

HEART of the SUNSET

By REX BEACH

Author of "The Spoilers," "The Iron Trail," "The Silver Horde," Etc.



CHAPTER XXII—Continued.

"Nor I," echoed Dave. "You don't need to understand. I know what I'm doing. I've thought of a way to save us all."

An incoherent refusal was upon his lips, but Alaire's face besought him; it was shining with a strange, new ecstasy, and he could not bring himself to deny her. Of what her plan consisted he had only the dimmest idea, but he assured himself that it could by no possibility succeed. After all, what did it matter? he asked himself. They were trapped. This might serve, somehow, to cheat Longorio, and—Alaire would be his wife.

"Very well," he stammered, weakly. "What are you thinking of?" "I haven't thought it all out yet, but—"

At that moment Dolores returned, bringing with her the three black-haired, black-shawled house servants, bundling them through the door and ranging them along the wall.

Father O'Malley's face was puckered; he said, hesitatingly: "My dear madam, this isn't regular; you are not Catholics. How can I bless you?"

"You can marry us legally, just the same, can't you?" Alaire was breathing rapidly, and some part of her eagerness began to thrill her hearers.

"Oh yes, but—"

"Then marry us. And make haste, please! Please!"

Law nodded. He could not speak, for his mouth was dry. His heart was beating violently; his temples were pounding; all the blood of his body seemed centered in his head.

Before the eyes of the four wondering women Father O'Malley married them. It seemed to Alaire that he would never reach the end, although, in fact, he stumbled through the ceremony swiftly. Alaire clipped his last words short by crying:

"Tell these people so that they'll understand what it all means. Tell them to remember they have seen a marriage by the church."

The priest did as he was directed, and his audience signified their understanding. Then Dolores led them out.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Man of Destiny.

"Now, then, I'll explain," said Alaire, turning to the men. "Longorio declares he won't have me except as his wife, and I think he means it. He is amazingly egotistical. He has tremendous ambitions. He thinks this war is his great opportunity, and he means to be president—he's sure of it. He loves me, but he loves himself better, I'm sure. Now, don't you see? He'll have to choose one or the other."

Father O'Malley did not appear to appreciate the full force of this reasoning. "My dear," he said, gravely, "he can make you a widow again. In such times as these men are savages." "Oh, but that's not all," Alaire turned to her newly made husband. "They let you in, and they'll let you out again—if you go quickly, before it's known what we've done."

Dave stared at her in bewilderment. "I? I go, and—leave you?" He seemed doubtful of her sanity.

"Yes." When he laughed shortly, Alaire cried: "Dave, you must! Don't you see what I'm driving at? If he can't marry me, if he finds you're gone and he can't lay hands on you, what can he do but let me go? Dave dear, for my sake, for the sake of us both—" "You're excited," he told her, and drew her to himself gently.

"Please! Please!" she implored. "You don't know that man," said Father O'Malley, with conviction.

But Alaire insisted, half hysterically now: "I do; that's just it, I do know him. He is planning the greatest things for himself, his head is in the clouds, and he doesn't do the things he used to do. That's why I called in those women as witnesses. He can't put them out of the way. With Dave gone I'll be safe. He can't ignore our marriage. But otherwise—There's no telling what he may do. Why, he'll kill you, Dave, as he killed Ed." She upturned a face eloquent with pleading. "Won't you do this for me?"

"No!" Law declared, firmly. "You wouldn't ask it if you were in your senses. Get me a gun and I'll shoot my way out. We'll go until they stop us. But don't ask me to leave you."

She searched his face eagerly, piteously, then with a quivering sigh relaxed her tension. "Then we've only made matters worse. You've spoiled our only chance."

Father O'Malley, who had been lost in thought, spoke up again: "Perhaps you will let me try my wits. But first, do I understand that it was he who effected the death of—Mr. Austin?"

Dave recounted as coherently as he could the circumstances of Ed's death, and told how he had learned, through Jose, of Longorio's intentions. As the priest listened a spot of color grew in his cheeks, his eyes glowed with indignation.

He was about to make known what was in his mind when Alaire raised her hand and in a strained whisper exclaimed: "Sh-h! Listen!"

The heavy door of the hacienda creaked, a quick tread sounded on the tiles, the door to the living room was flung open, and Longorio entered. He was hot and dusty from his ride, but with a lover's impetuosity he had made straight for this lighted room.

For the briefest instant he balanced himself just inside the portal, and the smile remained fixed upon his lips. Then his eyes became ringed with white and he made a swift, catlike movement of retreat. Plainly this was the supremest surprise of his lifetime, and he seemed to doubt his senses. But he recovered quickly. Thrusting his head forward, he demanded:

"What is this? You—and you?" He stared from Dave to the priest, then back again.

