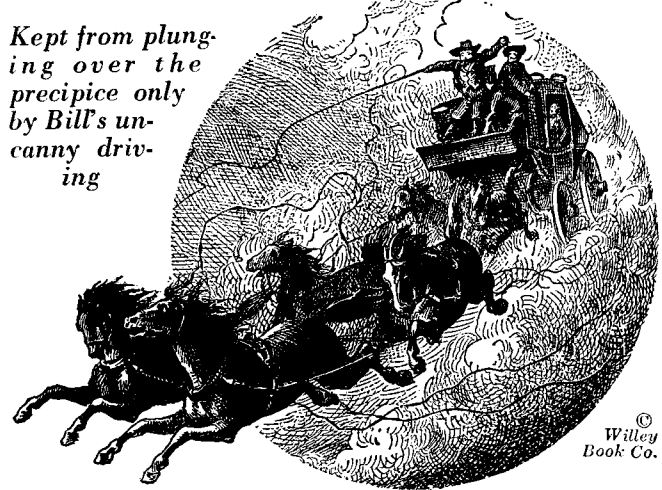
A Wild West Show for Alexis

GENERAL FORSYTHE and Surgeon Asch turned back to the post, while Bill Cody headed deeper into the wilderness winter, with nothing but a saddle blanket to protect him from the sub-zero cold at night.

In two days of bitter going Bill located Spotted Tail's camp. Not daring to show himself in the daytime, he hid in the brush until nightfall. Then, wrapping a blanket around his head so that the lynx-eyed braves could not tell him from an Indian, he managed to ride into the camp unharmed. He loafed around until he found the chief's lodge, which he hastily entered.

Old Spotted Tail, lying on some robes, recognized Bill instantly and bade him welcome. When Bill confessed that he had entered the camp by stealth the

Kept from plunging over the precipice only by Bill's uncanny driving



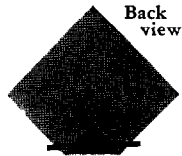
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chief praised his wisdom and ordered squaws to prepare food and a sleeping robe for the guest.

In the morning Spotted Tail strode with Bill into the tribal council circle, amid dark looks and ominous mutterings.

"Do you know who this is?" Spotted Tail asked his people.

"Yes, we know him well," growled a brave, fingering his tomahawk. "That is Pa-he-haska, our old enemy."

"That is he," replied Spotted Tail calmly, "and I want all my people to be kind to him and treat him as my friend. He brings word of a great chief from across the Big Sea Water who comes to meet me and my people ten sleeps hence at the Red Willow. We will greet the stranger."

On the morning of January 12, 1872, a special train rolled up to North Platte and was greeted with such fanfare as the bleak prairies provided—in this case a company of United States cavalry, a handful of officers and Bill Cody in his best buckskins.

General Sheridan at once presented Bill to the grand duke.

"Your Highness, this is the famous scout I have been telling you about, whom we all know as Buffalo Bill because of the great number of buffaloes he has killed. He is to take charge of you and show you how to kill buffaloes."

The poor little boy who had grown up under bull wagons on the American plains met the boy who had grown up in a gilded palace eye to eye and was not abashed.

The grand duke and his impressive entourage and General Sheridan with his staff then were swept rapidly in army buckboards to the camp prepared on the Red Willow.

The trip to Camp Alexis was made the more enjoyable for Bill—who was always thrilled by a wild rush against prairie winds—because of his reunion with General Custer, who had come with Sheridan.

Bill, knowing his Indian, had no qualms about the Sioux keeping their word—but Sheridan was on edge until, upon arrival at the Red Willow, Spotted Tail and a hundred of his finest warriors were found already on hand.

That night the Sioux gave the great war dance for which Bill had arranged.

Foreordained Bull's-eyes

IT AFFORDED a thrilling spectacle not only to the visitors from the Old World but to the American officers and soldiers as well—many of whom in the past had traded bullets with these self-same braves—and many of whose scalps were still fated to adorn Sioux lodge poles.

But there was no thought of blood-

shed this night. The Grand Duke Alexis, ably piloted by Bill Cody, enjoyed a mild flirtation with a coppery beauty—one of Spotted Tail's daughters, who had accompanied her father.

However, the thoughts of the duke, who had hunted big game all over the world, kept straying to the buffalo hunt of the morrow. He asked Bill numberless questions about buffalo run-

on the flanks of a buffalo. The real sport's in the chase."

