

The Secret of the Marshbanks

By Kathleen Norris

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The Story Thus Far:

KNOWING almost nothing concerning her past, Charlotte ("Cherry") Rawlings has been a student at a school for underprivileged girls for thirteen years, when one of her guardians—Judge Judson Marshbanks, of San Francisco, calls on her. The judge informs her that old Mrs. Porteous Porter, of San Francisco, needs a secretary; and that her other guardian ("Emma," once her mother's nurse, now Mrs. Porter's companion) wishes her to take the job.

A few days later, Cherry, comfortably established in Mrs. Porter's beautiful home, is hard at work. And presently, although she has little time for pleasure, she is seeing much of, falling in love with, Kelly Coates, a young artist.

But she is far from happy. Mrs. Marshbanks, the judge's mother, snubs her; Amy, debutante daughter of the judge's dead brother, Fred, patronizes her, looks down on her; and Fran, the judge's young wife, "uses" her so that she (Fran) and Kelly Coates can meet clandestinely, without the judge's suspicions being aroused!

Then comes a series of shocks: Emma, in a confidential moment, informs her that her mother had been Emma's sister! Concerning her father (of whom Cherry knows nothing), the old woman will say nothing. . . . Mrs. Porter, an invalid, dies; and following the reading of her will (by the terms of which, Cherry is to receive fifteen hundred dollars)—Judge Marshbanks, in an unguarded moment, divulges the fact that his brother, Fred—Amy's father—had been Cherry's father, and that he had never married Cherry's mother.

Crushed, wretchedly unhappy, Cherry turns to the one person who can comfort her: Kelly Coates. He gives her his sympathy, does what he can to cheer her up; and after that they meet often—sometimes at Topcote, Kelly's house near Sausalito, sometimes elsewhere. And Cherry soon learns that Fran, while making it appear to her that she is meeting Kelly secretly is, as a matter of fact, avoiding him. . . .

Cherry, preparing to enter Stanford, takes a room in Palo Alto. A short time later, she runs up to San Francisco, goes to the Marshbanks home. The judge's mother meets her, tells her that she is unwelcome at the house. Then, to her amazement, Kelly asks her to marry him! Suspecting that he still loves Fran, Cherry will not listen to him. . . . In the judge's chambers, the judge and Cherry have a talk. Cherry says: "Your mother asked me not to come to the house any more."

The judge frowns. "My mother did?" he says.

"Yes," Cherry replies. "She said it wasn't—decent."

VII

"H'M!" the judge said, gravely enough. "I'm sorry she did that. You know how much we all like you, and what reason I have for feeling that I've something to make up to you. Fran was saying only a day or two ago that you'd forgotten us."

"I'll never forget you! But there's more to it than that. Amy came in while your mother was talking to me the night she said that. I'd reached the house before Amy did, and I was in my room, reading, and your mother came in and said how much she resented my being there. But you see," Cherry interrupted herself to say in self-defense, "you see that I didn't know any reasons for my not coming, when I was first there. I didn't know I was her granddaughter as much as Amy was!"

"How much did Amy hear?"

"Cherry," Emma said suddenly, interrupting the girl's flow of talk. "I wanted to see you. I'd rather tell you than write"

"Well, your mother had just said that if I didn't break off all my relationships there, she'd have to let everyone know, and Amy too, that we were half sisters. And she said that would hurt my father, and my mother, too. And I said that that meant injuring the reputation of her own son! Amy heard that."

"And guessed the rest?"

"Guessed that it was you, instead of your brother Fred. After your mother had gone Amy said that she always had suspected that I was—" Cherry's throat thickened, she looked at him imploringly—"that I was your daughter."

"I see," he said thoughtfully.

"I didn't contradict her—I don't know what I thought for a few minutes—but I couldn't say anything. I kept trying to think which would be worse, telling her, or letting it go and talking some day to you."

"Fran and I were in Los Angeles then?"

"YES. And then I went to Palo Alto and didn't see you, and I knew that your mother cared more about keeping it from Amy than anything else, and I hoped that Amy wouldn't talk. But now Amy's back, and she wants me to come in to spend the night with her next Saturday, and go to the Quatres Arts Ball, and I don't know what to do!"

"My mother's a proud woman, Cherry," the judge said, after a silence during which he had marked a neat, firm row of crosses on a scratch-pad. "She's had a sad life. My father's illness ended her social interests, after twenty years in which her position had been everything any woman wants—big house, opera box, jewels, Europe. Two years later my young married sister died in childbed, and that embittered her; she's never been the same. The baby died, too; it was a crushing blow to my mother. I was away at the time; Fred was married, and she was a good deal alone with my invalid father. She had queened it here in San Francisco; she seemed to have nothing left. Fred's wife was heiress to all this money Amy'll have, but she was a delicate girl and years went by and there was no child. Fred was restless and unhappy and altogether things weren't in any too good shape when I decided to give up Washington and come home."

"My mother had been living in an apartment hotel and hating it. Fred and his wife, Amelia, had had a little place in Burlingame. But after years, five or six years, I think, she was going to have a baby, and everyone was anxious that this time it should go right. Old Wellington, her father, was an immensely rich man; he was going to come on from New York for the event, and do everything for the baby. Fred, who'd been restless and unsatisfied, settled down all of a sudden. Mother had opened the city house by this time, and they were all together. The baby was coming in November—"

"I know. I'm four days older than Amy," Cherry, listening absorbedly, put in as he paused.

"But you came two months too soon. (Continued on page 69)

On Don Jaime Street

Continued from page 16

down Don Jaime, moving in and out of the other saloons and dance halls to leave his brief greeting. Turning into Border he paused at the edge of Curran's barn and had a thorough look at the horses.

As soon as he departed from the precincts of the Louvre the swamper came to the doorway and watched him. The swamper said over his shoulder: "What's he doin' in town this time of mornin'?"

The barkeep murmured: "Doc Halliday's comin'."

"Ah," said the swamper, and stroked his stained mustache with the back of a hand.

Curly Jack moved past Curran's barn, watching one man wheel a barrow along Border's dust with a moment's strict interest. Out beyond the end of Border morning's sun streamed across the desert's tawny dust and silver cacti; in the distance a haze lay over Old Mexico. Curly Jack strolled onto the north side of town and paused momentarily by Boot Hill, idly considering the unmarked and inglorious mounds of those who had died by violence and in shame. Afterward he crisscrossed Dragoon, prowling through alley and street like a restless cat, and at last came to the end of Lode Street and put his shoulder to the corner of Schermerhorn's butcher shop, once more indifferent.

Life moved thin and slow through Dragoon. One woman—the heavy and handsome Poker Belle—came out of Don Jaime and entered Lanahan's general store. Mrs. Gerrish and her daughter Hope appeared at the head of Stafford and moved forward with their parasols lifted against the sun. Curly Jack watched the girl, who was nineteen, with an appreciative eye and then he looked at Mrs. Gerrish and the indifference changed to an odd wonder as though something new disturbed him. These two women turned the corner and went on toward Lanahan's, cool and serene in the dust and rawness of this town, leaving behind the clearest picture of immaculate grace.

Mrs. Gerrish said: "We'll stop at Lanahan's first to see if the gingham came in from Tucson. You should walk with your shoulders straighter, Hope."

Beyond Lanahan's a young man paused in the doorway of the Wells-Fargo office, black arm protectors half covering his white shirt sleeves. He stood still with his eyes on Hope Gerrish and could not catch her attention; just before she passed into Lanahan's with her mother she looked over her shoulder and smiled at him.

