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VIA WIRELESS

Novelized by Thompson Buchanan From the Successful Play of the Same Name

By WINCHELL SMITH, FREDERIC THOMPSON and PAUL ARMSTRONG

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CHAPTER XIV.

The Perils of the Sea.
The steamer Mongolian was pitching, tossing, pounding along as best she could through the night. For ten hours she had fought her way up the coast in the face of the worst storm of the season.

Now, off Hatteras, the danger spot in the route from Porto Rico to New York, the sturdy little liner scarcely seemed able to make any progress. She had been forced miles off her course and closer in toward the dangerous reefs than her captain liked.

Not that the liner herself was in any grave danger, for the old Mongolian and her experienced captain had faced too many Atlantic storms for even a big one to alarm them. The hatches had all been battened down, the passengers were below, and the stanch steamer, stripped as much as possible, slowly rising to each attack of the waves, drove on with all the power of her engines under the storm.

Up in the little wireless room, the highest point on the ship, Harling, the young operator, clung to his berth and wondered what was going to happen.

It was his second trip to sea and his first big storm, so no wonder the young operator felt the thrill of the struggle and just the faintest fear for the outcome.

Every officer and man connected with the liner was on post, waiting anxiously for whatever might happen. They had little fears for the stanch Mongolian, but there were many ships



He volleyed out into the night a message of cheer.

less sturdy in those waters, and on such a night, with the vessel out of her course, there was no telling what might occur. The captain's last instruction had been to look out for wrecks.

Most of the vessels of any size in these waters carried wireless outfits, and in case of trouble they would be sure to send out broadcast their appeals for help. Little could be done in any case, but at least the Mongolian could stand by to help as much as she could or, if absolutely necessary, take advantage of the warnings to keep clear of wrecks.

For hours the pitching of the ship, timed irregularly to the roaring drive of the storm, had held the wireless man fast at his post. It was now past midnight and with little chance of any abatement before dawn.

Harling's nerves were on edge as he clung to his berth, wide eyed, alert, waiting, listening to the faintest click, that might be the forerunner to a peril of disaster and death. Half a dozen times his strained nerves had brought him struggling from his berth to receive such a message, only to find his imagination had been playing tricks with his fear.

Suddenly there came from the instrument clicks so sharp, so distinct and yet so hurried that the young fellow sprang from the berth and stumbled to the table, sure now that at last something was coming.

Again the instrument clicked wildly. To the ears of the strained operator it brought a chill, for he knew it was the sending of some one wild with fear. Anxiously, impatiently, he listened. At first he could make out nothing.

"They're crazy!" he exclaimed to himself. "What's the matter with them? They're the vessel with them?" The wild rattle of the receiver stopped, and Harling seized his own key.

"What's wrong?" said a fool. Keep your nerves. Send sense."

The touch of the key had brought him thoroughly to himself. His nerve tightened and his head grew cool as he drove his message fiercely out into the storm.

He paused, listened eagerly, and again the receiver began to click, almost as wildly, as insanely, as before. Only the skilled operator could make out "C-Q-D."

"A distress signal!" he gasped. "It's come."

Again the Mongolian's wireless operator seized his key and drove out his answer into the night.

As he waited he seized the telephone connection direct with the captain's stateroom.

that of a man absolutely insane from fear.

"Help! Help! For God's sake help us!" was all the receiver clicked.

At last it stopped a moment, and the Mongolian operator managed to cut in.

"Send name and position," he pounded fiercely. "Send position. Keep nerve. Send position."

He stopped, grasping the table and waiting anxiously.

"M-o-n-g-o-l-i-a-n-a-n!" the receiver clicked with a nervousness.

"The fool!" gasped Harling. "The dirty coward! Sending that way at such a time!"

He seized the key and drove out fiercely his command:

"Send position."

For reply the receiver clicked back in the same rattled way:

"Yacht Irvessa grounding on reef. For God's sake help us. Will you pay any reward if you will save us on once? Help us quick, for God's sake!"

The rage of the operator had risen. The thought of lives resting on the work of the coward was awful.