Bill then coursed stirrup to stirrup with the grand duke, egging him along to the side of a charging bull; whereupon, sharply coached by Bill, the grand duke thrust the muzzle of his rifle dead against the bull's flank and fired a fatal shot.

This was only the beginning of Bill Cody's success in showing his royal highness a grand old American time. Bill deftly led Alexis to believe he had killed a buffalo with a revolver at one hundred paces—when it was really old Lucretia Borgia that did the trick. Then he had Spotted Tail send his famous warrior, Two Lance, on a hunt with Alexis to demonstrate his wonderful feat of killing a buffalo with a single arrow driven so hard that it passed entirely through the body of the great beast and out on the other side. The arrow was given to the Grand Duke as a memento of Two Lance's skill and strength.

The day came when Alexis had enough of plains' sport. On the return trip to the railroad Sheridan and the grand duke occupied an open carriage drawn by six spirited cavalry horses that were unused to harness.

Bill Reed, an Overland veteran, had the reins—and the grand duke noted with admiration the proud old stage driver's skill in handling so many very, very frisky horses.

General Sheridan hereupon explained the history and difficulties of Western stage driving and ended by telling Alexis that Bill Cody had done some stage driving on the hardest stretches of all—in the Rocky Mountains. The grand duke instantly expressed a desire to see Bill handle the reins, and Sheridan sang out:

"Bill, come back here and show the duke how you can drive. Mr. Reed will exchange places with you and ride Buckskin Joe."

The Grand Duke Cries Enough

A FEW minutes later the coach rattled along, with Bill pushing on the reins. General Sheridan slyly nudged him and whispered:

"Shake 'em up a little, Bill; give us some old-time stage driving!"

With a whoop Bill threw the beeswax into the skittish cavalry sextette. They jumped away with a suddenness that almost snapped the royal neck. Nor was the first danger the last or the least! The high-tempered cavalry mounts, indignant at the whoops and the whip, breasted their full magnificent strength against the traces and fairly lifted the light wagon from the ground.

While the rest of the cavalcade streamed out behind in astonishment

and horror Bill guided the bolting horses over the crest of a divide and down a long hill toward Medicine Creek at breakneck speed. There was no brake on the wagon, and the flying horses made no attempt to hold back on the grade.

Down—down—down—with the grand duke and the general clinging now to the seats and now to each other, and sometimes both ways—with Bill howling and bouncing on the seat like a stark crazy Comanche—and with the mad-dened horses running away, kept from plunging over the roadside precipice only by uncanny driving!

It was three miles from the top of that hill to the foot. The coach plunged down it in little more than as many minutes.

Bill was unable to stop the horses until they arrived at the relay camp, where fresh horses were to be obtained. Then, grinning, he turned to General Sheridan and the grand duke. The general sat back—game, but punished. And the grand duke, white and breathless, said he had enjoyed the driving very much—but couldn't Bill "please go a little slower for the rest of the trip!"

The Bowery; the Bowery—

REACHING North Platte, Bill was summoned into the royal car, where Grand Duke Alexis thanked him personally for his services and presented him with a coat of Russian fur, some valuable jewels and a cordial invitation to visit Russia.

That invitation at least served to remind Bill that Bennett had invited him to New York. Sheridan pressed Bill to go. With uncertain heartbeats, he did—stopping over in Chicago, where he was a guest in General Sheridan's house.

Discarding his buckskins for the first time in favor of swallowtails and stiff bosoms, Bill Cody scouted the best drawing-rooms of the city—a social triumph climaxed by a ball at Riverside, the aristocratic suburb, where Bill found more difficulty in facing the adoring feminine eyes than he ever had in facing Sioux arrows.

