"WHO HID 'EM?"

Synopsis.—Young Carlyle Wilbertson Dale, or "Bill Dale," as he elects to be known, son of a wealthy coal operator, John K. Dale, arrives at the Halfway Switch, in eastern Tennessee, abandoning a life of idle ease—and incidentally a bride, Patricia Claverling, at the altar—determined to make his own way in life. He meets "Babe" Littleford, typical mountaineer girl. "By" 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, owner of rich coal deposits, by a man named Carlyle. Moreland's description of "Carlyle" causes Dale to believe the man was his father. Dale arranges to make his home with the Moreland family. Talking with "Babe" Littleford next day, Dale is ordered by "Black Adam" Ball, bully of the district, to leave "his girl" alone. Dale replies spiritedly, and they fight. Dale whips the bully, though badly used up. He arranges with John Moreland to develop David's coal deposits. Ben Littleford sends a challenge to John Moreland to meet him with his followers next day, in battle. Moreland agrees. During the fight all the guns belonging to the Littlefords and the Morelands mysteriously disappear. Dale arranges to go to Cincinnati to secure money for the mining of the coal. The two clans find their weapons, which the women had hidden, and line up for battle.

CHAPTER IV—Continued.

"To disarm the Morelands so that when the enemy comes they will have nothing with which to defend themselves?" Dale didn't know much about these hill feuds. "No, Miss Littleford, I can say that I think it was a kind thing to do."

Miss Littleford arose and faced Dale. Her cheeks were flushed.

"Has the inemy come?" she demanded icily.

"No, but—"

"All right," the young woman broke in sharply. "If the inemy hain't come, what're you a-kickin' about?"

Her brown eyes were full of fire. They defied, and they withered, and Bill Dale suddenly felt that he was smaller and of less account in the scheme of things than that uneducated, wildly superb creature that stood before him.

"I beg pardon," Dale said evenly. "I didn't mean to offend, y'know."

His quick contrition struck the girl. Her mouth quivered. She dropped her fishing-rod, and began to toy absently with the end of her long, thick plait of brown hair.

"I've seed so much o' this fightin'," she murmured tremulously, "that it makes me go to pieces. I ought to beg yore pardon, mebbe, and I do.

I've seed a good many fine, strong men brought home dead or a-dyin' from the Moreland bullets. And the Littlefords has killed Morelands, too. One side about as many as t'other, I reckon. I'd be glad to give my life to stop it!"

"I'll help you, if I can," Dale told her. "Perhaps we can make friends of the Morelands and your people."

"You don't know what a hard thing it'd be," she replied tearfully. "The two sets has hated each other ever sence I can rickollect. And you won't be here very long, I reckon."

"I may be here for the rest of my life," said Dale.

"Is it the coal?" inquired Babe.

"Partly—yes, it's the coal. I'm going to develop it for the Morelands."

Babe looked at him with a tiny herald of hope in her eyes. Before she could speak again there came from somewhere back in the meadow the sound of her father's voice—

"Babe! O-oh, Babe!"

"Comin'!" cried the girl, half turning. "We'll try to make 'em friends; we'll try. Old Major Bradley, he'll be up here afore long to spend the summer, and he'll help us. He's a mighty good man; you're shore to like him. He gen'rally stays with us when he's here. You go easy with John Moreland! But when ye git him, yo'll have 'em all. I'll work on pap. The' ain't no danger o' trouble right now, anyways. Goodby, Bill Dale!"

"One moment, Miss Littleford," and he took a step after her. "Are you sure there's no danger right now?"

Babe halted, faced about nervously, and smiled a little.

"Don't call me 'Miss' no more," said she. "It makes me feel old. Call me what everybody else calls me, ef ye don't mind. Why, every one o' the Littlefords lost their rifles last night the same as the Morelands did! Meet me here at sundown, and I'll tell ye about it. Goodby, Bill Dale!"

"Goodby, Babe!" he smiled.

CHAPTER V.

At the River Again.

John stood on the gate. Met Dale at the gate.

"What did ye find out?"

