

Under Pressure

By George Agnew Chamberlain

© George Agnew Chamberlain
WNU Service

CHAPTER XI—Continued

He glanced into Joyce's boudoir and passed the open door of the drawing room. Then he retraced his steps and strolled to the opposite corner only to behold more emptiness. Abruptly he knew the truth as certainly as if he had watched Joyce lead Adan down the narrow passage toward a certain spiral stair. His heart contracted with such violence it caused him to halt in his tracks in more senses than one. Where was he headed? Where had he already arrived?

His deduction had been correct; Joyce had taken Adan to the roof. As they emerged into a transluence which would have been blinding had it not been dimmed by the impalpable golden dust of the night she turned toward her companion with caught breath. His face was amiable and alive but apparently his open eyes were blind. She felt dismay and then an impulse to laugh aloud at herself. She restrained it, aided by a feeling of sadness. The impassivity of his expression dumfounded her. Was it credible he saw neither moon nor stars nor that distant double torch of snow rising against the pale blue of heaven?

Rather hopelessly she led the way to the parapet and sat down, sensing a drag as if he followed unwillingly. Last night she had shivered and Dirk had put his coat around her shoulders; tonight it was Adan who quivered to the cold but she had no wrap to lend him. Since he was far more warmly dressed than she it seemed the cold which affected him must come from within himself. He was silent; not morose—just silent and suffering. If he saw the moon, the stars and the Nevada at all, it was with a calculating and compressing eye that strove to diminish grandeur to the size of a stage backdrop for future reference. He was theater, he was city, and he was Latin; furthermore such nights as this, with snow-capped Popo added to the Sleeping Woman for extra measure, were the everyday chili-con-carne of his existence. He made a movement toward his breast pocket. At least they could talk, thought Joyce; she must say something—must, must! She turned her head and felt her jaw drop loose. Adan was knotting his silk handkerchief at the back of his neck, arranging it in such a manner as to mask nose and mouth against the perils of the night air.

Joyce almost choked. "You don't like it here, do you?" she managed to murmur.

"Oh, yes, I do," replied Adan in muffled tones. "Much better than when Pepe ran the place."

Again Joyce caught her breath. "That's so," she said presently, "you visited him, didn't you?"

"Once."

"What was it? A shooting party?"

"Oh, no—a roughhouse. We brought down a carload of girls and two carloads of men. Don't let me talk about it." Abruptly his voice turned pleading. "Let's go down to the piano. I want to play for you—play for you like last night."

She rose with a sense of relief and escape to which were added several more poignant emotions—chagrin, self-pity, disappointment, to name only three, and a sort of confused dismay composed of anger at herself, and at the world in general and Dirk in particular. What had he to do with it? Nothing. That was why she was angry at him and somehow it seemed a perfectly good reason. As she hurried along the balcony, heading for the drawing room, she saw him leaning on the rail, his face lifted toward the visible patch of sky.

"Adan is going to play," she said crisply. "Want to come along?"

"No, thanks," said Dirk even more curtly. "I'm going to bed."

Under her urging Adan played only boisterous music—rollicking marches, rumbas and a galloping passo libre—and when he tried to slip into a languorous tango or a dreamy waltz she broke in with a cry: "No, no! something fast, faster—something jolly." She was studying him, measuring him by his own standard, yet giving him no chance to practice the whole alchemy of his art. He could have his piano but nothing more. Sitting there, with his agile fingers flying over the keys, he became readable, clear to her eyes. He was handsome, good-natured, shrewd, kind-hearted and fearless—an ideal master of ceremonies. Quite suddenly he rose from the piano and faced her, his eyes hard.

"You don't like me tonight," he stated.

"Why, yes, I do, Adan," stammered Joyce, "of course I do. What makes you say that?"

"No, no," said Adan, somewhat bewildered at finding himself in a role whose lines and cues he had totally forgotten if he had ever known them—the role of the undesired. He couldn't yet quite believe it. Much less could he conceive he might soon find himself cast as a pursuer if he didn't take his eyes off the flushed face before him. But some inkling of danger may have

stirred his senses as he continued, "It's different tonight. You ask for silly, meaningless music—music with no soul. You don't come with me. You stand to one side to see how fast I can run up and down the piano without losing my breath. No; I won't play any more. I'm a man, not a whippet chasing an electric rabbit for you to laugh. Good-night, senorita. You are very beautiful, but this evening you happen not to be a woman."

CHAPTER XII

The bullet which passed through Dorado's leg and traversed the heart of his horse was steel-jacketed; had it been soft-nosed the wound would have been serious, possibly fatal. The heavy-set general suffered far more from the shock of his fall than by reason of the hole through his thigh, nevertheless he considered his condition grave enough to appeal to Blackadder for advice and aid. He released him from the batea and installed him as nurse—a change equivalent to a transfer from one galley bench to another since, needless to say, Pepe was in the vilest of tempers.

