

The Clan Call

By Hapsburg Liebe

Copyright by Doubleday, Page & Co.

"ILL STICK"

Synopsis.—Young Carlyle Wilburton Dale, or "Bill Dale," as he is known, son of a wealthy coal operator, John H. Dale, arrives at the Halfway Switch, in eastern Tennessee, on a morning train. He is met by a man who identifies himself as "Labe" Littleford, a typical mountaineer. "Labe" Heck, a character of the hills, takes him to John Moreland's home. Moreland is chief of his "clan," which has an old feud with the Littlefords. He tells Dale of the killing of his brother, David Moreland, years ago, over a pile of coal deposits, by a man named Carlyle. Moreland's description of "Carlyle" causes Dale to believe the man was his father, Dale, who arranged to make his home with the Moreland family, for whom he entertains a deep respect. Talking with "Labe" Littleford, Dale is ordered by "Labe" to leave "his girl" alone. Dale replies angrily, and they fight. Dale wins the fight, though badly hurt.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

When Dale came back to a state of consciousness, he was lying under the covers in the carved bed room. Beside him stood John Moreland, who held in one hand a bowl containing a hot herb brew that his wife had prepared. "Granny Heck, her son By, and Mrs. Moreland, had not far away. "This here'll be good for ya, I think," said Moreland, nodding toward the bowl in his hand. He went over and put an arm around Dale's shoulders and helped him to sit up.

Dale drank the stuff with difficulty. "Much obliged," he murmured thickly. "Let's see, did I whiff—how did it end? He didn't lick me, did he—that fellow Ball?"

"He didn't," smiled Moreland. "Not by a long sight. He fell out first. His own pap won't hardly know him, Bill."

News travels rapidly in the big hills. The Morelands began to gather at the home of their chief to see the man who had whipped Black Adam Ball; every Moreland able to walk came to see Bill Dale. For three hours he was lionized, but he didn't enjoy it; the water had left many pains in his chest, and his bones ached dully, and his hands still felt as though the bones were shattered in them.

Came a thundershower that afternoon, and the mountain evening fell with a chill. A fire was made in the wide stone fireplace in the guest's room, and when supper was over the family gathered there with Dale, who refused to be kept in bed.

After a few minutes of silently watching grate-ashadow flit across the log walls, Dale said to John Moreland:

"If your brother David could know, don't you think he'd want you to get the vine out of the coal?"

John Moreland bent forward to rest his chin in his hands. His sober grey eyes stared thoughtfully toward the fire.

"I ain't never looked at 't that way," he said.

"That's the right way to look at it," declared Dale. "But you shouldn't sell the property as it is."

The mountaineer turned an inquiring face toward his guest.

"How in thunder could I handle it if I didn't?"

"Why not let me develop it for you?" Dale said earnestly. "I won't charge you anything above expenses, and I won't be extravagant."

"I'd take considerable money to start things a-movin'. Have you got it?" asked Moreland.

"No, but I can get it. Almost any body would be willing to lend money on so good a thing as this, y'know."

turned. Addie, honey; Luke, you and Cale."

Mrs. Moreland and her sons arose and left the room, closing the door behind them. Bill Dale paced the floor, arms folded, brows drawn. Finally he sat before the Moreland chief.

"There's nothing I'm ashamed of, I guess," he said. "I don't like to tell it simply because I don't like to tell it. But—I'll do it."

He sat down in his sheepskin-lined rocker, lay back and closed his eyes as though to visualize the story, to live it over.

"Maybe it's not very much in my favor, John Moreland," he began. "I never could get along with my parents, or with the set I was born into. Some-how, I was different. Father and mother wanted me to be a druid; they even wanted me to let a servant dress me. The others came when they tried to marry me to a young woman who didn't want me any more than I wanted her."

He opened his eyes, looked straight at Moreland, and went on:

"You see, they wanted to marry us in order to unite old Clavering's, for-



"You See, They Wanted to Marry Us in Order to Unite Old Clavering's Fortune and My Dad's."

time and my dad's; Patricia, like me, was an only child. It had been all cut and dried for us, for years. They put it up to me like this: they said I loved it to them, that it was my duty; that I had always been a severe trial to them; that my ancestry had put gray hair in my mother's hair, and a lot of things of that kind. I felt for it at last; it was sort of a matter of self-defense. With Patricia, it was a case of—well, a case of simple obedience. But in a good girl."