IN THE half shadows of Lanahan's store, dark shelves ran to a high ceiling, and the odors of leather and coffee and fabric blended to make a pleasantly stale air. At the far end of the counter Poker Belle gave her order to Lanahan in a brusque voice. Poker Belle's glance went to Mrs. Gerrish, covertly appraising her and her voice dropped a full tone. Mrs. Gerrish stood at the counter with a sweet unawareness of the other woman's presence; in a moment, having finished her business, Poker Belle departed from Lanahan's, leaving behind the rustle of her broad-striped silk dress and the rank emanation of lilac cologne. Hope Gerrish cast an oblique glance at her mother, conveying a dramatic distaste.

The gingham had not come. Mrs. Gerrish moved to the street and paused. "Hope," she said, "it is not good manners to express your feelings in public."

"The odor was rather strong."

"Where would she learn good taste?" asked Mrs. Gerrish.

Hope said, "I think I'll walk to father's," and moved down Lode with her parasol swaying daintily under the sun. Mrs. Gerrish tarried before Lanahan's to make certain minor adjustments to her dress. From the corner of her eyes she saw her daughter go slowly past the Wells-Fargo doorway and stop and show a lady's charming surprise when young Neal Curzon came through the doorway to speak to her. Mrs. Gerrish silently said, "That was properly done," and went along Don Jaime Street, keeping to the outer edge of the walk.

The town drunkard lay asleep by the Pavilion and the Louvre's swamper brushed the refuse of an evil night across the walk in rank clouds. Of this street Mrs. Gerrish had a most complete knowledge and yet walked through it and seemed to see nothing.

AT THE newspaper office she left the information she wished printed regarding an oyster supper at the church, and was squired gallantly to the door by Dragoon's eccentric whisky-drinking editor, Sam Gault. Returning up Don Jaime she met her daughter in front of the freight office, which was her husband's business. The two of them strolled leisurely homeward under the streaming sunshine.

"Neal is coming over tonight."

"You arranged it very well," said Mrs. Gerrish. "It is important never to let a man know he is being sought. Your manners are excellent, though I think you should speak of him as Mr. Curzon and not use his first name until you are engaged. Men set a value on those niceties, though they do not know it. Now we shall bake cookies. I must teach you how to make the date-filled nougat. My mother gave me the recipe many years ago when we lived in Cleveland."

"You are very fond of old things," said Hope.

"They are," murmured Mrs. Gerrish, "like little lamps shining far over the desert."

Curly Jack followed Don Jaime to the last gray house sitting opposite the newspaper office and entered it without notice. He rolled up the front room's window shade to command a view of the street and pulled two chairs together, stretching himself on them; igniting a fresh cigar, he lay back in comfort. Poker Belle came downstairs in her silk dress and came obediently to him, attractive and buxom, with great, black eyes now carefully studying his humors.

She said, "I hear Doc Halliday's coming to Dragoon," and by the streaky laughter of his eyes she had her answer. "Curly," she added, "you better bring your boys in. If Doc comes he won't come alone."

"Belle," he said, "get yourself a new dress. Make it a little plainer; make it—"

"Like Mrs. Gerrish's." Poker Belle looked upon him with an unresenting wisdom. "It isn't the dress."

"Something else? Well, get it."

"I'd have to start fifteen years back to get it, and if I had it I wouldn't be here. This is Don Jaime Street. They live up at the head of Stafford."

He rolled back in the chair. He worked the answer around his head, the mask of strange speculation returning to his face. His lids crept nearer together. "I run this town but they don't know we're alive. Why's that? What makes it that way—"

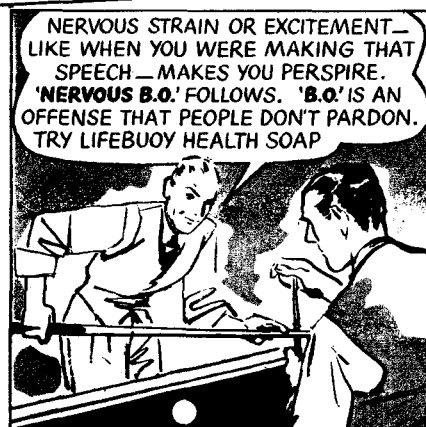
She reached out a hand to ruffle his

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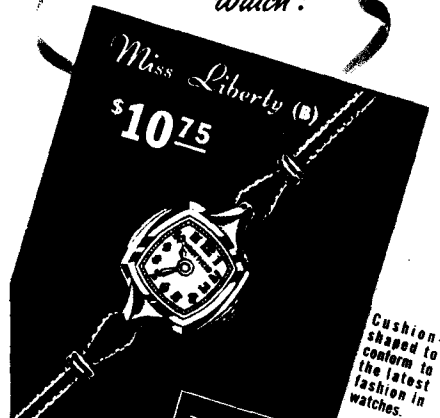


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hair. "Ah, don't think about that. It won't do you any good."

He looked up, sharp now. "You ever think about it?"

"Quit talking about it, Curly."

The noon whistles were blowing from the mines as Ben Gerrish came along Don Jaime with the liver-colored pup behind him. He turned and said, "Stay there," and reached Lode in time to see the Tucson stage enter the street, its four horses slacking down from a dead run. Flat against the wall of Lanahan's store young Ben watched Ike Ball tool the stage exactly before the hotel porch and clap on the brake. A solitary passenger encased in a long yellow overcoat crawled from the stage, bearing marks of travel. Ike Ball threw down the reins to a waiting hostler and descended, a wire-drawn man with a pair of agate, autocratic eyes set in a mahogany face whose features had an Indian inexpressiveness. A goatee pointed his chin. He saw young Ben and said, "Hello there, son," and young Ben said in a smothered voice, "Yes, sir," and walked homeward with his head down, in imagination flicking flies off the ears of the stage's lead horses with the sweep of a fifteen-foot whip.

THE gold piece was a round, small weight in his pocket while he ate his meal; the problem of it had been with him all morning. In time of hurt, when he needed sympathy, it was his mother he sought; but this was a practical matter before him now and therefore he kept it to himself until he walked back toward Lode Street with his father. "Curly Jack gave me this," he said, taking the gold piece from his pocket.

He knew what his father would say, yet dreaded to hear it. His father looked down at the gold piece. "Did you earn it, Ben?"

"No, sir. He just gave it to me."

"Ah," said his father in that cool tone young Ben knew so well. They crossed Lode into Don Jaime, seeing Curly Jack come from the Pavilion, and as they went forward the warm day grew cold to Ben and his heart began to swell against his chest. Curly Jack's face came about with that streak of brightness in the narrow apertures of his eyes.

"My son has something for you, Jack," said Gerrish.

Young Ben brought out the gold piece and held its round coldness in the warm sweat of his palm. Curly Jack faced Gerrish, his body stiff and his chest arched. He no longer smiled.

"I gave it to the boy."

"Tell him why you can't keep it, Ben," said Gerrish, unbreakably courteous.

"I didn't earn it," said Ben.

Curly Jack moved his shoulders. "It was a gift. It was free."

"Nothing's free," answered Gerrish.

THE expression of puzzled wonder again broke vaguely across Curly Jack's face. He stood still, as though searching for an answer to this strangeness, and presently lifted the gold piece from young Ben's palm and wheeled away. Young Ben rubbed his wet hands against his shirt, feeling the quick tap of his heart. But the dread left him. His father had stared back at Curly Jack's streaky eyes and his father's voice had been, for a moment, harder than Curly Jack's. He looked up at his father and was very proud. The liver-colored pup came forward, all bones and skin and feet; he sat down at Ben's boots and his tail threshed the walk. Young Ben said tentatively: "He doesn't belong to anybody, father."

"Don't be late," repeated Gerrish, and turned back to Lode. Young Ben tucked the pup under his arm and went on to the school. He left the pup at the foot of the steps and said: "Stay there."

