

The Land of Broken Promises

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"THE FIGHTING FOOL," "HIDDEN WATERS," "THE TEXICAN," Etc.

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A Stirring Story of the Mexican Revolution

A story of border Mexico, vivid, intense, such as has never before been written, is this one of American adventures into the land of manana. Texan, mining engineer, Spanish señor and señorita, peon, Indian, crowd its chapters with clear-cut word pictures of business, adventure and love, against a somber background of wretched armies marching and counter-marching across a land racked by revolution and without a savior.

CHAPTER I.

The slow-roiling winter's sun rose coldly, far to the south, riding up from behind the saw-toothed Sierras of Mexico to throw a silvery halo on Gadsden, the border city. A hundred miles of desert lay in its path—a waste of broken ridges, dry arroyos, and sandy plains—and then suddenly, as if by magic, the city rose gleaming in the sun.

It was a big city, for the West, and swarming with traffic and men. Its broad main street, lined with brick buildings and throbbing with automobiles, ran from the railroad straight to the south until, at a line, it stopped short and was lost in the desert.

That line which marked the sudden end of growth and progress was the border of the United States; the desert was Mexico. And the difference was not in the land, but in the government. As the morning air grew warm and the hoar frost dripped down from the roofs the idlers of the town crept forth, leaving chill lodgings and stale saloons for the street corners and the sun.

Against the dead wall of a big store the Mexicans gathered in shivering groups, their blankets wrapped around their necks and their brown ankles bare to the wind. On another corner a bunch of cowboys stood clannishly aloof, eying the passing crowd for others of their kind.

In this dry stream which flowed under the morning sun there were mining men, with high-limbed boots and bulging pockets; graybeards, with the gossip of the town in their cheeks; hoboes, still wearing their eastern caps and still ranting for a quarter to eat on; somber-eyed refugees and soldiers of fortune from Mexico—but idlers all, and each seeking his class and kind.

If any woman passed that way they walked fast, looking neither to the right nor to the left; for they, too, being so few, missed their class and kind.

Gadsden had become a city of men, huge-limbed and powerful and with a queuing look in their eyes; a city of adventurers gathered from the ends of the world. A common calamity had driven them from their mines and ranches and glutted the town with men, for the war was on in Mexico and from the farthest corners of Sonora they still came, hot from some new scene of murder and pillage, to add to the general discontent.

As the day wore on the crowd on the bank corner, where the refugees made their stand, changed its complexion, grew big, and stretched far up the street. Men stood in shifting groups, talking, arguing, gazing moodily at those who passed.

Here were hawk-eyed Texas cattlemen, thinking of their scattered herds at Mababi or El Tigre; mining men, with idle prospects and deserted mines as far south as the Rio Yaqui; millmen, ranchers and men of trades; all driven in from below the line and all chaffing at the leash. While a hundred petty chiefs stood out against Madero and lived by ransom and loot, they must cool their heels in Gadsden and wait for the end to come.

In this seething mass of the dispossessed, many of whom had lost a fortune by the war, there came two more, with their faces still drawn and red from hard riding through the cold. They stopped forth from the marble entrance of the big hotel and swung off down the street to see the town.

They walked slowly, gazing into the strange faces in the vague hope of finding some friend; and Gadsden, not to be outdone, looked them over curiously and wondered whence they had come.

The bunch of cowboys, still loitering on the corner, glanced scornfully at the smaller man, who sported a pair of puttees—and then at the big man's feet. Finding them encased in prospector's shoes they stared dumbly at his wind-burned face and muttered among themselves.