A minute of silence; then:

"I'll hurry along with it, John Moreland. I had one fine friend back there, it was Robert McLaughlin, a reporter on the city's leading newspaper. My dad didn't take to him because he was a worker, and not a pap. Mother wanted Pat's cousin, 'poor dear' Harry Clavering, for my best man. 'Poor dear' Harry and I had a fight, and he was killed. I didn't like him, I close Bobby McLaughlin for my best man, and I wouldn't give him up."

It was only when we met before the channel in a big crowded church that I fully realized the tragedy of it for Pat. I saw that her face was a clean white, and that her eyes held the shadow of something that was very terrible. I turned my head and saw the same shadow in the eyes of my greatest friend, Bobby McLaughlin. I knew then, Bobby and Patricia loved each other, John Moreland! Bobby didn't have any money to speak of, and that had held them apart."

"It had been the finest thing in the world, McLaughlin's acting as best man for me. There was friendship for you! I couldn't take from them their one chance of happiness."

"I couldn't see anything else to do, so I ran. I went home, pulled off my wedding ring and put on the clothes I was wearing now, threw some things into a bag and hurried down to the union station. I found that I could have my choice—the train that brought me here. I bought passage to Atlanta, but I never meant to use it; I meant to take the other train and pay a cash fare. In doing that, I was going to show myself from them. I wanted to go unhindered to some country where I wouldn't be considered a—g—savage, y'know."

"I went out to the train-station, and I hadn't taken a minute when Bobby McLaughlin came. I asked him how he knew where to find me. He said:

"I thought you wouldn't care to

stay here after doing what you did, and I wanted to say good-by, Bill. He always called me that, and it made me feel like a man. Then I put my bag down and took him by both shoulders and said to him this:

"Look here, Bobby, I'm going to give you some advice, and you take it. You steal Pat and marry her. Steal Pat and marry her if you have to live in a hole in a hillside. You're as good as any of them, and I'll be better than most of them. You cut your way to a better salary. You see, I told him, 'I've got about what we deserve in this world. Most of us don't deserve much.'"

"I asked him if mother was badly cut up. He said she was; that she had fainted. Dad swore aloud, he said, there in church. I told Bobby good-by and got aboard the train without saying anything about where I was going—but I didn't know myself where I was going, at the time."

"Now you've heard it. Every word was truth. If you'll trust me with the case, I'll make this land my land, your people my people. I'll suffer with you when you suffer, and be happy with you when you're happy; and when you fight, I'll fight with you."

The Moreland chief arose, and Bill Dale arose. The hillman put out his hand, and Dale gripped it.

"I believe in ye, Bill," said John Moreland. "Ye've another thing, I've seen ye fight. You can work the coal."

He looked toward the closed inner door and called, "Oh, Addie; you and the boys can come back now."

Out of the night a face appeared at one of the small windows. It was a feminine face and handsome, rather than pretty. Two slender, sunburned hands gripped the window-ledge nervously. The face pressed closer to the glass, then disappeared. Soon afterward the outer door of the guest's room opened, and Ben Littleford's daughter entered. Her skirts were dripping wet.

Mrs. Moreland arose and went toward the young woman. She knew that only something of great importance could bring a Littleford into her home in this fashion.

"What's the matter, Babe?"

Babe Littleford gave no attention to Mrs. Moreland. She went on to Bill Dale, walking softly on bare feet. "Black Adam is a-go-in to kill you tonight, Bill Dale."

"That so?" Dale's smile was rather grim. "How did you find that out, Miss Littleford?"

"I found it out, all right. As he went off from the river this mornin', I made fun of him; and he patted the stock of his rifle and said he'd get you through a window. He was at our house this evening to help his pap's gun, and when he left he started this way, a-go-in by the blow-down sycamore. I waded the river at Blue Cat shoals to beat him here. I thought you might want to know about this, y'know. I could make sure other folks' trouble o' makin' a funeral for ye."

She backed toward the door, her eyes never leaving Dale's face. Another second, and she was gone.

"They were all in their feet now. John Moreland gripped Dale's arm.

"Over that aside of the chimney, Bill," he ordered, his native drawl for the moment absent. "Out, Addie, honey! Luke, bring my rifle and hat—jump knee! Cale, bring water and towels; this here dry."

It was done. Moreland took his hat and the repeater and went alone into the night.

When some fifteen minutes had passed, there came to Dale's ears the sound of shooting. There were ten shots in such rapid succession that they made almost a continuous roar. Then came echoes and reverberations, and then silence. John Moreland let himself into the dark room.

His wife's voice was low and filled with anxiety:

"What happened, John?"