"The fool!" he gasped. "If he's breaking up, why is he wasting time that way?" And then his own message volleyed out into the night:

"What're you? Send position. Quick! In a panic click the answer came back. It was the same idiotic raving of a fear crazed man.

"I'll reward you. I am E. H. Pinckney and rich. Have thirty on board. Will reward handsomely."

Again Harling drove out the short demand for the position of the wrecked yacht. Then, as he waited for reply, he seized the captain's telephone a second time.

"It's the yacht Irvessa, captain. She reports going to pieces. There's a frightened fool at the key—E. H. Pinckney. Can't even get his position. I'm doing my best, sir, but Pinckney's lost his nerve completely. If they had a man at the key we might get something."

He hung up the phone to listen in disgust and despair to Pinckney's ravings driven out through the storm.

There was no chance for Harling to send. The man at the Irvessa key kept pounding with no sense to his messages. As the Mongolian operator waited for a break to cut in the captain, driven by the force of the wind, fairly burst into the little wireless room.

"Well," he snapped, "what is it now? Have you got the position of the Irvessa?"

Harling shook his head in disgust. "I can hardly make out what he says, captain. His sending is awful. He's a good operator, too, I believe, only he's lost his nerve completely. But as nearly as I can make out—it's a little better now. He says Irvessa, struck for New York from Porto Rico, bound reef two hours ago. Don't know where."

"Yes, yes, I understand," broke in the captain impatiently. "But can't he give us any idea of his course?" Can't send a reef is the only charted reef within 200 miles of our present position. Could you send 200 miles to-night?"

Harling shook his head. "I don't think we could, sir. And 200 miles for a yacht would be impossible. Wait a minute."

He sprang to the key again and with firm, emphatic strokes drove an imperative message.

"What's that?" asked the captain. "I asked for his radius of communication—how far he could send," explained Harling. He waited a moment, and then the receiver began again its nervous, frightened clicking.

The face of the listening operator brightened.

"Sixty miles," he exclaimed, translating the clicks. "Why, we must be within forty miles to get him at all to-night. But we are going toward him. We might now be within thirty miles."

The captain shook his head. "Both boats got away safely, Pinckney, Mrs. Durant, in first; also Miss Durant, I believe. Make every effort to save them."

The skilled operator quickly cut off part of the current, but the message continued uninterrupted. Harling laughed joyously.

"We are much closer than we thought," he exclaimed, with excitement. "I used less current, and he got us all right. If he got that we can't ten miles off."

He seized the key and clicked off the cheering news to the man on the stranded Irvessa who used the navy call.

Very firmly, but slowly, the answer came:

"We shall not outlive this. Storm gathering thicker. Both boats should give. If we are lost see this family of yours who stayed with me is rewarded with my property."

"I wonder who that fellow is," exclaimed the Mongolian's chief officer. "Did he tell you?"

Harling shook his head. "No, but he's a naval man. He used the navy call. We're on him. Listen."

He translated quickly: "You are now between us and boats. See your light. Boats south of you. Do not expect further directions. Going to pieces. Steer south."

The first officer burst into the wireless room.

"Here, sir," he exclaimed. "I'll take your place. There is a searchlight on the starboard bow."

The captain struggled out to the deck as Harling pounded this cheering message of help and appeal to stick:

"Message of help and appeal to stick: 'We're coming. We'll save you yet. Where are you? Hang on!'"

The captain laid his hand gently on the young fellow's shoulder.

"It's no use, I fear, boy," he said softly. "They are gone. That's the way it is at sea. You've done all you could by, say. Make a full report and transcription for me. If you should get another call send for me at once."

Turning, the old seaman opened the door of the wireless room to fight his way along the deck to the lookout's position. Inside the room young Harling dropped into a chair before his instrument and, bending over, buried his head in his hand.

Suddenly he sat up straight, tense in every nerve and muscle. What was that? Was it his imagination playing tricks again? No. He could not be mistaken. There it was again.

He looked, listened, then sprang to his feet, with a shriek of joy, for the little recorder in front of him began again slowly, as though tired, to click: "A-A-A-A."

He read it off aloud, with regret.