Gerrish walked to his office. He

paused at the door with his thoughts remaining on his son and presently he turned about and went up Stafford. When he stepped inside the house, his wife came from the kitchen, startled because of this break in routine. "What's wrong?"

"It's a dog that Ben wants. He has spoken of it before."

"A dog would be good for him."

He said: "I happen to know it is Poker Belle's dog. I'd have to make a bargain with her."

Mrs. Gerrish straightened her shoulders. "No. I don't want him to touch anything that belongs to Don Jaime Street. I hate that dirty, beastlike place. It has destroyed every decent thing in Dragoon. No, I don't want—"

"He has taken a fancy to that dog," said Gerrish gently.

She watched him a long while and at last dropped her shoulders. "If you think best," she murmured, and went back to the kitchen. Gerrish returned down Stafford and walked directly to Poker Belle's house.

The sun moved west in the bluest, clearest of skies and heat began to press through town and slowly the town livened. The solitary passenger from the Tucson stage strolled into the newspaper shop and introduced himself to Sam Gault:

"Name's Aaron Shotwell, member of Congress from New York State, member of the Committee on Public Lands, touring the West."

"Honored," said Sam Gault, suppressing his habitual irony. "Take the least dusty chair, Congressman."

"So this is the Babylon of the desert—the wildest town between St. Louis and the Pueblo of Our Lady of the Angels?"

"Babylon," observed Sam Gault, "was a camp before my time. Still, I imagine Dragoon might spot it a few points and come out with the most balls in the rack."

AT FOUR o'clock a lean and dusty man with a great hank of hair hanging below his hat brim rode in from the desert and pulled up at McSwain's watering trough. While his horse drank, this rider rolled himself a cigarette, his eyes striking at the town from beneath the concealment of the hat brim. He put a match to the cigarette, and his turning head stopped its motion when he found Curly Jack stationed idly by Lanahan's store. He looked upon Curly Jack with a complete blankness and turned the horse and loped out of Dragoon.

Curly Jack threw away his half-smoked cigar and chose a fresh one. Another man walked from McSwain's stable and stopped by. Curly Jack motioned at the disappearing rider. "He'll go back to tell Doc Halliday I'm here. They'll be in tonight, Link."

"I'll go get the boys," said Link.

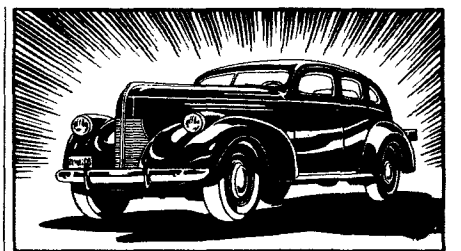
"Yes," said Curly Jack, the smile dancing in his eyes. From his place by Lanahan's he watched young Ben Gerrish come up Don Jaime from the school and turn to his father's office, the liver-colored pup following close. A six-horse team climbed out of Pedro Wash and stopped at the end of Border, a small crowd slowly drifting forward. Sam Gault sauntered up Don Jaime and joined Curly Jack; the two of them walked on to the wagon.

"That the piano?" asked Sam Gault.

"Yeah," said the teamster. Curly Jack's cigar tilted upward between his teeth. He looked curiously at the thick mahogany legs, carved and bowed, showing beneath the protective tarps. "What piano?"

"Gerrish's," said Gault.

Young Ben passed the freight office and saw his father beckon, and went in. "The dog," said his father, "belongs to Poker Belle but she has no use for it. You are to carry twenty armloads of



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wood from her shed to her back porch. Then you may take the dog home."

"Yes, sir," said young Ben, and turned out. His father's voice called him back. "Ben," he said, "always do more than you promise. Make each armload a full one."

Young Ben went down Don Jaime Street with the liver-colored pup obediently behind, turned into a short alley and came to Poker Belle's shed. It was fifty feet from shed to back porch and the twenty armloads, faithfully performed, took him an hour.

When he was through, he tucked the pup under his arm and returned home.

In his own shed behind the house, young Ben found a piece of rope with which to tie the liver-colored pup. "Just for a few days, so you won't go back to Don Jaime." He discovered a burlap sack and made a bed for the pup. Then he went into the house.

The new piano was a great, black-shining square of elegance under the light. His mother sat on the piano stool, her fingers running along the keys. She had her eyes shut. She pressed one key softly, and then her fingers formed a chord and she turned about and young Ben was astonished to see that she was near to crying. His father moved over the room, smiling down. He said: "Like home, Rose?"

She said: "I'll teach Hope to play. I'll teach Ben." She was suddenly terribly in earnest. "We must never let them forget anything."

AT EIGHT o'clock, night closed about Dragoon, soot-black, velvet-surfaced. Elsewhere the land lay empty, shadow and shadow pressing upon it,

discreet in its mystery and beautiful, the formless edge of mountains shaped against lesser black. The stores on Lode were closed, presenting blank walls to the glitter of Don Jaime Street's saloons and dance halls. On that short way men moved in errant waves from walk to walk; they batted through the swinging doors, their feet made a steady shuffle on the boards, their aimless traveling brought up the street's alkali dust. From the Pavilion rolled the steady melody of guitar and violin, the tramping of dancers, the call of voices and the high, sharp laughter of women.

One man, early drunk, stood in the middle of the street, swinging his arms around him in destructive circles; somewhere a woman stridently cried and the music went on and a gun exploded and all this revelry pulsed like the beat of blood in the jugular, echoing along Lode and dying against the withdrawn, distant life at the head of Stafford.

The night marshal came into the jail office on Border Street, fresh from sleep, and found the day marshal ready to be relieved. The night marshal was a lean, blond man with gray-green eyes, on whose dry face latent danger lay as a shadow. He said: "Anything new?"

"Curly Jack's in town. They say Doc Halliday just arrived. Both got some boys with them."

"So," said the night marshal. He took pains with his cigar; he strapped on his gun. "That's been comin' a long while."

"You want me to hang around?"

"No," said the night marshal. The day marshal turned out of the office. The night marshal lifted and dropped the gun in its holster to test it, gave himself a short glance in the wall



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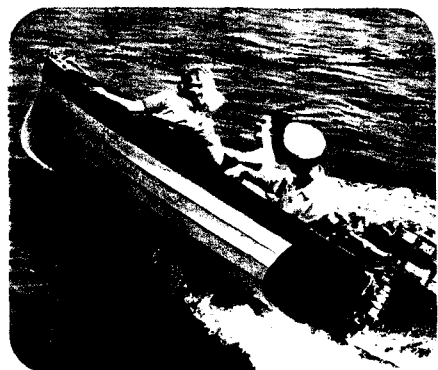
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mirror and stepped to the street. Coming to Don Jaime, he had his practiced look at the crowd, saw the things that needed to be seen and set out on his nightly rounds.

In his room at the hotel the congressman poured a pair of drinks, one for himself and one for Sam Gault. He stood at the window, viewing the sullen shining of light on Don Jaime and the dust rising like clouds of brimstone and sulphur around the moving mass of men. The tremor of Don Jaime, its shrill echoes and its growling undertone, came through the window at him.

"Nothing," said the congressman, being half drunk and very clear of head, "could be like that. It is a scene out of Dante, upon my soul. In a town like this not one decent thing could thrive, no kind impulse take root."

"Congressman," said Sam Gault, "you travel with good whisky. Let me have that bottle."

CURLY JACK crossed Don Jaime, moving men aside with a push of his shoulder, and stopped in the alley shadows beside the Pavilion. He searched Don Jaime with his glance, closely watching the double shadow of two men standing at the Louvre corner. Somebody moved past the Pavilion and paused by the alley's mouth, murmuring, "Halliday's in Kilrain's place—he's standing at the bar," and moved on into the crowd.