A dull thud came through the darkness, then came to Dale's ears the sound of shooting. There were ten shots in such rapid succession that they made almost a continuous roar. Then came echoes and reverberations, and then silence. John Moreland let himself into the dark room.

His wife's voice was low and filled with anxiety:

"What happened, John?"

A dull thud came through the darkness, then came to Dale's ears the sound of shooting. There were ten shots in such rapid succession that they made almost a continuous roar. Then came echoes and reverberations, and then silence. John Moreland let himself into the dark room.

His wife's voice was low and filled with anxiety:

"What happened, John?"

A dull thud came through the darkness, then came to Dale's ears the sound of shooting. There were ten shots in such rapid succession that they made almost a continuous roar. Then came echoes and reverberations, and then silence. John Moreland let himself into the dark room.

His wife's voice was low and filled with anxiety:

"What happened, John?"

"And Littleford meant 'a' began Dale."

"That'll be a big fight tomorrow," said Moreland. "Bill Dale, in a-makin' this land your land and these people your people, I'm afraid ye're a-go-in to get more'n ye expected, mebber more'n ye can handle. Do ye want to back up off it and let the coal go, or are ye one of them fellows who chaws with, they bites off of it's a hoss's head?"

"I'll stick," Dale's voice came firmly in the darkness. "I'll stick."

CHAPTER IV

The Mystery of the Rifles.

An hour after John Moreland had sent his ten and twelve whining over the head of Ben Littleford, every Moreland and every Littleford in the valley knew of the declaration of war. And each man of them oiled his weapons and got them in better working order.

When Dale went to bed, there was too much in his mind to render sleep easy for him. Tomorrow he would have to leap in the fight against the Littlefords, his own of the young woman who had saved him, without doubt, from death by the murderous rifle of the mountaineer Goliath—or break his word daily. It was a poor reprieve for such a favor. The longer he thought over the dilemma, the more perplexed he became.

He thought, too, of the everlasting wonder, the tale of John Moreland's bedtime prayer. How a man could go down on his knees and ask the blessings of the Almighty upon men whom he meant to fight the next day was a thing that Bill Dale could not understand.

It was after midnight before he slept. He woke at the break of day, arose and dressed himself, and went out. Going toward the flower-filled front yard, he found himself facing a very angry John Moreland.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Matter enough," cried the mountaineer. "Bill Dale, 'a-go-in to ax you a question, and I want the truth. Will I git it?"

"You'll get the truth if you get anything. Shoot the question."

"All right. What do you know about my gun?"

"About as much as you know of the left hand wheel of Ben Hur's chariot. What's wrong with it?"

Moreland's eyes were steady and declared war.

"Sakes!" laughed the old woman. "We knowed that last night when we heered them ten shots."

"And all the Moreland rifles are missing," Dale watched the effect of his words.

"What?" the Hecks cried in one voice.

Their surprise seemed genuine. Dale pressed the subject further and learned only that if they knew any secret of securing the disappearance of the rifles they were not going to tell. Then he started homeward by way of the pool above the blow-down sycamore.

There was a chance that Ben Littleford's daughter would be there daily, Dale told himself, and it was barely possible that she could throw some light on the mystery of the rifles.

He crossed the river by means of the prostrate tree. Babe was there; she sat on the stone on which she had been sitting the morning before; her back was to him, and he saw that there were in the water to her ankles. Dale went up close, stopped and gathered a handful of violets and dropped them over her shoulder and into her lap.

Babe looked around and smiled.

"What luck, Miss Littleford?"

"Nuttin'. I don't much want to ketch anything," she said slowly; a note of sadness in her musical voice. "I just come off down here to by what it's quiet. You ought to hear the noise at pap and the rest of 'em 'a-makin'!"

Dale narrated his eyes. "Are they, or making a noise? And what about?"

"My goodness gracious alive! You'd think so of ye could hear 'em! I ought to hear pap cuss John Moreland!"

She shrugged her pretty shoulders, lifted the small end of her rod to its proper place, and went on. "I never did see pap half as mad as he was when he got home last night from a-follerin' me."

"And at you?" asked Dale.

"No, but he would 'a' been of he hadn't had all his madness turned ag'in them Morelands. You knowed about pap's trouble on yan side of the river last night?"

"Yes, I knew about that," Dale answered slowly. "But John Moreland thought your father was my antagonist of yesterday."

"An-antagonist?" Babe muttered inquiringly. "What's that?"

"I mean Adam Ball, y'know."