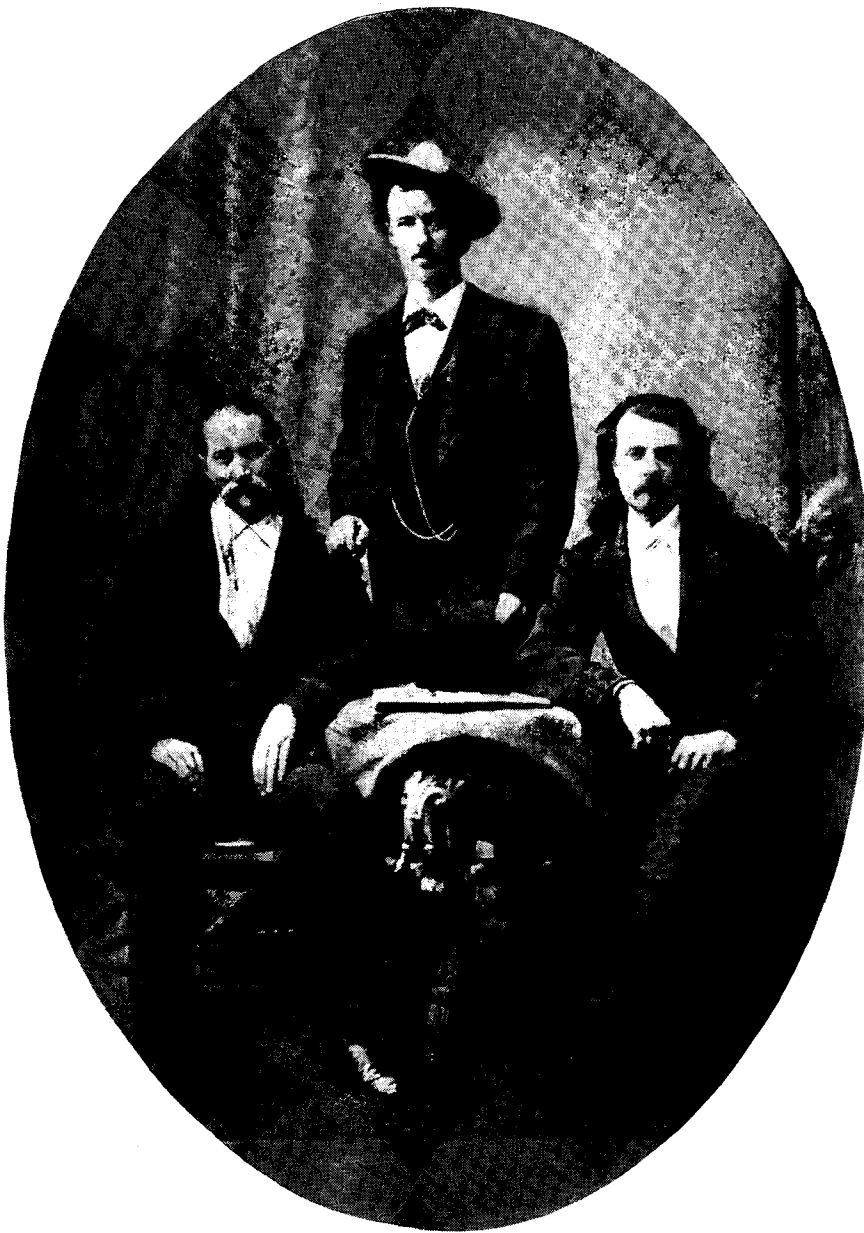
Here, indeed, was a pinnacle of fame of which the tattered little roughneck riding cavayard for Lew Simpson's bull trains had never dreamed. Only twenty-six years old, Bill Cody had endured five ordinary men's careers—lived a hundred lives, escaped a hundred deaths. Now, in the salons of the high and mighty, his manly poise and his adventures were the admiration of the men; his baby skin and the well-formed ears, of which he was always vain, were the despair of the beauties who fluttered around him.

On to New York, then; with Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Rochester scouted en route.

When Bill Cody set foot in the "depot" in the metropolis of the New World it was as much a treat to the city as to the plainsman. Buffalo Bill was the first visible link that city people had ever seen with that dark and mysterious frontier at the country's back door, which they knew of chiefly through the tall tales of travelers and fiction writers.

Bill was put up at the Union Club, at the Brevoort, at Buntline's—at so many places that he gave up in despair trying to find out where he was staying. He was dined at the Union Club, at August Belmont's, at other fine places, accepting each and every invitation in his hearty Western fashion, even though he had perhaps accepted a dozen other invitations for the same day and hour!

He enjoyed watching the actor J. B. Studley impersonate him in Buffalo Bill, the King of the Border Men. But he did not enjoy (Continued on page 59)



Wild Westerners: Wild Bill Hickok, Wild Texas Jack, Wild Bill Cody

ning—and Bill patiently explained his method.

