

The Land of Broken Promises

A Stirring Story of the Mexican Revolution

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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 to the 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 cloaked.

"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 partners 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 an 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. "Just about get it opened up 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 partner 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.

"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 euchred 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 mineral 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 partner 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-goned 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 pieces 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 this 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 corner monuments, he bade them remember it well and destroyed every vestige of paper. Then, as a final admonition, he said:

"Now go in there quietly, boys—don't hurry. Prospect around a little and the Mexicans will all come to you and try to sell you lost mines. Cruz Mendez is the man you're looking for—he's honest, and he'll take you to the Eagle Tail. After that you can use your own judgment. So good-by!"—he took them by the hands—"and don't talk!"

He held up a warning finger as they parted, and Bud nodded briefly in reply. Silence was a habit with him, desert-bred, and he nodded his head for two.

CHAPTER IV.

From the times of David and Jonathan down to the present day the world has been full of young men sworn to friendship and seeking adventure in pairs. "Partners," they call them; in the west, and though the word has not crept into the dictionary yet, it is as different from "partner" as a friend is from a business associate.

They travel together, these partners of the West, and whether they be cowboys or "Cousin Jacks," the boss who fires one of them fires both of them, and they go share and share in everything.

Bud Hooker and Philip De Lancey had met by chance in El Paso when the revolution was just beginning to boil and the city was swarming with adventurers. The agents of the rebels were everywhere, urging Americans to join their cause. Military preference, cash payments, and grants of land were the baits they used, but Hooker stood out from the first and took De Lancey with him. A Mexican promise did not pass current where he was born and they went to the mines instead.

Then the war broke out and, while fugitives streamed out of stricken Chihuahua, they finally struck out against the tide, fighting their way to a certain mine far back in the Sierra Madres, where they could dig the gold on shares.

Behind them the battle waged; Casas Grandes was taken and retaken; Juarez, Agua Negra and Chihuahua fell; Don Porfirio, the Old Man of Mexico, went out and Madero took his place; and still they worked for their stake.

Then new arms and ammunition flowed in from across the border; Orozco and his rebel chiefs went out, and the breath of war fanned higher against the hills. At last the first broken band of rebels came straggling by, and, reading hate and envy in their lawless eyes, the Americans dug up their gold at sundown and rode all the night for their lives.

And now, welded together by all that toil and danger, they were partners, cherishing no delusions as to each other's strength or weaknesses, but joined together for better or worse.

It was the last thing that either of them expected, but three days after they fled out of Mexico, and with all their money unspent, the hand of fate seized upon them and sent them back to another adventure.

It was early morning again, with crowds along the street, and as they



Make Maps and Answered Questions Until Every Detail Was Settled.

ambled slowly along toward the line the men on the corners stared at them. The bunch of cowboys gazed at Bud, who sported a new pair of high-heeled boots, and knew him by the way he rode; and the mining men looked searchingly at De Lancey, as if to guess the secret of his quest.

A squad of mounted troopers, riding out on border patrol, gazed after them questioningly, but Bud and Phil rode on soberly, leading their pack, and headed for Agua Negra across the line.

It was a grim place to look at, this border town of Agua Negra, for the war had swept it twice. A broad waste of level land lay between it and the prosperous American city, and across this swath, where the Mausers and machine guns had twice mowed, lay the huddle of low houses which marked the domain of Mexico.

Fussy little customs officials, lurking like spiders in their cooped-up guardhouses, raved out as they crossed the deep trench and demanded their permit to pass arms. The moment they crossed the line the air seemed to be pervaded with Latin excitability and ill-jan jealousy, but De Lancey replied in florid Spanish and before his title assurances and fulsome compliments it was dissipated in a moment.

"Good! I see on, amigos," cried the beady-eyed little jefe, pasting a label on their pack. "Adios, senior," he added, returning Phil's salute with a military flourish, and with a scornful glance at Bud he observed that the gentleman was muy caballero.

"Huh!" remarked Bud, as they rode on through the town, "we're in Mexico all right, all right. Talk with both hands and get busy with your eyebrows—and holy Joe, look at them pelones!"

The pelones referred to were a squad of Mexican federal soldiers, so-called from their heads being shaved, and they were marching doggedly to and fro through the thorny mesquit bushes in response to shouted orders from an officer. Being from Zacatecas, where the breed is short, they stood about as high as their guns; and their crumpled linen suits and flapping sandals detracted sadly from the soldierly effect.

Big and hulking, and swelling with the pride of his kind, Hooker looked them over slowly, and spoke his hidden thought.

"I wonder," he said, turning to Phil, "how many of them I could lick with one hand?"

"Well, they're nothing but a lot of petty convicts, anyway," answered De Lancey, "but here's some boys ahead that'll bet could hold you, man for

man, husky as you are, old fellow."