He was tall, and broad across the shoulders, with far-seeing blue eyes and a mop of light hair; and he walked on his toes, stiff-legged, away from his lips like a man on horseback. The rumble of comment rose up again as he raked past and then a cowboy voice observed:

"I'll bet ye he's a cow-punch!" The big man looked back at them mockingly out of the corner of his eye and went on without a word. It is the habit of cowboys that they

can tell another puncher at a glance, but they are not alone in this—there are other crafts that leave their mark and other men as shrewd. A group of mining men took one look at the smaller man, noting the candle-grease on his corduroys and the intelligence in his eyes; and to them the big man was no more than a laborer—or a shift-boss at most—and the little man was one of their kind. Every line in his mobile face spoke of intellect and decision, and as they walked it was he who did the talking while the big man only nodded and smiled.

They took a turn or two up the street, now drifting into some clamorous saloon, now standing at gaze on the sidewalk; and as the drinks began to work, the little man became more and more animated, the big man more and more amiable in his assent and silence.

Then they passed the crowd of refugees they stopped and listened, commenting on the various opinions by an exchange of knowing smiles. An old prospector, white-haired and tanned to a tropic brown, finally turned upon a presumptuous optimist and the little man nodded approvingly as he heard him express his views.

"You can say what you please," the prospector ended, "but I'm going to keep out of that country. I've known them Mexicans for thirty years now and I'm telling you they're getting treacherous. It don't do no good to have your gun with you—they'll shoot you from behind a rock—and if they can't get you that way, they'll knife you in your sleep."

"I've noticed a big change in them paleanos since this war come on. Before Madero made his break they used to be scared of Americans—thought if they killed one of us the rest would cross the border and eat 'em up. What few times they did tackle a white man he generally give a good account of himself, too, and I've traveled them trails for years without hardly knowing what it was to be afraid of anybody; but I tell you it's entirely different over there now."

"Sure! That's right!" spoke up the little man, with spirit. "You're talking more sense than any man on the street. I guess I ought to know—I've been down there and through it all—and it's got to now that you can't trust any of 'em. My pardner and I came clear from the Sierra Madres, riding nights, and we come pretty near knowing—hey, Bud?"

"That's right," observed Bud, the big man, with a reminiscent grin. "I begin to think them fellers would get up, for a while!"

"Mining men?" inquired the old prospector politely.

"Working on a lease," said the little man briefly. "Owner got scared out and let us in on shares. But no more for me—this'll hold me for quite a while, I can tell you!"

"Here, too," agreed the big man, turning to go. "Arizona is good enough for me—come on, Phil!"

"Where to?" The little man drew back half resentfully, and then he changed his mind. "All right," he said, falling into step, "a gin fizz for mine!"

"Not on an empty stomach," admonished his pardner; "you might get lit up and tell somebody all you know. How about something to eat?"

"Good! But where're you going?" The big man was leading off down a side street, and once more they came to a halt.

"Jim's place—it's a lunch-counter," he explained laconically. "The hotel's all right, and maybe that's a breakfast we got, but I get hungry waiting, that way. Gimme a lunch-counter, where I can wrap my legs around a stool and watch the cook turn 'em over. Come on—I been there before."

An expression of pitying tolerance came over the little man's face as he listened to this rhapsody on the quick lunch, but he drew away reluctantly.

"Aw, come on, Bud," he pleaded. "Have a little class! What's the use of winning a stake if you've got to eat at a dog-joint? And besides—say, that was a peach of a girl that waited on us this morning! Did you notice her hair? She was a pippin!"

The big man wagged his hand resignedly and started on his way.

"All right, pardner," he observed; "if that's the deal she's probably looking for you. I'll meet you in the room."

"Aw, come on!" urged the other, but his heart was not in it, and he turned gaily away up the main street.

Left to himself, the big man went on to his lunch-counter, where he ordered oysters, "A dozen in the milk." Then he ordered a beefsteak, to make up for several he had missed, and asked the cook to fry it rare. He was just negotiating for a can of pears that had caught his eye when an old man came in and took the stool beside him, picking up the menu with trembling hand.

"That's it," returned Kruger significantly; "this job I've got calls for a man like that."

"Well, Phil's all right," spoke up Bud, with sudden warmth. "We been partners for two years now and he never give nothing away yet! He talks, but he don't forget himself. And the way he can palaver them Mexicans is a wonder."