Curly Jack went along the alley to a side door of the Pavilion and opened it; he stood against the wall until Poker Belle left her partner on the floor and came obediently to him, sequins glittering around the low-cut front of her dress, her skin white against piled-up black hair. He said irritably, "Come on," and led her into the alley.

"What's up, Jack?"

He didn't answer. They walked side by side through the alley, turned across Lode at its dark end and moved out toward the low hill behind town.

She said: "Halliday's in town. Curly, I wish—"

They were at the head of Stafford, watching the house lights stream out through the muslin-draped windows. They were in the shadows, looking across the width of a thirty-foot street whose width was a bay and on whose far shore the houses of the genteel showed strange and distant lights.

"A funny thing," he said. "You can't hear Don Jaime Street when you're standing here."

"Let's go back."

He faced the Gerrish house, long silent, struggling with his wonder, annoyed by it but held by it. A young couple moved in from the edge of town—Neal Curzon and Hope Gerrish—walking arm in arm. They stood by the porch, softly laughing and gently whispering, and passed into the house.

"Listen," said Curly Jack. "That piano."

"There's a piano in the Louvre, Curly. Let's go back."

"I do what I please in this country, Belle. I can make a man smile and I can make him beg. Nobody in this town has got nerve enough to touch me. I could turn Don Jaime Street inside out if I wanted. But those people in that house—they don't know I'm alive. Why's that, Belle?"

"Come on," she said. "We don't belong here."

"Why not?" he said, in a resentful voice. "I walk where I please. Nobody stops me. Why not?"

But she pulled him around into Stafford. At the corner of Lode he stopped, looking across at the mouth of McSwain's stable. He said: "Go on, old girl. I'll see you later."

She took his arm, her strong perfume rising to him. Her shoulders lifted, and her face in these shadows was pale and

mute. She was a big and emotional woman but she held back her feelings, as she had learned to do, and turned across Lode to Don Jaime.

He had seen the blur of motion in McSwain's. He moved across Lode and threaded an alley and arrived at a side door of Kilrain's saloon. He opened the door and looked in. Halliday had been here but Halliday was gone, and so now he retreated and ducked along the rear alleys to Border and entered Don Jaime from the lower end. Light touched him briefly as he moved forward through the crowd; it flashed against his eyes and showed the faint sweat damp on his face. He passed the night marshal and said, "Hello, George," and came to the head of Don Jaime and crossed to Lanahan's. He placed his back to the store, watching Don Jaime. In a few minutes he was tired of waiting and moved to Stafford again, going along it toward the Gerrish house—impelled by the puzzle that wouldn't leave him.

He had his left flank close against the side of a building. He watched his right—the darkness over there and the break of building walls. The voice, when it arrived, shocked him immeasurably:

"Hello, Curly."

He wheeled full around, seeing nothing. He wheeled again and froze when he heard laughter above him and looked up to see shoulders poked half through the second-story window of the butcher shop. He heard the voice again—Halliday's cool and provoking voice, "So-long, Curly," and as he drew his gun in one futile motion Halliday's bullet tore through his chest and dropped him.

The noise of Don Jaime Street came forward in faint, murmuring waves. The gun's echo ran on and on and died in the silence beyond town. Face down on the walk he heard Halliday's boots rattle through the butcher shop and fade. After that he was alone. He turned on his side and he pushed himself to his knees, facing the head of Stafford, and from this position he saw the lights of the Gerrish house shining out and he heard the tinkle of the piano. Someone ran toward him with a gasping breath and in a moment Poker Belle's big warm arms enclosed him.

"Curly, why did you let them—?"

"Listen, Belle. Hear that piano?"

"It's from the Louvre, Curly."

"Louvre piano never sounded like that. Belle?"

"What you want, Curly?"

"Why don't they stop that damned piano? I'm out here. I'm dying. Don't they know that?"

"Curly," she said, and watched his head bob down. She sat in the dust, this heavy woman, with her bare shoulders bowed over a dead man, crying and saying things to him he had never heard while alive. Nobody came along. She was alone in the shadows of Stafford Street.

MRS. GERRISH sat before the piano, thinking of songs she had played as a young girl in the East. A single shot broke on Stafford somewhere, its echo creeping through the house wall. She sat still, rigid inside, and presently turned—holding dread out of her eyes. Neal Curzon and Hope sat on the sofa, alternately taking turns at the stereopticon; she saw them touch hands as though by accident, and look at each other with an absorption that made nothing else important. Young Ben sat on the floor with the pup spraddled on his lap. He rubbed his hand down the pup's silk ears, and his face was held in its dream. They had not heard the shot. Looking across to her husband she caught his nod, and turned back to the piano, relieved. Inside the four walls of this house Don Jaime Street was only an echo which meant nothing.



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The Secret of the Marshbanks

Continued from page 64

That's all part of the story. Well! My wife and I and little Greg got here just a week or two before Amy was born, and what we learned was rather confusing. It seems that Emma's sister, Charlotte Rawlings—much younger than she—was sometimes at the house, and that Fred had seen this girl, and had taken advantage of her. Emma knew nothing of it until almost the end when Lottie came to her and told her. Emma felt that nobody must know, that her sister's secret must be kept now, of all times, when Fred's wife, who wasn't any too strong, was expecting her own baby any day.

"But poor little Lottie couldn't bear it. One night she suddenly appeared in my brother's room, as he was reading to his wife, and accused him of having ruined her life!"

"If I was the baby," Cherry said, hardly breathing, "I must have been born just about that time, too."

"You were only a few days old. Your mother, poor Lottie, was perhaps weak and feverish, hardly knowing what she was doing."

"But she couldn't have come to the house. She'd have been too weak."

"She may have been in the house with Emma. I have always suspected that Emma had her there and the baby was born there. However it was, she rushed into Amelia's bedroom—the bedroom of 'Mrs. Fred' as we used to call her, to distinguish her from my wife and my mother—and there was a sad scene. To Amelia, gentle, dignified little thing that she was, it must have been a fearful shock. Fred had been reading to her, when poor Lottie came in. She'd lost all control of herself; she was sobbing bitterly—"

"Did she say anything about the baby?"

"No. Amelia never knew about the baby. Of course I don't know what she said," the judge admitted, with a faint frown. "But whatever she said, it didn't last long, for Amelia fainted, and when she came to she was very ill, and the baby was born within the hour. Emma came hurrying down and took Lottie away, and a few days later Emma left my mother, and she and Lottie went to live somewhere in the country."

"Fred was killed in a motor smash a few years later, and Amelia didn't survive very long. My mother took charge of Amy, and the money my brother left for you I administered as best I could. Emma had sent her sister to this school of Saint Dorothea's for a while, when she was little but Lottie hated it and came back. 'A school of character,' as the catalogue says, and she wanted you sent there."

"And I hope," the man finished, smiling, "that character is exactly what you've got, Cherry. I look to you for great things. Now, about this matter of my mother," said the judge, ignoring Cherry's stricken silence, "she doesn't want Amy to be distressed by this, and she'll not say another word about it. You come to the house when you like, give Amy as much friendship as you can and leave the rest to me."

Cherry was standing; she came over to his chair, bent over him swiftly, and he felt her warm lips against his forehead.

"I love you! There's never any trouble for anyone where you are!" she said, and was gone.

"OH, THE relief, Kelly!" she wrote him from camp. "The relief of doing something you simply don't want to do, and having it over, and your soul as clear as a bell! The judge was a saint, as

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usual and things stay as they are! . . .

"When will you see me? When college opens. For three delicious weeks before that, as soon as we close camp, Rebecca and I and a darling girl named Lucie Fargo are going on a wild cruise. Up to Victoria—we'll actually be out of America, imagine!—and on the way home we're going to stay with Lucie's grandmother, who has a country hotel. That's up in Mendocino County, not far from Aunt Emma's place; it's only about thirty miles. So I've written Aunt Emma that I'm coming over to see her.