They were riding past a store, now serving as an improvised barracks, and romping about in the streets were a pair of tall Yaqui Indians, each decorated with a cartridge-belt about his hips in token of his military service. Laughing and grabbing for holds, they frolicked like a couple of boys until finally they closed in a grapple that revealed a sudden and pantherlike strength.

And a group of others, sunning themselves against the wall, looked up at the Americans with eyes as fearless as mountain eagles.

"Yes, that's right," admitted Bud, returning the friendly greeting, "but we'll never have no trouble with them."

"Well, these Nacionales are not so bad," defended Phil, as they passed the state soldiers of Sonora on the street, "but they're just as friendly as the Yaquis."

"Sure," jeered Bud, "when they're sober! But you get a bunch of 'em drunk and ask 'em what they think of the gringos! No, you got to show me—I've seen too much of 'em."

"You haven't seen as much of 'em as I have, yet," retorted De Lancey quickly. "I've been all over the republic, except right here in Sonora, and I swear these Sonorans here look good to me. There's no use holding a grudge against them, Bud—they haven't done us any dirt."

"No, they never had no chance," grumbled Bud, gazing grimly to the south. "But wait till the hot weather comes and the revoltosos come out of their holes; wait till them Chihuahuas greasers throw up in the Sierras and come down to get some fresh mounts. Well, I'll tell 'em one thing," he ended, reaching down to pat his horse, "they'll never get old Copper Bottom here—not unless they steal him at night. It's all right to be cheerful about this, Phil, and you keep right on being glad, but I got a low-down lunch that we're going to get 'em bad."

"Well, I've got just as good a lunch," came back De Lancey, "that we're going to make a killing."

"Yes, and speaking about killings," said Bud, "you don't want to overlook that."

He pointed at a group of dismantled adobe buildings standing out on the edge of the town and flanked by a segment of whitewashed wall all spattered and breched with bullet-holes.

"There's where these prize Mexicans of yours pulled off the biggest killing in Sonora. I was over here yesterday with that old prospector and he told me that that wall is the bull-ring. After the first big fight they gathered up three hundred and fifty men, more or less, and throwed 'em in a trench along by the wall—then they blowed it over on 'em with a few sticks of dynamite and let 'em pass for buried. No crosses or nothing. Excuse me, if they ever break loose like that—we might get planted with the rest!"

"By Jove, old top," exclaimed De Lancey, laughing teasingly, "you've certainly got the blues today. Here, take something out of this bottle and see if it won't help."

He brought out a quart bottle from his saddle-bags and Bud drank, and shuddered at the bite of it.

"All right," he said, as he passed it back, "and while we're talking, what's the matter with cutting it out on booze for this trip?"

"What are you going to drink, then?" cried De Lancey in feigned alarm, "water?"

"Well, something like that," admitted Bud. "Come on—what do you say? We might get lit up and tell something."

"Now lookie here, Bud," clamored Phil, who had had a few drinks already, "you don't mean to insinuate, do you? Next thing I know you'll be asking me to cut it out on the hay—might talk in my sleep, you know, and give the whole snap away!"

"No, you're a good boy when you're asleep, Phil," responded Bud, "but when you get about half shot it's different. Come on, now—I'll quit if you will. That's fair, ain't it?"

"What? No little toots around town? No serenading the señoritas and giving the rurales the hotfoot? Well, what's the use of living, Bud, if you can't have a little fun? Drinking don't make any difference, as long as we stick together. What's the use of swearing off—going on record in advance? We may find some fellow that we can't work any other way—we may have to go on a drunk with him in order to get his goat. But will you stick? That's the point!"

Bud glanced at him and grunted, and for a long time he rode on in silence. Before them lay a rolling plain, dipping by broad gulches and dwindling ridges to the lower levels of Old Mexico, and on the skyline, thin and blue, stood the knife-like edges of the Fortunas miles away.

With desert-trained eyes he noted the landmarks. San Juan mountain to the right, Old Niggerhead to the left, and the feather-edge of mountains far below; and as he looked he stored it away in his mind in case he should come back on the run some night.

It was not a foreboding, but the training of his kind, to note the lay of the ground, and he planned just where he would ride to keep under cover if he ever made a dash for the line. But all the time his partner was talking of friendship and of the necessity of their sticking together.

"I'll tell you, Bud," he said at last, his voice trembling with sentiment, "whether we win or lose, I won't have a single regret as long as I know we've been true to one another. You may know Texas and Arizona, Bud, but I know Old Mexico, the land of manana and broken promises. I know the country, Bud—and the climate—and the women!"

"They play the devil with the best of us, Bud, these dark-eyed señoritas! That's what makes all the trouble down here between man and man, it's these women and their ways. They're not satisfied to win a man's heart—they want him to kill somebody to show that he really loves them. By Jove, they're a fickle lot, and nothing pleases 'em more than setting man against man, one partner against another."