Blackadder had often been called upon to act as surgeon in far more desperate cases amid surroundings fully as primitive. He procured a



"That's It," Said Blackadder.

couple of cotton jumpers, soft and ragged with wear, requisitioned a precious bar of soap and washed them out with his own hands. Then he boiled a kettle of water, tossed in a handful of salt and was ready. With a mighty grip he pressed the wound both ways from the inside out until the blood showed bright and clear of impurities. He took surly satisfaction in Dorado's howls of pain and a subsequent torrent of imprecations as the outlets were bathed with hot brine and then bandaged. Almost hourly thereafter the patient would insist on having the dressing removed. With plenty of salt water on hand Blackadder felt no fear of infection but resented such frequent interruption since he was busy with affairs of his own.

Keeping his ears and eyes wide open, a single day sufficed to give him an accurate idea of the layout of the camp; since nobody thought he knew Spanish all talked freely in his presence. It was situated at the northeastern extremity of the barranca where the chasm pinched out against sheer cliffs at whose feet bubbled the spring which supplied the brook with water. At night all the so-called miners—nothing but enslaved peons picked up at random—were herded into the depths of the two drifts opposite the one occupied by Dorado and himself. The riders then spread their petates in the airy entrances, forming a solid layer of bodies over which a fugitive would have to fly like a bat to escape. In addition two men with shotguns stood guard day and night at the right-angle turn downstream.

So much for the exterior; by night, when sleep seemed to have a fair hold on his patient, Blackadder would slip away for subterranean exploration. Darkness was his greatest handicap. Matches were scarce, candles there were none nor any lantern. Again inventiveness backed by experience—to say nothing of a knowledge of capillary attraction—came to his aid. Luxuriant castor oil shrubs grew in the shadow cast by the southern wall. He gathered a quantity of the berries, crushed out their oil into a discarded tomato can and rolled a strip off a bandage into a wick. Coiling it in the tin he let one end hang over the side, lighted it and found himself provided with a tiny but lasting beam of light.

By its aid he was able to explore the cavernous reaches behind Dorado's dwelling. There were three inner rooms besides his own. In one, sealed with a locked door of

hewn timbers, he knew the daily washings of gold were stored. The other two were open to such air as was available and matted heaps of hay showed they had been used as habitations. What interested him most, however, was the shaft he had surmised must exist. He found it on his third excursion and to his delight discovered it was not vertical but ascended at a slant, showing whoever had sunk it had lacked a mechanical hoist. No doubt it was cluttered with debris, but where men had once passed a man could pass again. Here was a road to freedom, ready-made, but reflection forced him to admit it could lead only to recapture or starvation in the desert; without a horse waiting at the exit it was useless.

He reverted to the idea which had developed in a flash to the size of a full-grown oak—trade La Barranca for possession of Joyce. He had no illusions as to the cash value of the hacienda. Discovery of the bootleg gold diggings might have impressed a novice, but not an old-timer who happened to know Mexican law establishes the subsol as the inalienable property of the state. Aware of the general situation as well, he was convinced tragic trouble and no conceivable gain would be Joyce's inevitable lot should he fall in his intention to rescue her, willing or unwilling. Dorado himself gave an opening.

"Bueno, cabron, it is now the third day and you write no letter. Tomorrow I think perhaps I send one finger."

"Listen, Dorado," said Blackadder, "you and I have seen a lot of each other and we ought to be able to talk straight from the shoulder. You occupied La Barranca for several years. Wouldn't you like to lay your hands on it again?"

Dorado straightened too suddenly, groaned and settled back.

"Go on," he ordered. "You talk, I listen, then I tell you."

"You know who threw you out, don't you?"

"That Pancho Buenaventura," cried Dorado, turning purple, "and his butcher-boss, General Onelia."

"No, no," said Blackadder impatiently. "Didn't you see a girl? Don't you know anything about her?"

"Girl?" repeated Dorado, his eyes suddenly wide. "Yes, I see one girl. Verry nice girl. Who is she?"

"The daughter of Cutler Sewell, the man from whom you stole the hacienda. He's dead and she owns it."

"Me, steal!" cried Dorado, enraged. "Pepe Dorado steal! No, no. That gringo, he abandon La Barranca."

"Just so," said Blackadder, "exactly the way you abandoned it five or six days ago, exactly the way the present tenant might be urged into abandoning it again. Get it, or do you want half an hour to think the thing out?"

"Si, si," murmured Dorado thoughtfully. "You tell me some more now."

"Here it is—the whole thing in a nutshell. I lied when I said I don't speak Spanish and again about being a prospector. I'm Miss Joyce Sewell's guardian acting for her stepmother. We don't want her to stay at La Barranca at any price. When you held me up you did yourself a bad turn because I was on my way to drag her out. If you want the place, help me do it now."