"I learned," was the answer, "that the Littlefords all lost their guns just as the Morelands did."

"The devil!"

The mountaineers began to crowd about Dale.

"And who," asked their leader, "do ye think done it?"

Bill Dale shook his head slowly and threw out his hands.

"How should I know?" He went on: "Babe told me about the Littleford guns disappearing. I saw her down at the river; she was fishing."

"Did she say anything," pursued John Moreland, "'at sounded like she knowed whar them guns went to?"

"She told me," said Dale, "she would give her life to stop the fighting. She seemed rather badly worked up over it."

From the cabin's front doorway came a woman's sorrowful voice:

"And me, too; I'd give my life to stop this here fightin'. I had a boy, a big, strappin' boy—"

John Moreland frowned toward his wife and interrupted: "Now, Addie, honey, don't do that."

It ended the talk.

Mrs. Moreland dried her eyes on a corner of her freshly ironed gingham apron, and announced the noonday meal. The mountaineers dispersed. Grandpap Moreland went away clawing at his long white beard and grumbling over the loss of his beloved old Lancaster.

An hour later Dale cornered the Moreland leader on the vine-hung front porch and suggested that they look over the coal property that afternoon. He was eager to go to work, eager to be doing something worth while, he told Moreland. The hillman stood very still for what seemed to the other a very long time, and had no word to say. Evidently the feud had all his mind now.

When he did speak, he said simply: "All right, Bill."

After half an hour of fighting their way through thickets of blooming laurel and ivy, they drew up before an old and mildewed cabin at the north end of David Moreland's mountain. Moreland led the way in and pointed to a spot under a small, paneless window.

"Thar," said he, "is whar we found my brother David."

The two men turned for the point at which the coal vein ran out to the light of day.

Dale picked up a piece of the shining black stuff. Judging by the little he knew and the great amount of description he had heard, the vein was very large and the coal itself of the finest grade.

"It was a big find," he told his companion, "a big find. It was a pity to let it lie here unfoubled for so long; and yet it's worth more today than it was ever worth before."

His enthusiasm ran warm, and Moreland caught it quickly. Together they hastily planned out the little railroad that was to wind its way through the wilds and connect with the big railroad at the Halfway switch.

"I know I'm a-doin' right about it," the mountaineer said twice for the benefit of his conscience. "I know pore David he would want me to do this ef he could know."

"I'm sure of it," agreed Dale. "I'll start for Cincinnati tomorrow. I've got enough money to take me there and back. I have a very wealthy friend there—his name is Harris; I think I can borrow enough from him to finance the beginning of this thing. And I'll buy a locomotive and cars, and all the other necessary machinery, while I'm in Cincinnati—unless I fail to get the money from Harris. When I get back, which should be within eight days, we'll start the work. At a guess, I'd say we'll need twenty men. Can we get them?"

"Shore," nodded the mountaineer. "And all Morelands at that."

They turned homeward. At last Bill Dale was happy. He had something to do now—an aim in life. He had difficulties to overcome, obstacles to remove, barriers to surmount—it was his big chance!

* * * * * * *

It was almost sundown when Dale returned from his visit to the coal vein—Big Pine mountain hid the sun at a little after three in the afternoon. He borrowed a fishing rod and a minnow pail, which made his going to the river seem proper enough to John Moreland, and set out to meet Babe Littleford. He was glad that nobody expressed a desire to accompany him.

He found Ben Littleford's daughter where he had found her twice before—sitting on a stone the size of a small barrel. She was fishing with an unbaited hook, which was equal to fishing not at all, and she seemed pleased when she saw him coming. He sat down on the stone at her side. She moved over a little shyly, and tried to cover her feet with her calico skirts.

"Needn't bother to hide them," laughed Bill Dale. "They're pretty enough. Most feet, y'know, are necessary evils, like chimneys and rain-spouts!"

Babe Littleford blushed. He went on, to hide her confusion, "Tell me about the rifles."

"You must shore keep it a secret," she told him.

"I promise."

"Better put yore hook in, so's ef anybody comes along—"

Dale threw out an empty hook.