"We never had any trouble yet," observed Bud sentimentally.

"No, but we're likely to," protested De Lancey. "These Indian women up in the Sierras wouldn't turn anybody's head, but we're going down into the hot country now, where the girls are pretty, ta-ra, ta-ra, and we talk through the windows at midnight."

"Well, if you'll cut out the booze," said Hooker shortly, "you can have 'em all, or all of me."

"Sure, that's what you say, but wait till you see them! Oh, la, la, la!"—he kissed his fingers ecstatically—"I'll be glad to see 'em myself! But listen, Bud, here's the proposition, let's take an oath right now, while we're starting out, that whatever comes up we'll always be true to each other. If one of us is wounded, the other stays with him; if he's in prison, he gets him out; if he's killed, he avenges his—"

"Say," broke in Bud, jostling him rudely as he reached into the saddle-bags, "let me carry that bottle for a while."

He took a big drink out of it to prevent De Lancey from getting it all and shoved it inside his overalls.

"All right, partner," he continued, with a mocking smile, "anything you say. I never use oaths myself much, but anything to oblige."

"No, but I mean it, Bud!" cried De Lancey. "Here's the proposition now. Whatever happens, we stay with each other till this deal is finished; on all scratch cases we match money to see who's it; and if we tangle over some girl the best man wins and the other one stays away. We leave it to the girl which one wins. Will you shake hands on that?"

"I'll do it," responded Bud; "I'll do it anyway."

"Well, shake on it then!" insisted De Lancey, holding out his hand.

"Oh, Sally!" burst out Bud, hanging his head in embarrassment, "what's the use of getting mushy?"

But a moment later he leaned over in his saddle and locked hands with a viselike grip.

"My old man told me not to make no such promises," he muttered, "but I'll do it, being's it's ye..."

(To be continued.)



FOR THE TENNIS GIRL

More and more is the sportswoman getting to be the rival of her brother when it comes to a matter of comfortable clothes. Here we have her enjoying the freedom of a pocket. She can carry all sorts of things in it, and they will not fall out, for under its trimming of buttons and buttonholes there are two snap fasteners, easily opened and easily shut.

NOTICE OF STOCKHOLDERS MEETING

The annual meeting of the Perpetual Building & Loan Association of Anderson, S. C., will be held at the Bank of Anderson, Tuesday, June 23, 1914, at 4 o'clock. Please be represented either in person or by proxy. R. E. Ligon, President. P. E. Clinkscales, Cashier.

STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

A meeting of the stockholders of Anderson Theatre Company will be held at the Chamber of Commerce of Anderson, S. C., at 5 o'clock P. M., on Tuesday, June 23rd, 1914, for the purpose of changing the name of said company and authorizing an increase of the capital stock to Thirty thousand Dollars.

J. S. FOWLER, President.

COME MONDAY

Our Annual June Underwear Sale is now on.

All underwear displayed on center aisle first floor.

D. GEISBERG

Agents Gossard Correl.

A MESSAGE TO GARCIA

Taking it up one side and down the other, as well as we can gather, there is around 66 2-3 or 70 per cent of a stand of cotton in this section. The Government report puts it 72 per cent. Some sections of the State may have better stands than we have, and so taking it up one side and down the other, our stand as well as we can gather, is around 66 2-3 or 70 per cent of a perfect stand. While this is not ideal, still there is enough cotton up to make a good crop of cotton if you will feed it and nurse it and pomper it.

If you will side dress it once or twice, putting from 150 to 200 pounds of fertilizer to the acre, each time, you get all out of your crop that can be gotten. And that is all that you can do.

You can get more out of this 66 2-3 per cent of a stand by feeding it and nursing it and pompering it than you can get out of an ordinary stand where you don't side dress it. But in side dressing this crop, you want the very best goods made for this purpose. It is no time for experiments, the business of this crop requireth haste, it is no time to take chances, you want a sure thing.

The side dressing fertilizer made by the Anderson Phosphate & Oil Company is the best made. Remember that side dressing makes more bolls and larger bolls, stands drought better, stands anything better, it is better fed and is stronger. Remember, too, that 1300 pounds of seed cotton that has been side dressed, will make as heavy a bale of cotton as 1500 pounds that has not been side dressed. But it takes the best fertilizer to do this. When you buy side dressing get the best. Get the best, and forget the rest.

ANDERSON PHOSPHATE & OIL CO.

It will pay you to pomper your corn crop too this year. It will be pretty rough to make a short cotton crop, and then buy corn. It pays handsomely to fertilize corn.

We Have Buggies

coming in almost every day the latest shipment being a car of

—COLUMBUS—

Come in and let us show them. They are 1914 Models.

We have a nice line of Pony buggies.

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