They all spoke at once, but he heard only Alaire's words:

"He came to find me." Pancho appeared in the doorway behind Longorio, saying, "I heard you ride up, sir, so I ran to tell you about this fellow."

But the general cut him short. "Call your men, quick," he cried in a voice that sent the soldier leaping back into the night.

Alaire was clinging to Dave, merely clutching him the tighter when he tried to unclasp her hold. Her movement infuriated Longorio, who uttered an exclamation and fumbled uncertainly with his holster. But his fingers were clumsy. He could not take his eyes from the pair, and he seemed upon the point of rushing forward to tear them apart.

"Don't touch her! Don't!" he began, cursing in a high-pitched voice. "God! What a reckoning!" Then he stamped his feet, he wrung his hands, he called shrilly at the top of his voice: "Lieutenant! Ho, Pancho! You fellows! Quickly!" Under the stress of his excitement the feminine side of his character betrayed itself.

Alaire felt her newly made husband gather himself for a spring; he was muttering to her to release him; he was trying to push her aside, but she held fast with the strength of desperation.

"You can't harm us," she declared, flinging her words defiantly at the Mexican. "You dare not. You are too late. Father O'Malley has just married us."

Longorio uttered a peculiar, wordless cry of dismay; his mouth fell open; his arms dropped; he went limp all over.

"This is the man I love—the only man." Alaire turned an anxious face to Dave, saying: "He is wonderful, Longorio is almost—afraid of him."

"Yes; he may bring him to his senses. If he doesn't—" Dave cast his eyes desperately over the room, conscious all the time that he was being watched with suspicion by the men outside. He stirred restlessly and moistened his lips. "Longorio would be crazy to injure you."

Ten minutes passed; fifteen. Alaire leaned, motionless, against the table; Dave paced about, followed by the eyes of the soldiers. One of the latter struck a match, and in the silence it sounded like a gunshot. Dave started, at which the soldiers laughed. They began to talk in murmurs. The odor of cigarette smoke drifted in to the man and the woman.

Finally the door through which Father O'Malley and Longorio had passed opened, and the priest emerged. He was alone. His face was flushed and damp; his eyes were glowing. He forced the Mexicans out of his way and, entering the living room, closed the door behind him.

"Well?" his two friends questioned, anxiously. "I've done all I can. The rest is out of our hands." The little man sat down heavily and mopped his forehead.

"What does he say?" "He told me to come here and wait. I never saw a man so torn, so distracted."

"Then he is wavering. Oh-h!" Alaire clasped her hands in thanksgiving, but the father cautioned her: "Don't be too sanguine. He is not afraid of consequences. He appears to have no conscience. He is without

mercy and seems lost to shame. I have never met a man quite like him. Do you know what he feels at this moment? Chagrin. Yes, mortification raised to the highest pitch, and a sort of stupefaction that you should prefer another man to him. He can't understand your lack of taste." Father O'Malley smiled faintly.

"Conceded idiot," Dave growled. "His humiliation kills him. When I saw that it was useless to appeal to him on moral grounds, and that threats were unavailing, I took another course. Something gave me insight into his mind, and the power to talk as I have never talked before. All in a flash I saw the man's soul laid bare before me, and—I think I played upon it with some cunning. I don't remember all I said, for I was inspired, but I appealed to his vanity and to his conceit, and as I went along I impressed upon him, over and over, the fact that the world knows we are here and that it trusts him. He aspires to the presidency; he believes he is destined to be Mexico's dictator; so I painted a picture that surpassed his own imaginings. He would have been suspicious of mere flattery, so I went far beyond that and inflamed him with such extravagant visions as only a child or an unblinking egotist like him could accept. I swelled his vanity; I inflated his conceit. For a moment, at least, I lifted him out of himself and raised him to the heights."

From beyond the closed door came Longorio's voice, issuing some command to his men. A moment passed; then he appeared before the three Americans. He seemed taller, thinner, more erect and hawklike than ever. His head was held more proudly and his chest was fuller. A set, disdainful smile was graven upon his face.