"I want to tell ye some other things fust, so's ye'll onderstand better when I come to the part about the rifles," Babe began, looking thoughtfully across the water to where a kingfisher sat in watchful waiting. She continued slowly, choosing her words carefully. "I was brought up to hate them Morelands, but—I don't think I do. My people is jest like the Morelands. The biggest difference ye can find is that one side mostly has grey eyes like you and t'other side mostly has brown eyes like me. All put their everlastin' fightin', they're good people, Bill Dale.

"Each side, ye see, is brought up to hate t'other side. I'm ashamed to tell it, but—I onderstand the fust plain words my Uncle Sim Littleford's last baby said was these here: 'D—n John Moreland!' It started a long time ago, and it started over nothin'. Grandpap Littleford and John Moreland's pap got in a dispute over whether Kaintucky was in Virginny or Nawth Carliner, and went to fightin' about it. Purty soon my Uncle Saul and Abner Moreland happened along, and they went to fightin', too. Thank goodness, it was on Sundaj, and none of them didn't have their rifles with 'em. Whatever else we are or ain't up here, Bill Dale, we gen'rally respects the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

"I see," Dale muttered sympathetically.

"I've seen my own mother set down in the floor and take her boy's head in her lap—oh, such a big, fine boy he was!—while the blood run through her dress from a Moreland's bullet. He died with mother's arms and mine around him. It was all we could do for him, was to love him. I'em, sisters watch their brothers die from Moreland bullets, and young women watch their sweethearts die, and wives watch their husbands die.

"I tell you, Bill Dale, them Morelands never misses when they have even half a fair shot. You'd be purfectly safe in a-settin' any o' 'em shoot dimes from atween yore finger and thumb all day. And it's the same way with the Littlefords. They're fighters, too, every one, and they don't give in any more than the Morelands does.

"Addie Moreland knows what it is to take her dying boy's head in her lap, whilst blood run through her dress to her knees. His name was Charley, and he was bad; he'd drink, and once he shot up Carversville. But Addie, she allus loved him better'n Cale or Luke. Wimmen like her allus loves the worst boys the best; 'cause they need it the most, the worst boys does.

"It's the wimmen that pays, Bill Dale, when the'e fightin'. The wimmen o' this valley is right now on needles; they're afeard the men'll find their rifles. You can guess whar the guns went to now, can't ye? The wimmen hid 'em last night after the men had gone to sleep! By good luck, they had almost a whole night fo' it. You must be shore to keep it to yourself—but I know ye will. Addie Moreland, she started the idee. She got Granny Moreland to spread the word amongst the wimmen o' my people. When the fightin' fever sort o' dies down the guns'll all be brought back and put whar they belong."

She arose and stood there smiling down upon him. He was staring at the swirling water without seeing it at all.

Her voice brought him to himself.

"What're you a-thinkin' about Bill Dale?"

Pale went to his feet. He saw that she was smiling, and he smiled, too.

"I was thinking," he said, "of the difference between you and some other women I know."

Her clear brown eyes widened. "And I reckon I seem purty no 'count, don't I?"

"No, not at all. It is—er, quite the opposite, Babe. You make them appear unreal, artificial."

Babe Littleford's countenance brightened. She did not doubt that he meant it. He was not of the sort that flattered. She began to like Bill Dale at that same moment.

And Bill Dale told himself as he went homeward that he was beginning to like Babe Littleford. He did not fight the feeling, because it somehow made the world seem a better place.

Early the following morning Dale made ready for his journey to Cincinnati. Having learned the evening before that he was going, By Heck had come to accompany him to the Halfway switch.

The two set out. They had three hours in which to cross David Moreland's mountain before the arrival of Dale's train, and they walked leisurely.

They had not gone a dozen rods when there came from somewhere down near the river the sound of a rifle shot. Both stopped and faced about quickly.

"I'll be dadgummed ef the Littlefords ain't found their weepons!" exclaimed By Heck. "They have, igod, as shore as dingit!"

"How do you know?" Dale's voice was troubled.