"Very likely, very likely," agreed Kruger, and then he sat a while in silence.

"We got a few thousand dollars with us, too," volunteered Bud at last. "I'm a good worker, if that's what you want—and Phil, he's a mining engineer."

"Um m," granted Kruger, tugging at his beard, but he did not come out with his proposal.

"I tell you," he said at last. "I'm not doing much talking about this proposition of mine. It's a big thing, and somebody might beat me to it. You know what I am, I guess. I've pulled off some of the biggest deals in this country for a poor man, and I don't make many mistakes—not about misera, anyway. And when I tell you that this is rich—you're talking with a man that knows."

He fixed his shrewd, blue eyes on the young man's open cut; once and waited for him to speak.

"That's right," he continued, as Bud finally nodded non-committally; "she's sure rich. I've had an eye on this proposition for years—just waiting for the right time to come. And now it's come! All I need is the man. It ain't a dangerous undertaking—least-wise I don't think it is—but I got to have somebody I can trust. I'm willing to pay you good wages, or I'll let you in on the deal—but you'll have to go down into Mexico."

"Nothin' doing!" responded Bud with instant decision. "If it's in Arizona I'll talk to you, but no more Mexico for me. I've got something pretty good down there myself, as far as that goes."

"What's the matter?" inquired Kruger, set back by the abrupt refusal; "scared?"

"Yes, I'm scared," admitted Bud, and he challenged the old man with his eyes.

"Must have had a little trouble, then?"

"Well, you might call it that," agreed Bud. "We been on the dodge for a month. A bunch of revolvers tried to get our treasure, and when we skipped out on 'em they tried to get us."

"Well," continued Kruger, "this proposition of mine is different. You was over in the Sierra Madres, where the natives are bad. These Sonora Mexicans ain't like them Chihuahuas fellers—they're Americanized. I'll tell you, if it wasn't that the people would know me I'd go down after this mine myself. The country's perfectly quiet. There's lots of Americans down there yet, and they don't even know there is a revolution. It ain't far from the railroad, you see, and that makes a lot of difference."

He lowered his voice to a confidential whisper as he revealed the approximate locality of his bonanza, but Bud remained unimpressed.

"Yes," he said, "we was near a railroad—the North-western—and seemed like them red-flags—did nothing else but burn bridges and ditch supply trains. When they finally whirped 'em off the whole bunch took to the hills. That's where we got it again."

"Well," argued Kruger, "this railroad of ours is all right, and they run a train over it every day. The concentrator at Fortuna—he lowered his voice again—"isn't been shut down a day, and you'll be within fifteen miles of that town. . . . He whispered; "I could get a hundred Americans to go in on this tomorrow, as far as the revolution's concerned. It ain't dangerous, but I want somebody I can trust."

"Nope," pronounced Bud, rising ponderously to his feet; "if it was this side the line I'd stay with you till the hair slips, or anything, but—"

"Well, let's talk it over again some time," urged Kruger, following him along out. "It ain't often I get took with a young feller the way I was with you, and I believe we can make it yet. Where are you staying in town?"

"Up at the Cochise," said Bud. "Come on with me—I told my pardner I'd meet him there."

They turned up the broad main street and passed in through the polished stone portals of the Cochise, a hotel so spacious in its interior and so richly appointed in its furnishings that a New Yorker, waking up there, might easily imagine himself on Fifth avenue.

It was hardly a place to be looked for in the West, and as Bud led the way across the echoing lobby to a pair of stucco chairs he had a vague feeling of being in church. Stained-glass windows above the winding stairways let in a soft light, and on the towering pillars of marble were emblazoned prickly-pears as an emblem of the West. From the darkened balconies above, half-seen women looked down curiously as they entered, and in the broad lobby below were gathered the prosperous citizens of the lead.

"Here," called Bud, coming to an instant conclusion, "give 'im his sandwich; I'll pay for it!"