Bill described the sagacity of old Brigham, his celebrated buffalo horse, as only a doting master could. When the grand duke expressed his amazement, Bill said graciously:

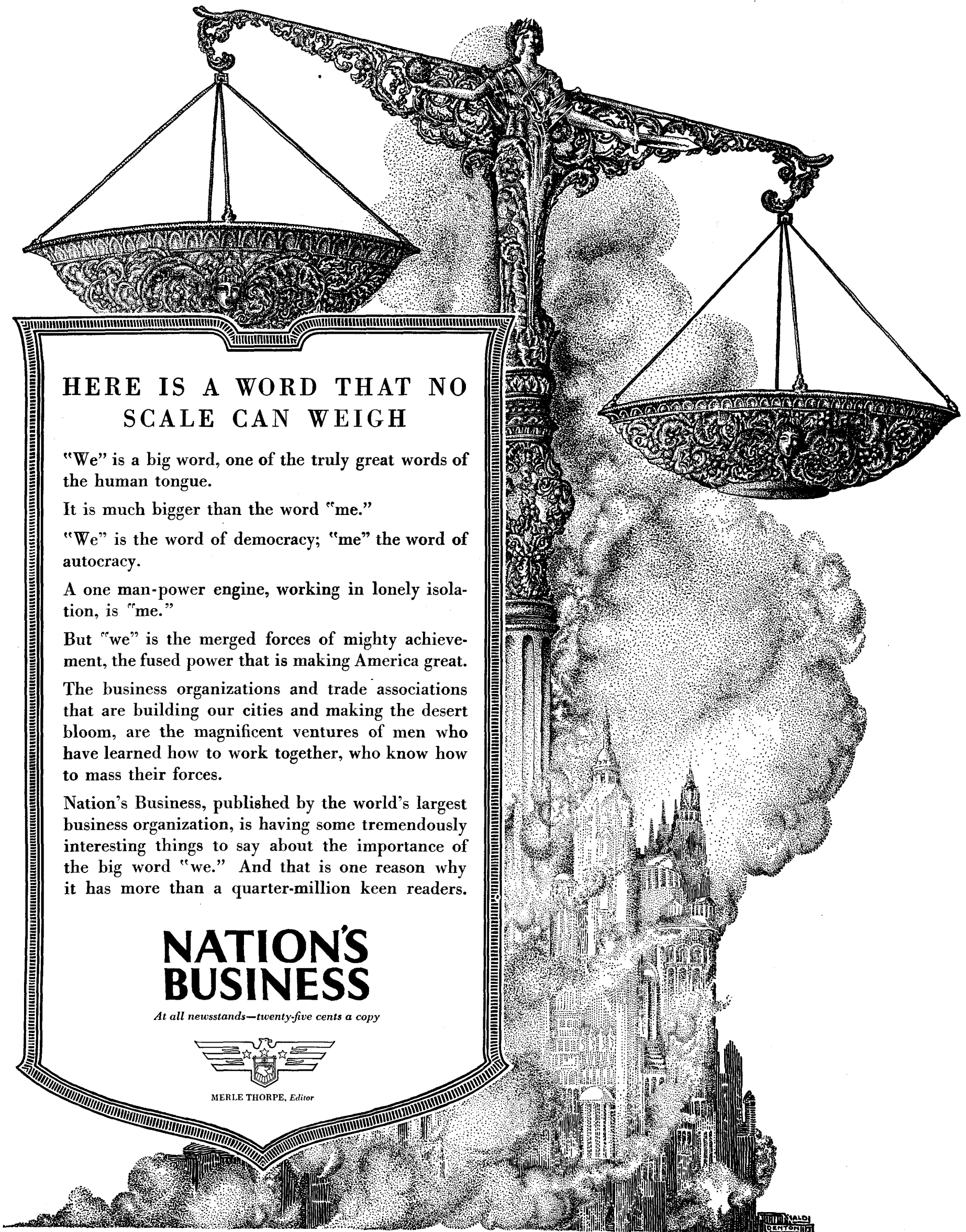
"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I've got a horse now that's almost as good as Brigham—Buckskin Joe. I'll let you ride him tomorrow. Then, when we dip into a herd, all you'll have to do will be sit on his back and blaze away."

Early morning found the entire party galloping in search of buffalo. Bill soon spotted a herd, whereupon the duke became greatly excited and wanted to charge directly. Bill cautioned him to take things easy and led him to windward of the bisons, which they approached gradually behind a spur of sand hills.

Coming out at length close upon the tail of the rushing black storm, Bill shouted:

"Now's your time. Give Buckskin Joe his head, and don't shoot until you've got a good opportunity."

But Alexis, carried away by excitement, fired too soon and missed. Bill spurred to his side and shouted: "Come now, don't fire again until we're right



HERE IS A WORD THAT NO SCALE CAN WEIGH

"We" is a big word, one of the truly great words of the human tongue.