"Just some battleship," he said bitterly to himself. That's the navy aloud hysterically, for it was the navy call. Next his face lighted, and he laughed aloud hysterically, for it was the navy call, but it came from the Irvessa. Impatiently the operator seized the telephone.

"Captain, captain," he shrieked, "I've got the Irvessa again, sir! Not Pinckney this time. There's a man at the key. We can get something from this one. He can't send much, but he's all there with his nerve."

He dropped the telephone again as the receiver began to click:

"Yacht Irvessa grounding on reef. Position unknown, but within thirty miles of your getting this message. To indicate relative position stanch center now passing directly northeast of us. Heaviest lightning northeast by east. Can you make out our position?"

The captain had re-entered the wireless room by the time the message was delivered.

"Tell him," exclaimed the officer, "we can make out his probable position. We are steering southwest by west to find him. Ask him how long he can last."

The answer to the message came back slowly, with every dot and dash absolutely distinct:

"Half an hour."

"Tell him," commanded the captain, "we are twenty miles away probably and can't make better than 12 knots an hour in this storm."

A terrific flash of lightning for an instant lit up the mountainous waste of waves outside.

"Ask him where that lightning was," shouted the officer.

"East by north," the receiver clicked back.

In another minute the course of the boat had been changed one point to the southward, and all this while the receiver slowly but steadily clicked out guiding news.

"We have two boats. Both boats left yacht ten minutes ago during break in communication with you. They seem understand direction you coming. First boat making for you. Look for its lights."

An expression of admiration came on the face of the old seaman.

"Then that fellow must have stayed behind to guide us and save the people in the boat," he exclaimed. "Ask him how many are with him."

Harling translated the quick answer:

"Excitement at the Durant Works. The Durant gun works was in a fever of excitement. Ever since the forging of the Sommers gun events of importance had happened in such close succession that about the works generally was the feeling of stunned amazement, moment by moment.

Pinckney hurried to Pittsburg for the first train, but Sommers stayed over a few hours to make the trip with Frances and her mother. Mr. Durant had met them there, and all came on together. The steel man was not given to many words. Sommers was equally uncommunicative. They had wrung each other's hands with mutual respect and esteem, but there had been no words of the relation which all knew must exist between the young officer and Frances. The girl had said nothing. Even her mother was not in her confidence.

On the trip from New York to Pittsburg Mrs. Durant had found time to take up the subject with her husband.

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He wanted to meet Marsh before the investigation began. He must know what Marsh had told Bradley. Their stories must agree. But the first blurted question brought another surprise to the chief conspirator.

"I haven't seen any secret service man. There hasn't been any around here," protested Marsh.

Pinckney shook his head impatiently. "Don't be foolish, Marsh. You saw him and talked to him. He questioned you here nearly a month ago. His name was Bradley."

Marsh, thoroughly frightened at the idea of secret service men working on a case, could only redouble his protest.

"I haven't seen him. I haven't talked to anybody I didn't know in a month," Pinckney gave a relieved sigh.

"Then he bluff me," he said. "But now listen. This investigation is coming off today. We're all right. If you keep your head for half an hour you can't go wrong. And we begin work on a government contract for the Rhinestrom tomorrow."

"What must I say?" inquired the inventor of the Rhinestrom gun weakly.

"Swear that Smith was drunk and say that I and Sommers were in the furnace room when the gun went into the tempering bath. Then Bradley can't prove anything to save his life. Don't let him frighten you. He'll try to, but keep your nerve. If he asks you about the Rhinestrom gun don't know anything about it."

Marsh, naturally nervous, was now trembling with fear.

"You know of those killed and wounded, Mr. Pinckney. We both deserve state's prison for it."

Pinckney grabbed the little man by the shoulder to shake some courage into him.

"Don't get chicken hearted, you fool," he cried angrily. "I feel as bad about the accident as you do, but we can't think of that now. It's state's prison or a fortune for you, Marsh. Now keep your nerve. How did we know the gun was going to explode? Never thought it would stand the test at the proving ground. Come on in the office, and I'll give you a drink to brace you."

They were still in the inner room when Bradley, cool and debonair, as usual, stroled into the outer office.