"All right," answered the waiter, who was no other than Sunny Jim, the proprietor, and, whisking up a sandwich from the sideboard, he set it before the old man, who glanced at him in silence. For a fraction of a second he regarded the sandwich apathetically; then, with the aid of his coffee, he made away with it and slipped down off his stool.

"Say," observed the proprietor, as Bud was paying his bill, "do you know who that old-timer was?"

"What old-timer?" inquired Bud, who had forgotten his brusque benefactor.

"Why, that old feller that you treated to the sandwich?"

"Oh—him! Some old drunk around town?" hazarded Bud.

"Well, he's that, too," conceded Sunny Jim, with a smile. "But lemme tell you, pardner, if you had half the rocks that old boy's got you wouldn't need to punch any more cows. That's Henry Kruger, the man that just sold the Cross-cut mine for fifty thousand cash, and he's got more besides."

"Huh!" grunted Bud, "he sure don't look it! Say, why didn't you put me wise? Now I've got to hunt him up and apologize."

"Oh, that's all right," assured the proprietor; "he won't take any offense. That's just like old Henry—he's kinder queer that way."

"Well, I'll go and see him, anyway," said Bud, "he might think I was butting in."

And then, going about his duty with philosophical calm, he ambled off, stiff-legged, down the street.

CHAPTER II.

It was not difficult to find Henry Kruger in Gadsden. The barkeepers, those efficient purveyors of information and drinks, knew him as they knew their thumbs, and a casual round of the saloons soon located him in the back room of the Waldorf.

"Say," began Bud, walking bluffly up to him, "the proprietor of that restaurant back there tells me I made a



"We All of Us Make Our Mistakes."

mistake when I insisted on paying for your meal. I just wanted to let you know—"

"Oh, that's all right, young man," returned Old Henry, looking up with a humorous smile; "we all of us make our mistakes. I knowed you didn't mean no offense and so I never took none. Fact is, I liked you all the better for it. This country is getting settled up with a class of people that never give a nickel to nobody. You paid for that meal like it was nothing, and never so much as looked at me. Sit down, sit down—I want to talk to you!"

They sat down by the stove and fell into a friendly conversation in which nothing more was said of the late inadvertence, but when Bud rose to go the old man beckoned him back.

"Hold on," he protested; "don't go off mad. I want to have a talk with you on business. You seem to be a pretty good young fellow—maybe we can make some dicker. What are you looking for in these parts?"

"Well," responded Bud, "some kind of a leasing proposition, I reckon. Me and my pardner jest come in from Mexico, over near the Chihuahua line, and we don't hardly know what we do want yet."

"Yes, I've noticed that pardner of yours," remarked Henry Kruger dryly. "He's a great talker. I was listening to you boys out on the street there, having nothing else to do much, and being kinder on the lookout for a man, anyway, and it struck me I liked your line of talk best."

"You're easy satisfied, then," observed Bud, with a grin. "I never said a word hardly."

"Boys," he said, "I'm feeling lucky today or I'd never have closed this deal. I'm letting you in on one of the biggest things that's ever been found in Sonora. Just to show you how good it is, here's my smelter receipts for eight hundred pounds of picked ore—one thousand and twenty-two dollars! That's the first and last ore that's ever been shipped from the old Eagle Tail. I dug it out myself, and sacked it and shipped it; and then some of them crooked Mexican officials tried to beat me out of my title and I blowed up the whole works with dynamite!"

"Yes, sir, clean as a whistle! I had my powder stored away in the drift, and the minute I found out I was evicted I laid a fuse to it and brought the whole mountain down. That was ten years ago, and old Aragon and the agente mineral have had the land located ever since."

"I bet they've spent five thousand pesos trying to find that lead, but being nothing but a bunch of ignorant Mexicans, of course they never found nothing. Then Francisco Madero comes in and fires the agente mineral off his job and old Aragon lets the land revert to taxes. I've got a Mexican that keeps me posted, and ever since he sent me word that the title had lapsed I've been crazy to relocate that claim."