He began by addressing his words directly to Alaire. "Senora," he said, "I am a man of deep feeling and I scorn deceit. Therefore I offer no apology for my recent display of emotion. If I have seemed to press my advances with undue fervor, it is because, at heart, I am as great a lover as I am a statesman or a soldier. But there are other things than love. Nature constituted me a leader, and he who climbs high must climb alone. I offered Chapultepec as a shrine for your beauty. I offered to share Mexico with you, and I told you that I would not be content with less than all of you. Well, I meant it. Otherwise—I would take you now." His voice throbbled with a sudden fierce desire, and his long, lean hands closed convulsively. "You must realize that I have the courage and the power to defy the world, eh?" He seemed to challenge denial of this statement, but, receiving none, he went on, fixing his brilliant, feverish eyes once more upon Alaire. "As a man of sentiment I am unique; I am different from any you have ever known. I would not possess a flower without its fragrance. You did not believe me when I told you that, but I am going to prove it. All your life you are going to think of me as heroic. Perhaps no patriot in history ever made a more splendid sacrifice for his country than I make now. Some day the world will wonder how I had the strength to put aside love and follow the path of duty."

Alaire trusted herself to ask, "Then we are free to go?" The general's face was swept by a grimace intended for a smile. "I have ordered your horses to be saddled."

Dave, who had with difficulty restrained his anger at the fellow's bombast, was upon the point of speaking when Father O'Malley took the words out of his mouth:

"Would you send this woman out of her own house into a country like—like this? Remember the fortune in cattle you have already taken—"

"NEW" WEAPONS REALLY OLD

Asphyxiating Bomb and Incendiary Shell Outgrowth of Missiles Employed Long Ago by Chinese.

Many of the "new" weapons produced by the world war are really very old. Thus the asphyxiating bomb is an outgrowth of a missile employed long ago by the Chinese. Instead of deadly chemicals, it contained some substance that emitted a nauseous odor, accompanied by stifling smoke. Later this device appeared in Europe and was known by the inelegant but expressive name of "stink-pot."

Another Chinese war method paved the way for incendiary shells. They invented a rocket, later adopted and widely used by the Saracens, which fired a kind of ball having claws or hooks that would catch hold to the side of a building and set fire to it. These balls were made of petroleum and niter, which became famous in the later ages as Greek fire.

The German device of throwing petrol upon an enemy by means of a pump was used long ago, when an attacking ship often spouted flames at the object of its assault. This plan was reserved for close quarters, and frequently resulted in the destruction of the vessel so attacked.

Names Detroit Escaped. The Detroit city directory contains this bit of information: "Detroit was established as a town 114 years ago. 'Detroit' was adopted as the name of the new town after six other cognomens had been tried out and found wanting. You-do-ti-ga was the first title, then came Wa-we-a-tun-ong, Togs-nigh-fondje, Teuchs-a-grond, Ka-row-ta-en and Fort Pontchartrain. 'Old records show that when Fort Pontchartrain was built, the village of Detroit was isolated within its walls, giving Detroit the unique distinction of being the 'Walled City of the United States.'"

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 16 THE FIERY FURNACE.

LESSON TEXT—Daniel 3. GOLDEN TEXT—When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.—Isaiah 43:2.

I. The Occasion (vv. 1-7). The fact that God said to Nebuchadnezzar, "Thou art said this head of gold" (2:38) was too much for him. Though he appeared to have been deeply impressed with Daniel's God, his pride got the better of him. As he grew great and became conscious of it, he grew proud. This moved him to set up a colossal idol of gold in the Plain of Dura to be worshipped by all the people of his realm. It was an attempt at self-deification. It combined with it a political move, the object of which was to weld together the various kingdoms and peoples into one homogeneous body. He inaugurated a religious festival, and called upon all the people to worship the image which he set up. He backed this demand by civil authority. The penalty for refusal to bow down and worship the image was to be cast into the burning fiery furnace. Imposing images are set up in many places, and men and women are being called upon to bow down and worship them. Some of these images are money, fashion, scholarship, worldly ambition, pleasures, etc., and we bow to those who will not worship before them.

II. The Behavior of the Hebrews (vv. 8-18). (1) The accusation by the envious spies (vv. 8-12). Daniel's three friends had been promoted to positions of honor and responsibility. Certain Chaldeans whose envy had been excited by the promotion of these Hebrews, sought occasion against them. This they found when the Hebrews would not bow down to and worship the image. Envious eyes are always watching God's faithful ones. Had these Chaldeans been faithfully worshipping, they would not have seen the Hebrews.

(2) The king's rage (vv. 13-15). He calls the Hebrews before him, questions them and gives them another chance. The offense was not serious—they were defying the authority of the one who had honored them in their promotion; it savored of ingratitude. After closely questioning them he gave them another opportunity to consider their position before consigning them to the fire. His supreme mistake was in the challenge he made to the God of the Hebrews. He seems to have forgotten entirely the confession he had made with reference to God (2:47).