"How?"

"Give me a horse. Send guards to watch me all the way into the hacienda."

"Then what?"

"Sooner or later I'll snake the girl out and La Barranca will be once more abandoned and at your mercy. The only thing that stops me is how to get away to Toluca

and from there to Mexico City." He paused. "Of course, if you should try any double-crossing in the way of holding us both for ransom you'd lose the hacienda in the end and perhaps your life."

Dorado thought for a long time, his eyes half closed lest Blackadder read his mind. What fools these gringos were—they still believed in honor among thieves! He pictured first La Barranca, most desirable of all haciendas as far as he was concerned, then Joyce whom two flashes had revealed to be as lovely a girl as he had ever seen. At the moment he honestly believed he could be happy with either as long as he lived—but with both? Mere anticipation caused moisture to gather at the corners of his loose mouth.

"In exchange for freedom and the senorita," he announced finally, "you make offer of La Barranca. So?"

"That's it," said Blackadder. "I accept. The matter of your escape to Mexico City is not difficult to arrange. Near the hacienda there is a rope bridge which saves many miles. I have a car in Toluca; I shall send for it and hide it by night in an arroyo. I'll have horses at the bridge when you arrive with the senorita and I myself will be there to wish you both goodspeed. It remains only to agree on a signal announcing you are ready."

"That's the trouble," said Blackadder, scowling. "How do I know just when I'll be ready since I may have to carry the girl out against her will?"

"So?" murmured Dorado curiously. "But let's not worry over such small difficulties. The moon is in its third quarter; before it rises there are two hours of darkness. When do you wish to start?"

"Today. Now."

"Bueno. Tomorrow night, and the next, and the night after that, I shall spend the two hours immediately preceding the rising of the moon at the bridge—on the north side. Be careful how you cross it."

"I know all about rope bridges," said Blackadder. "What about your leg?"

"You are a good doctor. It is quite nearly well. Today I can walk. I will show you; I shall go now to choose your horse and give orders."

Blackadder took advantage of his absence to descend to the brook as though to wash his hands but in reality to recover his passport and wallet. Half an hour later, accompanied by three guards armed with carbines, he was riding downstream toward the switchback path which had caused him such agony a few days before. Since it was the only exit from the barranca through all its length they were obliged, once the level of the prairie was reached, to ride all the way back around the camp before starting down the other side. Before they made the turn, however, he noticed a peculiar depression masked by a patch of thorny acacias. Deliberately he passed to windward of it and caught a faint odor of smoke; so, he thought, had he risked the shaft here is where he would have come out.

But that was not to be his only discovery. An hour later, chancing to glance across the barranca, he saw a sight that first puzzled, then amazed him. Three lorries were wending their way over the plain from the general direction of Toluca. That in itself was not surprising; what astonished him was their freight—each was loaded with a howitzer. At first he had thought they were boilers; but no, there was no doubt about it, they were howitzers. He questioned the men but got only shrugs for his pains and a little farther on they came to a halt.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Word "On" Is Frequently Mispronounced; "Again" Next in Order for Carelessness

What common words do we Americans mispronounce? The office of education has helped to compile a list of the dozen words in common use that are most abused.

Strange as it may seem, the two-letter word "on" is the most frequently misused word on the list. You might think that almost anyone could pronounce this preposition correctly, but thousands say "un" or "en" and the word is just about number one in the battered American vocabulary, observes a Washington United Press correspondent.

Number two is "again." Folk in this country apparently like to pronounce it like something left over from the prosperity days before 1929, as "a-gain," or they may shorten it to "a-gen."

The rest of the list runs: toward, interesting, accept, address, preferable, drowned, perform, automobile, attacked and forehead.

For correct pronunciations, consult your dictionary. This is the court of last appeal in case you get into an argument. Remember that

the first form given in the dictionary is the preferred one.

All these words are supposed to be in the vocabulary of a person who knows at least 2,000 words. This fact is based on numerous studies of the frequency with which words are used in speech, in newspapers, in magazines, in books and on the air waves.

Of course, other words may be mispronounced a higher percentage of times, but such words belong to the higher levels of personal vocabularies that include more than 2,000 words.

For example, here are a few sticklers for your tongue if you have a vocabulary running up to 5,000 words:

Literature, extraordinary, envelope, drama, detail, recess, route and subtle.

Produced the Billiard Table
Robert Gillow, an English furniture manufacturer and designer, produced the present type billiard table in the Eighteenth century.

A Lift Toward Spring



GOOD frocks and true are these currently exhibited by your favorite designers, Sew-Your-Own. There's an ultra-polished model for informal evenings (dancing and that sort of thing), called the "Good-night frock." Then there's the more home-loving "Good-morning" number, and, to complete the trio, a swell little afternoon frock for tea-time goings-on. Why not spend happy days ahead in these very frocks? All you need do, you know, is to Sew, Sew, Sew-Your-Own!