"Well, now, that don't look so bad, does it?" he asked, beaming paternally at Bud. "There ain't a man in town that wouldn't have jumped at the chance, if I was where I could talk about it, but that's just what I couldn't do. I had to find some stranger that wouldn't sense what mine I was talking about and then git him to go in on it blind."

"Now here's the way I'm fixed, boys," he exclaimed, brushing his unkempt beard and smiling craftily. "When I dynamited the Eagle Tail it was mine by rights, but Cipriano Aragon—he's the big Mexican down at old Fortuna—and Morales, the liberal agent, had buncoed me out of the title."

"So, according to law, I blowed up their mine, and if I ever showed up down there I reckon they'd throw me into jail. And if at any time they find out that you're working for me, why, we're ditched—that's all! They'll put you out of business. So, after we've made our agreement and I've told you what to do, I don't want to hear a word out of you—I don't want you to come near me, nor even write me a letter—just go ahead the best you can until you win out or go broke."

"It ain't a hard proposition," he continued, "if you keep your mouth shut, but if they tumble, it'll be a fight to a finish. I'm not saying this for you, Hooker, because I know you're safe; I'm saying it for your pardner here. You talk too much, Mr. De Lancey," he chided, eying him with sudden severity. "I'm afraid of ye!"

"All right," broke in Hooker good-naturedly, "I reckon we understand. Now go ahead and tell us where this mine is and who there is down there to look out for."

"The man to look out for," answered Kruger with venom, "is Cipriano Aragon. He's the man that bilked me out of the mine once, and he'll do it again if he can. When I went down there—it was ten years and more ago—I wasn't on to those Spanish ways of his, and he was so dog-gone polite and friendly I thought I could trust him anywhere."

"He owns a big ranch and mescal still, runs cattle, works a few placers, sends out pack-trains, and has every Mexican and Indian in the country in debt to him through his store, so if he happens to want any rough work done there's always somebody to do it."

"Well, just to show you how he did me, I got to nosing round those old Spanish workings east of Fortuna and finally I run across the ledge that I'm telling you about, not far from an abandoned shaft. But the Mexican mining laws are different from ours, and an American has lots of trouble anyway, so I made a trade with old Aragon that he should locate the claim for me under a power of attorney. Didn't know him then like I do now. The papers had to be sent to Mictetzuma and Hermosillo, and to the City of Mexico and back, and while I was waiting around I dug in on this lead and opened up the prettiest vein of quartz you ever saw in your life. Here's a sample of it, and it's sure rich."

He handed De Lancey the familiar piece of quartz and proceeded with his story.

"That ore looked so good to me that I couldn't wait—I shipped it before I got my title. And right there I made my mistake. When Aragon saw the gold in that rock he just quietly recorded the concession in his own name and told me to go to blazes. That's the greaser of it! So I blew the whole mine up and hit for the border. That's the Dutch of it, I reckon," he added grimly. "Anyway, my old man was Dutch."

He paused, smiling over the memory of his misplaced credulity, and Hooker and De Lancey joined in a hearty laugh. From the town bum that he had first seemed his shabby little man had changed in their eyes until now he was a border Croesus, the mere recital of whose adventures conjured up in their minds visions of gold and hidden treasure.

The rugged face of Bud Hooker, which had been set in grim lines from the first, relaxed as the tale proceeded and his honest eyes glowed with admiration as he heard the well-planned scheme. As for De Lancey, he could hardly restrain his enthusiasm, and drawn on by the contagion, Henry Kruger made maps and answered questions until every detail was settled.

"After the location had been marked, and the lost tunnel charted from the

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she lays between shale and porphyry." His eyes sparkled as he carefully replaced the specimen, and then he looked up at Bud.

"I'll let you in on that," he said, "half and half—or I'll pay two hundred dollars a month and a bonus. You alone. Now how about it?"