It is much bigger than the word "me."

"We" is the word of democracy; "me" the word of autocracy.

A one man-power engine, working in lonely isolation, is "me."

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MERLE THORPE, Editor



"I heard you getting in—that's why I was ready for you. Why did you make so much noise?"

The Escaping Burglar

You can't smoke cigarettes in bed, any more than you can eat crackers, without unpleasant results

By DON MARQUIS

THERE was the click of an electric light switch, and, almost before the sudden brilliance flooded the room, the burglar realized he had been trapped. He turned from the bureau drawer where he had been fumbling by the cautious, intermittent gleam of his pocket flash, and confronted a very determined lady with steady, cool, gray eyes.

Her left hand was holding a beautiful flowered dressing gown more closely together over her bosom, her right hand was pointing at him a small pearl-handled revolver. He stared at the revolver as if he knew it; and then he stared at the lady, and gulped, with a perceptible movement of his Adam's apple. The revolver was a silly-looking little weapon, but there was nothing silly in the attitude of the handsome woman who pointed it. She was not at all nervous nor hysterical, nor even excited.

"Put your hands up over your head," said she.

The burglar did so. There was something in his manner of doing so which indicated that he might have obeyed the lady even if she had not been pointing the pretty little pistol at him.

"I suppose you have a gun," she said.

The burglar moved his head from side to side with a negative motion, without speaking.

"I thought all burglars carried guns," said the lady severely. "How does it happen that you don't carry a gun?"

Her manner implied criticism of his efficiency as a burglar; it was easy to see that already she rated him as a second- or third-class burglar; possibly even a fourth- or fifth-class burglar.

"Sit down in that chair there," continued the handsome lady, "but keep your hands over your head. I don't believe for one minute that you haven't got a gun. A man who would break into an apartment to steal would think nothing of telling a lie! And take that mask off."

The burglar sat down in the chair which she indicated, but he did not take the mask off at once. He continued to hold his hands above his head.

"Why don't you take the mask off," said the lady, "as I told you to?"

"Because," mumbled the burglar, with irrefutable logic, "I can't take the mask off and at the same time keep my hands over my head, can I?"

There was something about the bur-

glar's voice which seemed to startle the lady. She said nothing for the moment, but stared at the mask. She stared at it in a very condemnatory sort of way. It was evident that there was something about this particular mask which displeased her greatly. It was an irregular slice of black silk, and the right eyehole was twice as large as the left one. There was no symmetry about it. Moreover it was tied to the burglar's head in a very unsymmetrical fashion. The general effect was one of untidiness, even of uncouthness.

"I should think," said the lady severely, "that even a burglar would care more about his appearance than to wear a thing like that!"

The man in the chair mumbled something inarticulate; inarticulate, but apologetic.

"Of course," went on the lady, "the moral disintegration which would result in a man's becoming a criminal would also make him untidy in his habits. Or, more likely, your downfall started with untidiness."

There was another apologetic mumble from the burglar.

"You may let the left hand down far enough to remove the mask," said the lady, "but keep your right hand up in the air, and put your left hand up in the air again as soon as you have removed the mask."

THE burglar dejectedly performed this maneuver; dejectedly, but promptly.

"William!" said the handsome lady when his face came into view.

"Yes, Miranda," said the burglar meekly, "it's me!"

There was a half minute's silence. Miranda recovered herself first. She said severely: "William, do not say, 'It's me.' Say, 'It is I.'"

William, the burglar, who had permitted his hands to drop into his lap and was now nervously drawing the mask between his fingers, mildly repeated after her: "It is I."

"How long have you been a burglar," asked Miranda, "and what brought you down to this?"

"I have been a criminal about two years, Miranda," said William, "and I don't know that I can tell you just exactly what it was that started me on the downward path. I think it was a combination of things, Miranda. I think it started with smoking cigarettes in bed."

A look of sad satisfaction passed over the severe lady's handsome face.

"I told you twelve years ago," she said, "that any man who persisted in smoking cigarettes in bed was taking his first step towards a complete mental and moral dissolution."

"Yes, Miranda," said William, "you used to tell me that pretty often."

"You never heeded what I told you," said she, "never, at any time, during the five years that we were married! You used to scatter ashes and burn holes everywhere—always!"

"Not always," protested William feebly.

"Always!" said his former wife, finally. "And now look at you—a burglar! Carelessness and untidiness and disorder and neglect led you into vice, and vice has led you into crime!"

She put her pistol under the pillow again and got (Continued on page 58)