"How are you?" he said genially to Mazie O'Brien, the pretty stenographer, peering away in one corner at her machine. "I was looking for Mr. Pinckney."

"In the inner office with Mr. Marsh," responded the girl.

Bradley nodded.

"Sure. He sent for Marsh as soon as he came, didn't he?"

"Yes," replied the girl curiously. "How did you know that?"

Bradley smiled.

"Mind reader," he suggested, then added, with a serious explanation, "I have an engagement with him, so I thought they'd be waiting for me."

"I'll tell him you are here," asked the stenographer.

Bradley made a hasty objection.

"Oh, no; don't bother. I'll wait till they get through. I was just going to see them on a little business about the Rhinestrom gun. And that reminds me. Give me Mr. Rhinestrom's address, won't you? I have to drop him a letter."

"Rhinestrom's address?" she asked curiously.

"Why, I've never sent him any letter," Mazie returned coolly. "If you want his address, why don't you get it from Mr. Pinckney?"

Bradley smiled.

"That's a good idea," he said. "I'll just do that. You take all Mr. Pinckney's dictations, don't you?"

"Yes, I take Mr. Pinckney's dictation," she agreed cautiously.

"And he's never written to Rhinestrom?" demanded Bradley, with sudden sternness.

For a moment the girl flared up.

"Say, who are you anyhow? What do you want? Are you trying to pump me?"

Her questioner smiled blandly.

"Oh, please don't go in with a thing," he said. "I'm going in to see a man named O'Leary. When Mr. Durant comes tell him that Mr. Bradley of the secret service is in the works, then send for me. Goodbye. Much obliged for what you had to tell me."

Mazie O'Brien leaned back in her chair, looking after Bradley with a curious expression on her face.

"Well, what do you think of that?" she said to herself at last in astonishment.

"He a detective! Well, he's a pretty good looking fellow—for a detective. I wonder what's up. I remember I was around here a month ago."

Ten minutes later the detective was back in the office in time to meet Frances entering with Lieutenant Sommers.

"I'm glad you're here, Miss Durant," he declared earnestly. "Would you

miscellaneous reading.

PARKER ON THE TARIFF.

Former Presidential Candidate Discusses Subject Interestingly.

By Judge Alton B. Parker.

The people have suffered, and greatly, by the loss of the money taken from them through tariff statutes to fill the coffers of the protected interests. Yet great as that loss is, it is no wise compares with the damage resulting to them in the decay of political morals, due to the successful efforts to utilize the government for political purposes. The steady lowering of political ideals, which has occurred, will diminish or cease when, and only when, business and politics are separated. To that end the gradual reduction of the tariff to a revenue basis should be entered upon and persisted in. Doubtless, to prevent such result, a panic will be threatened by the protected interests, and may be precipitated, but their elimination from governmental control will be of infinitely greater value to the people than the cost of one or even many panics.

That a panic is easily within their combined power no one doubts. That the power will not be exercised except as a last resort common sense teaches. But that their mastery will be surrendered before exhausting this last resource only the blindly credulous can believe. Their leaders include many of the most masterful men of the generation. And they have always at their command vast power—power that has been thrice created to meet emergencies, a servicable man without number, in money almost without limit.

The Protected Interests.

The protected power of the protected interests in this country as they exist today cannot be measured, hardly even imagined, by the wisest men. What one of their units can do toward helping itself to property that it wishes was described before a committee of the United States senate having under consideration the absorption of the Tennessee Coal and Iron company by the United States Steel corporation. One can but marvel at the ability which conceived and the audacity which created the situation from which the latter emerged with its greatest competitor in its arms, ready to receive the generous and abundant thanks of a grateful people for having stopped the panic by this seizure with the executive sanction.

The last national commitment of the party in power promised a revision of the tariff. While we must admit that a revision of the tariff is a revision whether up or down, the president insisted that good faith required a reduction of duties in many cases.