"Oh. That's what I told pap. But pap he wouldn't believe it, and he wouldn't believe it—'cause he don't want to believe it. And him 'at John Moreland wasn't nothin' to him, and he wouldn't believe that, neither. Pap's as hard-headed as a brindle cow, when he gets a fool notion on him. What—what did them Morelands say about their guns bein' gone?"

Dale straightened.

doorway; he was lazily cutting a new midday sun mark in the place of the worn old one. Behind him sat his mother, who was busily knitting a gray yarn stocking.

The moonshiner looked up and started quickly to his feet.

"Hi, thar, Bill, old boy!" he greeted cordially. "My goob, but ye've come at the right time, shore. We're a-go-in to have young squirrels for dinner, and a billed hamshank with string beans, and cumcumber made with the yellor o' ham eggs. Live while ye do live, says I. Come right in, Bill, old boy."

"La, la, la!" cried Granny Heck, looking over the brass rim of her spectacles. "How glad I am to see ye, Mr. Bill! Come right in and tell us the news."

Bill Dale crossed the threshold and accepted a creaking chair. His eyes took in at a sweeping glance the home-



made dining table with its cover of red cloth, the broken cast-iron stove, the strings of dried peppers hanging on the log walls, the broken stillborn lying in the corner.

"The Littlefords," said Dale, "have declared war."

"Sakes!" laughed the old woman. "We knowed that last night when we heered them ten shots."

"And all the Moreland rifles are missing," Dale watched the effect of his words.

"What?" the Hecks cried in one voice.

Their surprise seemed genuine. Dale pressed the subject further and learned only that if they knew any secret of securing the disappearance of the rifles they were not going to tell. Then he started homeward by way of the pool above the blow-down sycamore.

There was a chance that Ben Littleford's daughter would be there daily, Dale told himself, and it was barely possible that she could throw some light on the mystery of the rifles.

He crossed the river by means of the prostrate tree. Babe was there; she sat on the stone on which she had been sitting the morning before; her back was to him, and he saw that there were in the water to her ankles. Dale went up close, stopped and gathered a handful of violets and dropped them over her shoulder and into her lap.

Babe looked around and smiled.

"What luck, Miss Littleford?"

"Nuttin'. I don't much want to ketch anything," she said slowly; a note of sadness in her musical voice. "I just come off down here to by what it's quiet. You ought to hear the noise at pap and the rest of 'em 'a-makin'!"

Dale narrated his eyes. "Are they, or making a noise? And what about?"

"My goodness gracious alive! You'd think so of ye could hear 'em! I ought to hear pap cuss John Moreland!"

She shrugged her pretty shoulders, lifted the small end of her rod to its proper place, and went on. "I never did see pap half as mad as he was when he got home last night from a-follerin' me."

"And at you?" asked Dale.

"No, but he would 'a' been of he hadn't had all his madness turned ag'in them Morelands. You knowed about pap's trouble on yan side of the river last night?"

"Yes, I knew about that," Dale answered slowly. "But John Moreland thought your father was my antagonist of yesterday."

"An-antagonist?" Babe muttered inquiringly. "What's that?"

"I mean Adam Ball, y'know."

"Oh. That's what I told pap. But pap he wouldn't believe it, and he wouldn't believe it—'cause he don't want to believe it. And him 'at John Moreland wasn't nothin' to him, and he wouldn't believe that, neither. Pap's as hard-headed as a brindle cow, when he gets a fool notion on him. What—what did them Morelands say about their guns bein' gone?"

Dale straightened.

"How did you find that out?"

"Don't matter how!" She smiled almost naively. "I knowed about it afore ye did, Mr. Bill Dale. Don't you think whoever does it done a kind thing?"

"I—might 'nigh wish I was dead."

ONE NEIGHBOR TELLS ANOTHER

Points the Way to Comfort and Health. Other Women Please Read

Moundsville, W. Va.—"I had taken doctor's medicine for nearly two years because my periods were irregular, came every two weeks, and I would suffer with bearing-down pains. A lady told me of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and how much good it had done her daughter, so I took it and now I am regular every month and have no pain at all. I recommend your medicine to everyone and you may publish my testimonial, hoping that the Vegetable Compound does some other of the good it has done me."—Mrs. GEORGE THOMAS, 915 Third Street, Moundsville, W. Va.



How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about her health. Such letters are held in strict confidence.

How many young girls suffer as Mrs. Teggarden did and do not know where to turn for advice or help. They often are forced to earn their living by toiling day in and day out no matter how hard the pain they have to bear. Every girl who suffers in this way should try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and if she does not get prompt relief write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts, about