Spring Frock.
The girl who has a flare for streamlining will see at once that the frock at the left is meant for her—just for her. She will make it of satin if she's thinking ahead to Spring; of wool if her mind is on the present or near future. She will puff the sleeves gently, give the girde tie a fair firm snug-ging-up, adjust the chic cowl neck—and she'll be something lovely to look at. Yes, Milady, this is the "Good-night frock" and if it's the last thing you do, you must add it in your new wardrobe.

To Start the Day.
When you greet the little family with that bright and cheery "Good morning," be sure your frock reflects an equally sweet note. Sew-Your-Own's most assuring number to this end is pictured above center. With a copy or two in gay gingham or seersucker you'll breeze through your day's work like nobody's business. The shirt-waist styling offers style and comfort that make this your best bet for early season's wear.

A "Go-Gittin'" Style.
And for a charming "Good afternoon," choose a frock with plenty on the personality side. Such is the new young model at the right. Buttons in a line down the front tell you in so many dots and dashes that here you have "go-gittin'" style for Spring, 1933. Princess lines cared for fastidiously by a

belt, and a collar with much of what it takes—these are things that prompt Sew-Your-Own to put this frock in its Fashion-First Review for the Spring season. Make your version soon, Milady. That invitation to tea will find you unafraid and eager to go.

The Patterns.
Pattern 1410 is designed for sizes 12 to 20 (30 to 38 bust). Size 14 requires 4½ yards of 39-inch material, plus ¾ of a yard contrast for trimming sash as pictured.

Pattern 1438 is designed for sizes 36 to 52. Size 38 requires 4¾ yards of 35-inch material.

Pattern 1211 is designed for sizes 12 to 20 (30 to 40 bust). Size 14 requires 3½ yards of 35-inch material, plus ¾ yard contrasting for collar and cuffs.

Send your order to The Sewing Circle Pattern Dept., Room 1020, 211 W. Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill. Price of patterns, 15 cents (in coins) each.

© Bell Syndicate.—WNU Service.

Power of Speech

Whitefield, famous old preacher, was addressing an assembly of seamen: "Well, my boys, we have a clear sky, and are making fine headway . . ." he began, and then, "Hark! Don't you hear distant thunder? Don't you see flashes of lightning? There is a storm gathering! The air is dark! The tempest rages! Our masts are gone! The ship is on her beams ends! What next?" At this dramatic climax, it is said, the tars, reminded of former perils on the deep, as if struck by the power of magic, rose with united voice and cried, "Take to the lifeboats."

Smiles

Can't Be That
Father—I think my watch needs cleaning.
Small Son—Oh, no; I had it in the bath yesterday.

Others in the Field
"Have you proposed?"
"Well, I was just coming to it when she said she loved Shelley, Wordsworth—and somebody else. What chance do I stand with three other blokes in the running?"

Stingy Patient (to Dentist)—
Two dollars to pull out a front tooth? I should say not. I'll start a fight on the way home.

Other Way Round
Horse-Owner—I'm afraid, sir, I must ask you to pay in advance for the hire of the horse.
Amateur Rider—What's that for? Are you afraid I shall come back without the horse?
Horse-Owner—Oh, no, sir. But the horse might come back without you.

Keeping Count
The amorous honeymoon couple were a nuisance to the other passengers in the railway compartment.

"Do you love me, George?" asked the bride.

The old man opposite rose. "Pardon me," he said courteously to the bridegroom, "she's asked you that thirty-eight times so far. I'm getting out at this station, but I'll leave the score with this gentleman in the corner."

NERVOUS?

Do you feel so nervous you want to scream? Are you cross and irritable? Do you feel those distressing twinges?

If your nerves are on edge, try LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND. It often helps Nature calm quivering nerves.

For three generations one woman has told another how to go "smiling through" with Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. It helps Nature tone up the system, thus lessening the discomforts from the functional disorders which women must endure.

Make a note NOW to get a bottle of Lydia E. Pinkham's Compound today. Write WITHEOUT FAIL from your druggist—more than a million women have written in letters reporting benefits.

Why not try LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S VEGETABLE COMPOUND?



IT'S LUDEN'S FOR COUGHS

CHEW LONG BILL NAVY TOBACCO 5¢ PLUS

Bridge Winter with Quaker State Winter Motor Oil

Enjoy easy starting, care-free lubrication, and economical lubrication for the rest of the Winter. Quaker State Winter Oil is made only of finest Pennsylvania crude oil . . . specially refined for Winter. It flows freely when cold . . . gives the most full-bodied lubrication. The retail price is 35¢ a quart. Quaker State Oil Refining Corporation, Oil City, Pennsylvania.