"I wrote you that I've made the entrance exams and am admitted; credits to spare too, so score one for Saint Dorothea's! Life is all exciting."

And she signed it "Your devoted and obedient Marchioness."

BUT despite high spirits she dreaded the visit to Emma, and was glad that it was to be put off until the end of the holiday. By that time perhaps it wouldn't seem important, it wouldn't be an ordeal. Whatever it meant, somehow she felt that she must make it.

In due time she and Rebecca and Lucie were off into a world of freedom and laughter and good companionship. They drove along the ocean coast, and into high mountains, and through valleys where great rivers raced.

It was all glorious and restful and exciting. To have climbed into the car at the kitchen door of the Pringle house in a quiet California town and to descend from it in what might have been an English city was a sort of miracle. English voices and accents, English beds and English names—fruit tart and brawn and Melton Mowbray pie. The girls could not rejoice enough in the novelty of it, or in the thrill of the still autumn air, and the glory of their first look at the turning leaves.

So that when they were back in California with the great mountains and the days of laughter and change and adventure behind them, Cherry felt herself older, wiser, braver, and she shook off the little instinctive wincing of her spirit at the thought of encountering Emma again, and on a certain sober September afternoon presented herself at the door of Emma's cabin with nothing more than a little shyness in her manner.

Emma lived in a lumber country. Cherry, for her drive of thirty miles, had borrowed the car, leaving the other girls with Lucie's grandmother. She parked it at the foot of the steps that led from the road straight to the door of Emma's main room, conscious already of a sense of thankfulness that she had her means of escape so close and ready.

The door was half open; there were no locks in Upper Camp. The interior of the room was dark, the walls rough pine board and batting, the furnishings simple and useful and homemade. There were crushed cushions on a couch before a cold fireplace in which a pyramid of gray ashes stood.

Emma had been lying on the couch, evidently napping; her sallow middle-aged face was spotted and flushed with sleep. She welcomed Cherry pleasantly enough, but without an embrace, and put the girl into a chair at the hearth while she started a fire and lighted one dim kerosene lamp.

"I leave those ashes for warmth," she explained, "it gets so cold here, already. Well, Cherry, I was rather expecting you today, but when three o'clock came I thought it would probably be tomorrow."

"Lucie had to see her grandmother—" Cherry launched into explanations, and a description of her trip.

"Cherry," Emma said suddenly, interrupting the girl's flow of talk, "I wanted to see you. I'd rather tell you

than write you. I'm going to be married."

Cherry stared at her in amazement, laughed delightedly.

"Lumberman?"

"No. A man I used to know twenty years ago. You've never heard his name; nobody has. He's not an American; we shan't live in America."

"Aunt Emma! But who is he?"

The plain face flushed as Emma turned from stirring the fire.

"I'd rather you didn't know."

Cherry sat back, snubbed and humiliated.

"I'm sorry," she said stiffly.

"I don't mean it the way you think I do," Emma pursued, in her slow, pains-taking fashion. "I mean that it will be better for you and everyone if you don't know. I will be gone from here—now that I've seen you—in a day or two. I shall lock the door, get into my car and drive away. I've no friends here, although they're all kindly neighbors. I'll meet—my friend next week, be married, sell my car and go away. It's better so."

"But, Aunt Emma, why?" the girl said, recovered from her moment's setback, and full of sympathy. "Even if it's only to write each other, once a year, it's something. You're not—" She laughed as at an absurdity. "You're not trying to hide something, are you?"

"I've hidden something for twenty years," Emma said quietly. In the shadows Cherry could not see her face. "It touches you nearer than it does me," the older woman continued. "I want you to know it, even though it may make no difference in the way you live, and what you feel and do. What I did was wrong. Whether it's a prison offense or not I don't know. I'm risking that. I'm risking your not caring enough, or anyone's caring enough, to follow me—to have me traced. I can tell you in a few words."

Cherry sat staring, with her face colorless and her eyes blazing, and her lips unable to utter a sound.

"I don't think I heard what you said, Aunt Emma," Cherry said faintly, after a long while.

"Yes, you heard me," Emma said. She repeated what she had said before. "You ought to know—not that you ever can prove it!—that you aren't Charlotte Rawlings at all, Cherry. You ought to know that you're Amelia Marshbanks."

CHERRY swallowed with a dry throat, essayed to speak, failed. She seemed able to make nothing more than a cawing, choking sound.

"You said, Aunt Emma—?" she stammered after a silence and stopped. "You didn't say that I'm Amy—?"

Breath failed her again. The other woman looked at her somberly.

"I'll tell you what happened," Emma said in her characteristic unemotional way. "I'd have sworn twenty years ago that wild horses couldn't drag it out of me. But you're different from what I thought you'd be. Everything's different. Time was when I wanted everything good in the world to come to Amy Marshbanks. But she isn't like Lottie; she isn't like her mother. She's proud, superficial; proud as her grandmother is. They've made her like that. Well! Let it go."

"I went down to the city last week to see the judge about moving my account from the bank," Emma pursued. "I have it all in traveler's checks now. I can take it with me. When I called at the Marshbanks house, Amy was going up the stairs with two other girls. She saw me waiting there in the hall; she didn't even give me a nod. 'It's just one of Granny's old servants,' she said. I think I made up my mind at that minute to tell you that you're the one who ought to have the money, you're the one who ought to be going to the dances and to Honolulu and to Europe!



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FROM THE
ISLES OF SPICE

"It won't do you any good, Cherry. There's no proof. No one knew except Lottie, and she's been dead these thirteen years."

Silence. Silence. After a while Emma's voice again:

"I was twelve years older than Lottie; my mother died when she was two. She was pretty the way Amy is, only slighter and smaller, with Amy's kind of hair. After my father died we lived with an aunt and uncle; they weren't always kind to me, but everyone adored Lottie. When my aunt died I kept house for my uncle and Lottie was my baby. When she was six I took her to her first school and hung around at noon to see the little things come running out, and my shy little Lottie among them, with a big girl holding her hand."

"I did her homework with her, and got up her costumes for school plays and took her shopping Saturdays, buying her new shoes and sailor hats and little gingham. My father was John Rawlings—he never could do much for us, and when he died and my uncle and aunt died—I was nineteen then—Lottie was all I had left."

"WELL, I married Tom Haskell, and he was a father to her. She was ten, and pretty as a picture. We watched her as she grew up; nothing dangerous must come near her. Innocent—with big eyes always serious at first, and then smiling suddenly, as if the sun had broken out—"

"One Sunday we were driving along comfortably, Lottie squeezed in between me and Tom on the front seat and me thinking of the baby we were going to have in a few months—"

"Ah-h-h!" Cherry drew a quick breath of pity and sorrow. The pine-scented shadows of the place seemed to be drawing closer about her, deepening, forming a background of more complete silence as Emma began again:

"I suppose everyone has had the experience of driving along and getting hit, and saying afterward, 'I never saw it at all. It was right there and I never saw it!' A truck was on top of us—smashing in from the left. Tom was dead at the wheel; I was broken in two. But little Lottie was protected by our bodies; she reproached me long afterward for 'squeezing' her 'that day Uncle Tom put his head down on the wheel.'"

"Three months later I went to the Marshbankses. I tried St. Dorothea's for Lottie—an old friend of mine was a Sister there—but she couldn't stand it, so I boarded her with a fine Irishwoman who had three children. I saw her often, every week nearly, for the old lady can be generous enough to her servants when they remember that they're servants. I was the nurse they'd had years before when the boys were ill; they liked me, and they wanted someone always around because old Colonel Marshbanks was an invalid and they weren't sure when the end might come."