"I shore know," and Heck narrowed his gaze. "At was Ben Littleford's old .45 Winch. I'd know that gun of I heered it at the nawth pole. Thar! it's beed cut off, and it don't sound like other Winchesters."

"Caleb Moreland was down near the river cleaning out the springhouse ditch," Dale muttered, facing his companion. "I think we'd better go back."

Together they went back to the cabin. John Moreland and his wife and their son Luke were standing at the weatherbeaten front gate, with their eyes turned anxiously toward the river. Caleb was coming up through the meadow and he carried his hat in his hand.

"Who fired that shot," asked Dale.

"Ben Littleford," John Moreland answered readily.

Two minutes later Caleb leaped the old rail fence on the other side of the road and approached them hastily. He was breathing rapidly and his strong young face was drawn and pale—with the old hate.

"Well," said his iron father, "what is it?"

Caleb held up his broad-rimmed black hat and ran a finger through a hole in the upper part of the crown's peak.

"He didn't miss!" snapped John Moreland.

"No," quickly replied Caleb, "he didn't miss. He don't never miss. You know that, pap, as well as ye know God made ye. He done it jest to show me he meant what he said. He told me to go and tell you to gether up yore set o' rabbit-hearted heatherns and come down to the river fo' a lead-and-powder picnic, onless ye was a-skeered to come! He said to tell ye the wimmenfolks had hid our guns, and we'd find 'em onder the house floors."

John Moreland look it with utter calmness, though his face was a little pale behind his thick brown beard. He turned to his wife, who looked at him squarely.

"Addie, honey," said he, "I'm mighty sorry."

"Ef—ef you was much sorry, John," Mrs. Moreland sobbed, "ye wouldn't go down thar to the river."

"Me a coward?" Moreland appeared to grow an inch in stature. "Ah let a Littleford send me news like this here which Cale brings, and not do nothin' at all about it? I thought you knowed me better'n that, Addie."

He faced his two stalwart sons. Always he was the general, the leader of his clan. He sent Caleb in the direction and Luke in another, to rouse his kinsfolk.

Then he beckoned to Dale, who had been trying hard but vainly to think of something to do or say that would be of aid to the cause of the women.

"I don't want you in this here mix-up," he said decisively. "You must stay clean out of it. You air used to this way o' fightin'. Addie, you're our hope. More'n that, mebbe, you owe yore life to Babe Littleford; you cain't get around that, Bill Dale."

He went on, after a moment, "Ef I git my fight put out today, I want ye to do the best ye can with the coal.

They Dropped to Their Hands and Knees and Began to Crawl Through the Tall Grasses, the Ironweed and the Meadow Clover.

But o' course ye will. I want ye to do me two favors, Bill Dale, ef I have my fight put out today. Will ye 'do 'em fo' me, my friend?"

"Certainly," Dale promised.

"Much obliged to ye, shore. The fust is this: I want ye to take good pay out o' what the coal brings, pay fo' yore work. The second is this: I want ye to go to Ben Littleford after I'm done—provided he is yet alive—and tell him about the end o' my bedtime prayer. I want him to know I went him one better, 'at I was a bigger man inside 'an him. Remember, Bill, you've done promised me. Now you go ahead to Cincinnati, and do jest like ye didn't know the least thing about this trouble we're a-goin' to have. So long to ye, an' good luck."

"I don't like the idea"—Dale began, when the big hillman interrupted sharply:

"Go on! You cain't do no good here!"

Heck started. Dale turned and followed the lanky moonshiner; there seemed to be nothing else to do.

When they had reached a point a little way above the foot of David Moreland's mountain, the pair halted and looked back. They saw the Littlefords and the Morelands, every one of them armed, going toward the river. It had a strange and subtle fascination for Bill Dale, a fascination that he did not then try to understand.

As the fighters reached dangerous ground they dropped to their hands and knees and began to crawl through the tall grasses, the ironweed and the meadow clover. They were intent upon reaching the shelter of the trees that lined the banks of the river without being seen. The stream here was more than fifty yards wide; this was Blue Cat shoals. The two lines of trees stood back a rod or so from the water, making the final shooting distance some seventy yards.