"For a moment Hooker looked at him as if to read his thoughts; then he shook his head and exhaled his smoke regretfully.

"Nope," he said. "Me and Phil are pardners. We work together."

"I'll give you three hundred!" cried Kruger, half rising in his chair.

"Nope," grunted Bud, "we're pardners."

"Huh!" snorted the mining man, and hung away in disgust. But as he

"I'll Give You Three Hundred!" Cried Kruger.

neared the door a new thought struck him and he came as quickly back. "You can do what you please about your pardner," he said. "I'm talking to you! Now—will you think about it?"

"Sure!" returned Hooker. "Well, then," snapped Kruger, "meet me at the Waldorf in an hour!"

CHAPTER III.

On the untrammelled frontier, where most men are willing to pass for what they are without keeping up any "front," much of the private business, as well as the general devilment, is transacted in the back rooms of saloons. The Waldorf was nicely furnished in this regard.

After a drink at the bar, in which De Lancey and Hooker joined, Henry Kruger led the way casually to the rear, and in a few moments they were safely closed.

"Now," began Kruger, as he took a seat by the table and faced them with snapping eyes, "the first thing I want to make plain to you gentlemen is, if I make any deal today it's to be with Mr. Hooker. If you boys are pardners you can talk it over together, but I deal with one man, and that's Hooker."

"All right?" he inquired, glancing at De Lancey, and that young man nodded indulgently.

"Very well, then," resumed Kruger, "now to get down to business. This mine that I'm talking about is located down here in Sonora within three hours' ride of a big American camp. It isn't any old Spanish mine, or lost padre layout; it's a well-defined ledge running three or four hundred dollars to the ton—and I know right where it is, too."

"What I want to do is to establish the title to it now, while this revolution is going on, and make a bonanza out of it afterward. Of course, if you boys don't want to go back into Mexico, that settles it; but if you do go, and I let you in on the deal, you've got to see it through or I'll lose the whole thing. So make up your minds, and if you say you'll go, I want you to stick to it!"

"We'll go, all right," spoke up De Lancey. "If it's rich enough."

"How about you?" inquired Kruger, turning impatiently on Bud; "will you go?"

"Yes, I'll go," answered Bud sullenly. "But I ain't stuck on the job," he added. "Jest about get it opened up when a bunch of rebels will jump in and take everything we've got."

"Well, you get a title to it and pay your taxes and you can come out, then," conceded Henry Kruger.

"No," grumbled Hooker, "if I go I'll stay with it." He glanced at his pardner at this, but he, for one, did not seem to be worried.

"I'll try anything—once!" he observed with a sprightly air, and Bud grinned sardonically at the well-worn phrase.

"Well," said Kruger, gazing inquiringly from one to the other, "is it a go? Will you shake hands on it?"

"What's the proposition?" broke in De Lancey eagerly.

"The deal is between me and Hooker," corrected Kruger. "I'll give him three hundred a month, or an equal share in the mine, expenses to be shared between us."

"Make it equal shares," said Hooker, holding out his hand, "and I'll give half of mine to Phil."

"All right, my boy!" cried the old man, suddenly clapping him on the shoulder. "I'll go you—and you'll never regret it," he added significantly. Then, throwing off the air of guarded secrecy which had characterized his actions so far, he sat down and began to talk.

(To be continued.)

Winthrop College. SCHOLARSHIP AND ENTRANCE EXAMINATION

The examination for the award of vacant scholarships in Winthrop College and for the admission of new students will be held at the County Court House on Friday, July 2, at 9 a. m. Applicants must not be less than sixteen years of age. When Scholarships are vacant after July 3 they will be awarded to those making the highest average at this examination, provided they meet the conditions governing the award. Applicants for scholarships should write to President Johnson before the examination for Scholarship examination blanks. Scholarships are worth \$100 and free tuition. The next session will open September 16, 1914. For further information and catalogue, address President D. B. Johnson, Rock Hill, S. C.