"When she was old enough Lottie went to a nice, simple little boarding school in Belmont, and I'd go and take her out to a picture in Redwood City and for ice cream. Summers they had a camp, and she was happy and good and prettier and prettier."

"Fred Marshbanks, your father, was one of the handsomest men I ever saw, but weak. He had married Amelia Wellington by this time—she was a lovely girl with blue eyes and light hair, but for a long time it looked as if they couldn't have a child, and it broke her heart. Jud Marshbanks was married too, but he lived in the East, and they only saw his little boy now and then. That's Gregory, of course."

"I wanted Lottie nearer me then, and she'd left school, and boarded down in Redwood City. But she was often with me in the Marshbanks house."

"When Lottie was eighteen and I was thirty I was sewing in my room one night. We were all under a considerable strain in the house, for at last Fred's wife was going to have a baby, and they were terribly anxious for fear something would go wrong again."

"It was eleven o'clock, I suppose, and I was thinking of going to bed when suddenly and quietly my door opened, and Lottie was there. She gave me a terrible start."

"The minute I saw her I knew we were lost somehow, but I didn't know why. She looked pale and changed and she didn't smile or kiss me. She just crossed the room and knelt down at my knee, and said, 'Sis, I'm in trouble.'"

"I guess my life—the real living—ended right there," Emma went on, after a moment when only Cherry's dilated eyes and half-parted lips and quickly moving breast showed how absorbed



IN CHEYENNE, RODEO LEADS

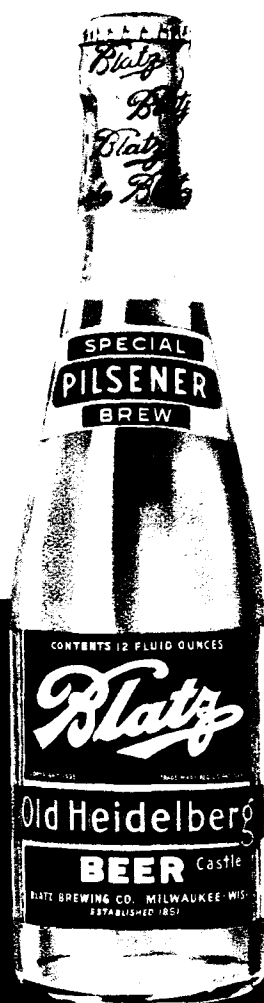
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she was. "I asked her what kind of trouble, and she cried, and I said over and over, 'What kind of trouble, Lottie?' and gradually it came to me—or perhaps it came in a flash—that I knew. Anyway, sitting there with her hands in mine and her face all tears—I'd never let Lottie cry before!—it seemed to me that I'd always known.

"I kept patting her hands, and swallowing, and looking away, and by and by I heard myself telling her, 'All right, darling, I'll take care of you. You mustn't cry. I'm here. We'll get out of this somehow.' When she'd stopped sobbing and was leaning against me, resting her hair against my cheek, I asked her who it was, if I knew the man. 'He'll marry you; any man would,' I told her; 'and after a little while, with your dear little baby, everything will begin to seem right again.' Of course I knew that with a nature like Lottie's it never would come right, but I had to comfort her.

"'Em,' she said, 'he never can marry me. He's married.'

"Then she told me.

"FOR a few minutes the whole world seemed to rock and roar with it," Emma went on, talking in a low tone now, looking into space with narrowed eyes, seeming to be only thinking aloud. "It was as if a gun had gone off. My throat was thick and my head hurt. But I had to keep holding tight to her, telling her it was all right, that we'd get through—we'd get through somehow. Had she told anyone? No, nobody—nobody. She carried that secret for five months, Cherry, and even then she seemed as slim and quick as most girls, unless you knew.

"Well, she crouched there, and I patted her head and I thought and thought. I thought of him, rich and popular and free, and so glad his own wife's child was coming; I thought of him passing me in the hallway, always with some little joke. 'Watch your step, Emma! There's a destroyer in town and the place is full of bluejackets!' and 'Emma, you've not been drinking my brandy again, have you?' And all the time knowing this. And I thought of Lottie going on for months and months, seeing me, planning my off Sundays and my vacation with me and keeping this from me. The bitterness of it seemed to suffocate me, but I said to myself, no, I mustn't die. Lottie'd have no chance at all without me, and I had to save Lottie.

"Fred and Lottie had seen each other lots of times, of course. They all knew my little sister, who used to come in from school now and then and stay with me. She told me—this night she told me what had happened. That in the spring she had come in one late afternoon at the beginning of the Easter vacation to surprise me and hadn't found me there. I'd gone with the old lady to Santa Barbara for two days; there was a stomach doctor there she used to consult. Well, Lottie came in, and didn't find me, and did find Fred. His wife was staying down in Burlingame for a few days, and he was supposed to go down himself to join her. But instead he took Lottie to dinner and they went somewhere to dance, and she told him that she'd always loved him.

"They came back to the house about midnight; still no one there. Lottie went upstairs and went to bed. I'd left her a message I'd be home the next day. She thought Fred had gone, driving himself down to Burlingame that night. But he came upstairs—

"You're only twenty, Cherry, but you're a woman. That was the only time they were in each other's arms. The only time. She told me that if she had known then how she was to pay for it she would have killed herself rather than ever face me with that news."

The piny, warm darkness of the room, the dying embers of the fire, the swish of low leaves against the roof and the expressionless voice droning on. It was all more than ever like a strange dream.

"To think, Cherry, of the welcome they were getting ready for the Marshbanks baby, and of the way the world would treat my Lottie's unwanted little scrap, seemed to work like some terrible intoxicating poison in me. I put her to bed; she'd stayed at the house often enough; there was no comment by anyone; and if Fred Marshbanks ever had thought of her, he had probably put it all out of his mind, as a moment's foolish mistake months before.

"Lottie went off to sleep, and the next morning she was her quiet little self. Bonifacio, the Filipino servant we had then, brought up my breakfast, and I sent him down for another tray; that went placidly enough. And I began to think—my head was splitting with thinking by this time—if I could possibly keep Lottie safe up there, on the third floor of a big house. Where else would she be so hidden and so safe? I always was upstairs in my room for breakfast, I was as fussy about that then as I am now; my trays always had too much food on them, and Filipinos aren't talkers. I said to Bonifacio that my sister would be with me a good deal. It was none of his business; he didn't care. Lottie could come and go in the quiet hours of the day, and in the evenings. If we'd arranged for years to have this happen we couldn't have arranged it more safely for her.



"I'm afraid there's nothing here"

GARRETT PRICE

"I don't remember that we talked of it much. Weeks went by. Lottie expected her baby in January. She and I went on very quietly, reading the newspapers, sewing, talking. She embroidered beautifully, and I remember that we were marking blanket covers and monogramming napkins for the old Madame. 'Lottie didn't go back to school?' the old lady said to me one day. 'Lottie graduated, and you sent her twenty dollars, Madame.' 'Oh, so I did! She's with you now, Emma?' 'We're embroidering the new linen.' 'Of course. Remember, I'm paying Lottie for that just as if I'd had it done downtown!' That was all there was to that.

"I don't suppose Fred ever knew she was there, much less what else was there—his unborn baby under his own roof! He thought she'd never breathed it to me, of course. Perhaps he didn't know she was going to have one.

"I had arranged for Lottie to go to a good hospital for the confinement in January—"

"January!" Cherry interrupted. "But we were both born in November, Amy and I!"

"Yes, but one of you came two months too early." Emma went on with the story. "I was going to Fred, and if necessary bring in his brother, for the judge had moved out here then, and have them acknowledge his child. But it all came out differently.