Drawled Heck: "Le's set down here and watch it; hey?"

Dale was silent. The very air was filled with the spirit of tragedy. The faroff tinkle of a cowbell seemed tragic; tragic, too, sounded the song of a bird somewhere in the tree branches overhead.

"Did ye hear me, Bill?"

"I think," Dale muttered, "that I'd better not go away until tomorrow. I can't leave matters like this. Do you know of any way to stop that down there?"

By Heck shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you know o' any way to stop the risin' and settin' o' the sun?" he grinned.

They went back to John Moreland's cabin.

* * * * * * *

It was altogether by accident that the Littleford chief found his weapons. He had dropped a small coin through a crack in the floor. Babe was quick to say that she would crawl under the house and look for the coin, although she had just put on a freshly laundered blue-and-white calico dress. Her anxiety showed plainly in her face. Her father questioned her sharply, and she stammered in spite of herself. Ben Littleford's suspicions were aroused.

So he came out from under the cabin floor with his hands full of the steel of rifle barrels, and with the money forgotten. He placed the rifles carefully on the floor of the porch, turned and caught his daughter by the arm.

"Who hid 'em?" he demanded gruffly.

"I hid 'em," was the ready answer, defiant and bitter—"I, me! What're you a-goin' to do about it?"

Littleford flung his daughter's arm from him. He was king, even as John Moreland was king. His keen eyes stared at the young woman's face as though they would wither it.

"What made you hide 'em?" he growled. "Say, what made ye do it?"

"To try and save human lives, 'at's why!" Babe answered. "That man from the city—what'll he think o' us a-doin' this-away, a-fightin' like crazy wildcats?"

"Ef he don't like the way we do here, he can go back home," retorted the angry mountaineer. "He ain't nieu is he?"

Babe smiled a smile that was somehow pitiful, and turned off.

"The' ain't no use in a-argyin' with you, pap," she said hopelessly. "I—I might' nigh wisht I was dead."

At that instant the gate creaked open. Babe glanced toward it and saw coming that black beast of a man, Adam Ball the Goliath, and he was armed heavily; in one hand he carried a new high-power repeating rifle, and around his great waist there was a new belt bristling with long, bright smokeless cartridges fitted with steel-jacketed bullets.

* * * * * * *

When Dale and his companion reached the cabin, Addie Moreland met them. Anxiety was breaking her heart.

"Mr. Dale," she pleaded, "I want you to go down thar to the river and see ef the's anything ye can do to stop it afore it begins. You jest walk out bold in the open and ye won't be shot at, and I'll be obleeged to ye. Oh, I know the' ain't but one chanst in ten thousand, but I'm a-prayin' ye'll strike that one chanst."

Dale knew that he could do nothing toward bringing peace, and he knew that John Moreland would be angry at his interfering. But he nodded and went toward the river. He didn't have the heart in him to refuse.

Then there came the keen thunder of a rifle shot.

Dale halted for a moment. Between two sycamores on the nearer side of the river he saw a puff of smoke rising lazily from behind a water oak on the further side; a Littleford had fired first. Dale went on, moving rapidly and trying to keep himself always in plain view.

The feud forgotten.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

HAD NEWS OF IMPORTANCE

But Tompkins, Habitually Polite, Hesitated to Address Anyone but the Head of the Firm.

Tomkins was of a nervous disposition; he was somewhat slow and hesitating in time of emergency.

When he entered an office one day and found a stranger there, instead of the man he wanted, he somewhat lost himself.

"Oh, I beg your pardon!" he began "but—but are you Mr. Brown, the head of this firm?"

"No; I regret to say I'm not."

"I'm sorry, very sorry indeed," went on Tomkins. "I had something I rather wanted to tell him. Do you think he'll be in soon?"

"I'm afraid not. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Er—yes, perhaps—er—perhaps you'll do as well as Mr. Brown. May I ask your name?"

"Certainly." And the stranger gave it.

"Delighted to meet you," said Tomkins.

"And now, what can I do for you, sir?" asked the new-found friend.