In an address which I delivered on the subject at Princeton University on March 13 last, two days before the assembling of congress in extraordinary session, I had this to say: "Rumors persist that the ways and means committee have found a way to revise the tariff by lowering the rate of duty and at the same time increasing the actual amount of the duties to be paid, the plan being, while lowering the rates of duty, to appraise the value of imported goods not at their market prices abroad, as now, but at the prevailing prices in the United States. This is a much higher price since included therein is a great part of the protection already afforded by the present abnormal rates of duty. By that plan a smaller rate will nevertheless produce a larger actual amount of duty."

Upholding Party Honor.

It seems to them certain to satisfy the people who demand a reduction of duties to have the appearance of upholding the honor of the party. In this, however, they are mistaken. The president in his recent message at the opening of the regular session of congress had this to say of the discretion given to him under the "maximum and minimum" clause of the act passed last summer: "The discretion granted to the executive by the terms 'unduly discriminatory' is wide. In order that the maximum duty shall be charged against the imports from a country it is necessary that he shall find on the part of that country not only discrimination in its laws or the practice under them against the trade of the United States, but that the discriminations found to be unduly discriminatory are of a nature which I conceive that this power was reposed in the president with the hope that the maximum duties might nevertheless be applied in any case, but that the power to apply them would emanate from the state department through friendly negotiation to secure the elimination from the laws and the practice under them of any foreign country of that which is unduly discriminatory. No one is seeking a tariff war or a condition in which the spirit of retaliation shall be aroused."

Demanding Justice.

Let us hope that justice may result, but be assured that it will not result unless the people make their demand loud. In the beginning of the country it was never suggested that a tariff for the purpose of so-called protection—a tax upon the people for the benefit of the producer—could under ordinary conditions be justified either in the domain of morals or of economics. Had any statesman of that day desired that result he would not have dared to give expression to his wish. He knew too well the Anglo-Saxon deep-seated hostility to unjust taxation—to taxation for any purpose other than the administration of government, economically administered. The long and bitter content leading to Runnymede and its Magna Charta, the triumphs of Hampden, of Pym, of Sydney and of Russell, the revolution of 1688, and the American Revolution but just ended, all in the burning questions relating to the broken rights of the people. In the hour in which we were just emerging from a struggle the beginning of

which had witnessed the hurling of taxed tea into Boston harbor, he would have been counted a madman who had seriously proposed the tariff statute of today, a statute under which a small minority are permitted to levy tribute upon the great majority.

Now, for more than forty-four years that have passed since the war, the people have not been able to secure relief. Attempts have been made, but the end is worse than the beginning. Why is this so? Because the protected interests, grown rich and powerful during the war, entered politics, as it had been predicted that they would, in order to hold fast to their special privilege to levy tribute. Forty-four years of success have crowned their vigilant and incessant labors.

THE CONSERVATION MOVEMENT.

It Means a New Leaf in the Nation's Life.

The American people found awaiting them when they established the nation a heritage richer by far than that which any other nation has ever known.

The late Professor N. S. Shaler, the country's foremost economic geologist and one of its most profound thinkers, said: "Of all the sinful wastes of man's inheritance in the earth—and all are in this regard sinners—the very worst are the people of America."

There must be a realization on the part of the people that now is shared only by the few—that the country as a whole will have to "turn over a new leaf." This leaf can not be turned at once or without mighty effort. We have "got the habit" of spending, and it will be a long time before we can begin to save. In fact, it is only the impending pinch that makes us think of saving now.

We boast of what we can do and of what we are doing, and with reason, for we are doing it. The leading part in the world's work, and do we not literally "deliver the goods" to all the world? But at the same time we do not reckon on what the morrow will bring, and we will go heading to national decadence unless we stop to take an accounting. We do furnish, in general figures, a quarter of the world's wheat supply, half of its petroleum, three-quarters of its supply of cotton, and nine-tenths of its tin. But we are doing it at a terrible sacrifice.

Take the forest question as an example. As a matter of fact we do not know how much forest we have, and we have been here, as a nation, a century or more. And yet we talk blithely of our "inexhaustible" forests and go drawing on the account without much more than a general notion of what the forest capital is, and with no notion of "forest" analysis. It is no better business than it would be for a bank to operate without a balance sheet, without any notion of its capitalization and spending cost, trusting to luck that accounts may not be overdrawn and the surplus carried off. Government supervision now protects the people