"Lottie was quiet, talking with me, planning with me, that sometimes I didn't know what she was thinking inside, whether the thing meant to her what it meant to me. But she felt everything—the shock of it and the shame of it—"

EMMA'S voice stopped for a minute. When she took up the thread of her history again she seemed to have a momentary difficulty in enunciating:

"She'd been as pure as a child up to that night with Fred; she hadn't known how life was. The shock, the horror of what Fred did, meant far more to her than that she was going to have a baby. Motherhood wakes a girl up; she's a woman then, and she begins to bear pain and shame and loneliness and fear like a woman.

"But she didn't complain; she went on very quietly, and we were discussing arrangements for January when I came upstairs one wet November afternoon to find her writhing in bed. Her trouble had come upon her two months too soon and she'd set her teeth and was going through it all alone. The room was dark, and the rain pouring down, and she seemed to me, with her red face and her wild hair and her teeth gritted, like an animal in a trap. I knew what to do; there was chloroform downstairs; I went and got it, and eased her off now and then, and presently I slipped down and telephoned old Doctor Povlitski. He had been a friend of mine when I took the nurses' training course in the hospital, and I knew he would keep our secret.

"The old Madame was out, Fred wasn't home, and Fred's wife was dozing in her room. The doctor came in quietly the side way—I looked out for that—but fifteen minutes before he arrived Lottie's little girl, very tiny, but healthy enough, was born. There was nothing for him to do; he went away, and left her to me. And then I had some thinking to do again, for there isn't any hiding a new baby very long. But she was a good baby.

"Four nights later, Lottie'd been lying there very quietly and the baby was as good as gold, when she said to me, 'What's the excitement downstairs?'

"I was surprised that she'd heard it, for the room I had her in was way at the back of the house, but there had been a good deal of laughing and calling, and so

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I made some errand to go down to Mrs. Fred's room, and then came up and reported. Mrs. Fred's father had arrived, and had brought the baby everything—his pram and chair and crib, his silver bowl and plate, and they'd been opening them up and making a great fuss.

"Well, old Mr. Wellington went away, and the Madame went to her room, and things settled down. As soon as she could be moved I was going to get Lottie to a boardinghouse I knew of. I'd been to see the woman and told her that my cousin's husband was in the merchant marine; I'd even found out the name of a ship that I said he was on. So I was breathing easier, for I thought even if old Madame discovered Lottie's baby, I could cook up some story of a marriage and say that the child had come early, which was true, and that they were leaving immediately.

"SO I settled her and the baby off for the night, and went to my room. This was maybe eleven o'clock. I was undressed, and just getting into bed when I heard the baby cry and went into Lottie's room.

"Her bed was tumbled and she was gone. I rushed back into the hall, all the doors in every direction were closed, and I ran to the stairhead and saw lights in the hallway below and Lottie crossing it. Then I heard Lottie's voice in Amelia's room—Mrs. Fred's room, and then Fred shouting. I don't know how I got down there. Mrs. Fred had stumbled back toward her bed and was staring at Lottie. There was a terrible silence when I got there, and then Amelia said in a whisper, 'You lie!'

"I don't lie,' Lottie said. She was so weak that she was leaning against a chair as if she had no bones in her body, and her voice was hoarse and weak too. 'Ask him!' she said. 'He had what he wanted from me seven months ago; he said it was right; it was no sin because we loved each other! And it's not fair, it's not fair that your child will have everything—wealth and position and cribs and bowls—and all I get is disgrace!' Poor little Lottie, she was beside herself, she didn't know what she was saying.

"Don't,' Fred said, 'oh, don't let my mother know about this!' Amelia looked at him, and her face was like chalk. 'Fred, it isn't true?' she said. 'Yes,' he said very quietly, 'it's true.'

"That was all I heard. I got Lottie upstairs; I was afraid it had killed her. She was crying wildly by that time, and I had a terrible time quieting her. But after a while she sobbed only now and then, and her eyes closed—dreadfully sunk they were, and her face was so bloodless—I was creeping back to bed again when the old Madame called me. Amelia was having hysterics and for a few minutes it seemed as if we couldn't bring her around. From screaming with laughter she went into real screaming, and in a few minutes I told Fred to call the hospital and tell her doctor we were taking her there—that the baby was coming. But we didn't have time to move her. Old Mrs. Marshbanks was coming in and out of her room in her wrapper now—no good at all—and Fred was beside himself with terror. 'Can it live if it comes now?' he asked me in the hall. I said it could, but when the poor tiny baby slipped into the world it didn't look as if it could last an hour.

"The doctor was there then and had brought a nurse; they had the ambulance at the door and they said Amelia was sinking—it was only a matter of minutes unless they could get her to the hospital for a transfusion. Fred had rushed on ahead to have his blood tested, and Madame went with the doctor and Amelia. 'I'm afraid the baby won't live,' the doctor said to me, for you were as blue as an iceberg and about as cold."

"I was!" Cherry exclaimed in a stricken whisper. Her fascinated eyes never left Emma's eyes gleaming in the shadows.

"Yes, it was you. Your little fists were almost transparent; your poor little knees bent up against you like a dead bird's feet, your eyes were sunk into your head, and your mouth was open, cawing, as if you couldn't get air. I did what I could with hot water and an eye-dropper, fixed the crib, tearing open the packages of blankets and new beautiful monogrammed sheets, laid you in them with a hot-water bottle at your feet and ran upstairs to tell Lottie and get my night wrapper.

"Mrs. Fred's had her poor little baby,' I said to Lottie. 'It's a valvular case, I think. It can't live the night through. I'm going down to sit by it and wait until the old Madame comes back.'

"Then I went downstairs and began a long vigil. Once Mrs. Marshbanks telephoned—horrible the bell sounded too, in the dark winter night. Fred's wife was very low. How was the baby? I had to say something cheerful; I said she looked much better now that she was washed. It was about five o'clock when Fred came in. I'd been within hearing of the child all the time, but I'd gone into the dressing room to drink a cup of coffee and twice I'd been out to the telephone in Mrs. Marshbanks' room.

"He looked deathly; they'd taken a pint of blood from him, saving Amelia's life, he said. But she was still in a terrible state, and had wanted him beside her, holding her hand. He came in to fling himself down for some sleep. But first he took a look at the baby.

"Why, Emma, she's small but she'll make the grade. She looks like a different baby!' he said. I went over and looked down expecting to see you, breathing your very last, maybe—but instead I recognized Lottie's child."

Emma's breath had been coming shallow and fast as she reached the last phrases. Now she was perfectly still, and the room was still. But Cherry could hear the wind whining in the redwood branches outside.

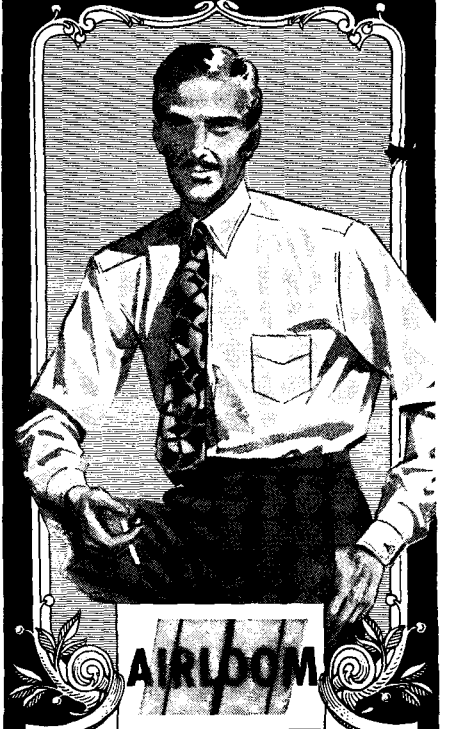
"She'd changed them—changed us!" Cherry said in a whisper.