"Oh, it's a very small matter—not of the slightest consequence—er, that is, I came to tell the head of the firm that the building is on fire!"—Los Angeles Times.

MINISTER DISCUSSES HIS WIFE'S TROUBLES

Rev. A. H. Sykes, former pastor of the Watkins Park Presbyterian church, Nashville, Tenn., says:

"After seeing what Tanlac has accomplished in my wife's case, I am convinced that it is a medicine of great power and extraordinary merit. I do not think I have ever seen anything give such prompt results. Mrs. Sykes had been in delicate health for ten months, suffering from stomach trouble and nervous breakdown.

"I frequently sought medical advice but Tanlac is the only thing that gave her any relief. After taking the medicine only a short time, she was able to sit up and help with the household duties. I think it only a short time until her health will be fully restored."

Tanlac is sold by leading druggists everywhere.—Advertisement.

In and Out of Matrimony.

"Is this the place you go to see about divorces?" demanded a careworn individual recently of Leonard Graziano, the proprietor of the boot-shining stand on the west side of the county courthouse.

"Sure," replied Graziano, looking rather intently at the man. "You better take a lawyer in with you or pick one up in the hallway. There's always a lot of 'em hanging around."

"Say!" he called after the sad one, "didn't you come to this here door two years ago with a skirt and didn't you ask a guy where the marriage license bureau was?"

"Yeh. What of it?"

"Nothin'," replied Leonard, "only I'm that guy. You come to the right joint this time."—New York Times.

ASPIRIN

Name "Bayer" on Genuine

BAYER

Beware! Unless you see the name "Bayer" on package or on tablets you are not getting genuine Aspirin prescribed by physicians for twenty-one years and proved safe by millions. Take Aspirin only as told in the Bayer package for Colds, Headache, Neuralgia, Rheumatism, Earache, Toothache, Lumbago, and for Pain. Handy tin boxes of twelve Bayer Tablets of Aspirin cost few cents. Druggists also sell larger packages. Aspirin is the trade mark of Bayer Manufacture of Monoaceticacidester of Salicylicacid.—Advertisement.

Qualified.

"Now," said the governor to the forger who had just arrived at the prison, "we'll set you to work. What can you do best?"

"Well, if you give me a week's practice on your signature I'll sign your official papers for you," said the prisoner.—Pearson's Weekly.

Important to all Women Readers of this Paper

Thousands upon thousands of women have kidney or bladder trouble and never suspect it.

Women's complaints often prove to be nothing else but kidney trouble, or the result of kidney or bladder disease.

If the kidneys are not in a healthy condition, they may cause the other organs to become diseased.

You may suffer pain in the back, headache and loss of ambition.

Poor health makes you nervous, irritable and may be dependent; it makes any one so.

But hundreds of women claim that Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, by restoring health to the kidneys, proved to be just the remedy needed to overcome such conditions.

Many send for a sample bottle to see what Swamp-Root, the great kidney, liver and bladder medicine, will do for them. By enclosing ten cents to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y., you may receive sample size bottle by Parcel Post. You can purchase medium and large size bottles at all drug stores.—Advertisement.

Whites Outnumbered.

Taking the broadest possible view of the racial maps of the globe as it existed before the war, it will be found that out of a total number of human beings amounting to 1,700,000,000, 550,000,000 were white, 1,150,000,000 were colored. Thus the colored races outnumbered the whites more than two to one.

Cuticura Soothes Baby Rashes

That itch and burn with hot baths of Cuticura Soap followed by gentle anointings of Cuticura Ointment. Nothing better, purer, sweeter, especially if a little of the fragrant Cuticura Talcum is dusted on at the finish. 25c each everywhere.—Advertisement.

Use the Atomized Coal.

About fifteen million tons of coal is burned in pulverized or "atomized" form in this country annually. The British and Canadian governments have recently published extensive reports on the use of this type of fuel in the United States.

Guess the Occasion.

Indian paper—Mrs. Blank delivered a speech befitting the occasion, she being quite inaudible.—Boston Transcript.