(3) The courageous reply of the faithful Hebrews (vv. 16-18). They replied without passion or fear. The peace of God filled their hearts. Their behavior is an expression of triumphant faith. "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, he will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." They courageously showed their contempt for death. They were not afraid to die, but were afraid to sin against God. They knew that to bow down before this image was to disobey and dishonor God. While they did not know what God would do, in the premises they knew that he would do the right thing. These Hebrews were far away from home, exposed to the most severe temptation, but they saw their duty clearly set before them. God's law plainly settled it for them. They did not try to find an excuse to evade their duty, and seeing the way clearly they acted accordingly.

III. The Glorious Issue (vv. 19-30). (1) The harmless furnace (vv. 19-25). The infuriated king ordered the heat of the furnace to be intensified, his most mighty men to bind the Hebrews and fling them into the fire. Though the heat was so intense that the soldiers who cast them into the furnace were slain, the Hebrews were seen walking loose in the fire without any hurt. Equally astounding was the fact that a fourth one was seen with them.

(2) The convinced king (vv. 26-28). The spectacle was so wonderful that the king called the Hebrews together out of the fire. They came forth unharmed, for the fire had no power over their bodies; not even a hair of their heads was singed, their coats changed, nor the smell of fire upon them (v. 27).

(3) The king's decree (v. 29). This was most foolish and wicked. Even a king has no right to kill people for not worshipping God.

(4) Promotion of the Hebrews (v. 30). Their fidelity in this trying ordeal resulted in their promotion instead of downfall. May we learn from this that: (a) God alone is Lord of the conscience. One's faith and worship should be determined by the individual before his God. No church, king or ruler has a right to interfere.

(b) We should meet religious intolerance by being obedient to God rather than man.

(c) God will support those who are faithful.

(d) We should prepare for fiery trials, and through them all be true to our conscience.

A GUARANTEED REMEDY FOR HAY FEVER--ASTHMA

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An Expert

In the basement at the Birmingham (Eng.) art school is an art model—a plaster figure of a very big man—a decided corporation. Across it, in chalk letters, appear the familiar words, "Eat less bread."

MOTHER! Have you ever used MOTHER'S JOY SALVE for Colds, Coughs, Croup and Pneumonia, Asthma, and Head Catches? If you haven't get it at once. It will cure you.—Adv.

Not Yet. "The governor ought to be glad of one thing," remarked the back platform wag as he called loudly for a W. I. transfer. "Oh, pull it," requested the gentleman who rides the stockyards line, impatiently. "He won't have to worry about a coal shortage on any city cars until October at least."—Indianapolis News.

MINNESOTA DRUGGIST PRAISES DR. KILMER'S SWAMP-ROOT

I believe you have a splendid, reliable kidney, liver and bladder medicine in Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, and my customers who have taken it during the past thirty-six years have nothing but praise for what it accomplished for them. On account of the splendid reputation which it enjoys in the trade I have no hesitancy in recommending it for the troubles for which it is intended.

Yours very truly, J. G. SIEBEN, Druggist, Hastings, Minn. Sept. 21, 1916.

Letter to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Birmingham, N. Y.

Prove What Swamp-Root Will Do For You. Send ten cents to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Birmingham, N. Y., for a sample size bottle. It will convince anyone. You will also receive a booklet of valuable information, telling about the kidneys and bladder. When writing, be sure and mention this paper. Large and medium size bottles for sale at all drug stores.—Adv.

SHE SAW DANGER IN DELAY Owing to Circumstances, Fair Maid Was Willing to Make Momentous Decision at Once.

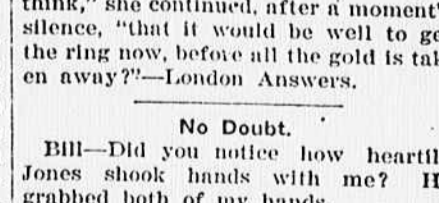
"Hurry," she began, in a sweet, timorous voice, "what's all this talk about gold and silver?" Henry, who reads the papers, and was about as thoroughly ignorant on the subject as everybody else, plunged in bravely, but she stopped him.

"I don't want to know about that," she faltered, "but is gold getting so awful scarce?" "Awful scarce!" echoed Henry, dismally.

And is it all being taken away to pay for the war?" "It is," said Henry. "And if they continued to take it away, there won't be any left in this country by and by and we'll have to use silver!"

"Yes," sighed Henry. "Henry," she whispered, "I told you I would give you my decision in the summer—but I repent. It—it is 'Y—yes.' Henry, don't—don't you think," she continued, after a moment's silence, "that it would be well to get the ring now, before all the gold is taken away?"—London Answers.

No Doubt. Bill—Did you notice how heartily Jones shook hands with me? He grabbed both of my hands. Jack—Yes, I suppose he thought his watch would be safe that way.



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