"Lottie. She'd slipped downstairs while I was out of the room, put her own baby into the crib, carried you upstairs. I don't know," Emma said, "whether—if I'd had time to think, if I'd had my wits about me—I mightn't have told him, then and there. But I was like a person struck senseless. What it meant to me, what it meant to Lottie, what it would give Lottie's baby if the other baby died, and if Lottie mightn't be in danger of—oh, I don't know what, prison maybe—if they found her out. Anything!"

"I STOOD there, struck silent, and before we turned away Mrs. Marshbanks and old Mr. Wellington were in the room. 'Not living, Emma?' she said, coming to the crib. 'Living!' Fred said, 'and she looks all right! She's tiny, but she looks all right.' 'Why, little girl,' the old man said, in that kind voice of his, 'you may stay with us yet. This is good news for Amelia,' he said, 'and we'll get it to her right away. Yes,' he said, 'you catch onto my finger as if you had a good deal of spunk, baby. Emma. I thank God for this! The doctor told us it was one chance in a hundred. My little granddaughter looks pretty well, to me!'

"That finished me. I couldn't say a word then. I thought of the little thing upstairs, perhaps dead already. It came to me that this would save Lottie from shame, from responsibility. She was only nineteen. She didn't love—how could she love?—her baby. It was Fred's child, after all, and it might save his wife from bitter grief, perhaps from death, to have it to raise as her own.

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"I don't think I thought it all out, Cherry. But anyway, I acted as if I had. I heard my own voice saying, 'She's had a bath and some sleep, and she does look stronger.' I was trembling all over, as I am now, remembering it, but I said it easily enough. Immediately Fred burst into tears; he was a tenderhearted fellow, and he'd grown up some that night. The judge and old Mr. Wellington said they'd go back to the hospital and wait until Amelia was awake, and give her the good news; Mrs. Marshbanks said she must have some coffee and sleep.

"Fred followed me into the hall. 'Emma,' he said, 'you know what your sister said last night, after my wife fainted?'

"I was so tired—so frightened, all I could do was nod.

"'Was it true?' he asked me. 'Is she going to have a baby? Emma, she couldn't! We'd had such a happy time that evening, and she was so sweet, so little and young and loving. I've been married six years, and Amelia and I have always wanted a baby. . . . It couldn't be that Lottie—! Tell me that she was scaring me, that she's not going to have a baby!'

"'No, she's not going to have a baby,' I said, looking him right in the eye.

"'Oh, thank God, thank God! If she heard anything or guesses anything I can tell my wife that!' he said. 'Tell her I'm sorry. That I've always been sorry.'

"He went into his room. I went upstairs to Lottie's room. She was lying in bed, wide awake, with a rested, triumphant expression in her eyes.

"'My little girl,' she said in a whisper, 'will have what she's entitled to. This one will be no worse off. Look at her, Emma, she can't live. Who's hurt? Little Charlotte's with her own father, and a nameless little baby gets buried.'

"I couldn't speak about it. The world seemed to have gone to pieces about me. I didn't know where to begin thinking, much less talking. I went over and looked at you. It would have killed

Amelia Marshbanks to give up the healthy child that was asleep downstairs and put the leaden little thing that was you in her place. You seemed hardly breathing; for days you flickered between life and death. And if you had gone, Lottie's baby was safe and you no worse off.

"They moved their baby to the hospital that first day. A nurse came and bundled her up, asking me for blankets and a silk veil for the little face, and saying to me, 'This is a very important baby, you know. We think her grandfather's going to give us the new maternity ward.'

"WELL, that's all. You know all the rest. You went on breathing; you were dying, but you didn't die. Every hour seemed the last but it wasn't. Days went by, and Lottie and I took you to the country. I'd told Fred, after that night, that of course I'd go; he needn't be afraid he'd ever see us again. But later he sent for me, and when I confessed that my sister had had a child—his child—he then made the provision that you know of. You grew strong and big, much stronger than Amy, and I tried—" The speaker's voice thickened; there was a pause.

"I tried not to like you, Cherry. When you came to Mrs. Porter's I tried to remember poor Lottie's triumph and her revenge. But it wasn't any use. You nursed me, you brought me Cappy—"

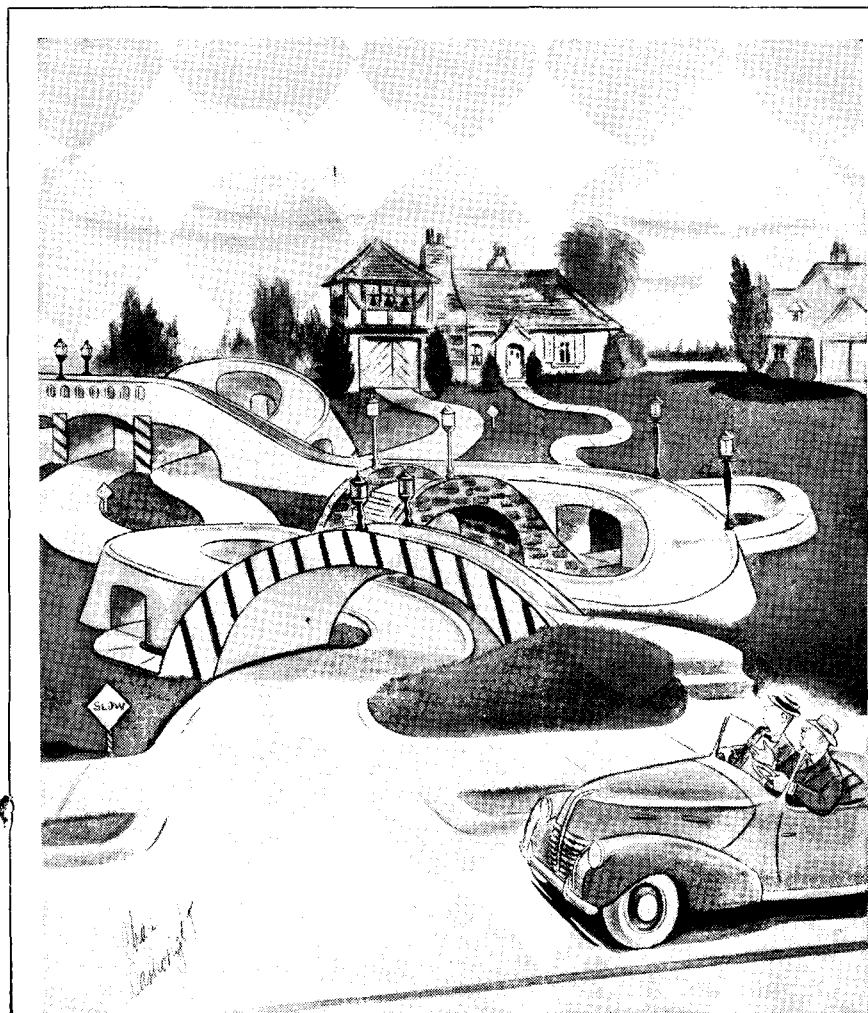
Emma stopped abruptly, stroking the cat, who had jumped into her lap.

"That's all," she said, and there was another silence.

"Who knows, Aunt Emma?" Cherry said then, hoarsely.

"Nobody knows. Lottie died of pneumonia when you were seven. No one else knows." She paused. "In a few weeks, if you like, you can tell the judge this. For I think he knows something," Emma said. "It is only my idea; there may be no foundation for it."

(To be continued next week)



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CHAS. CARTWRIGHT

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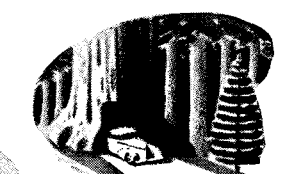
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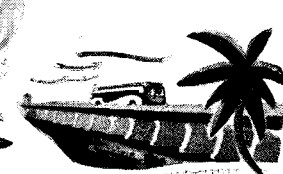
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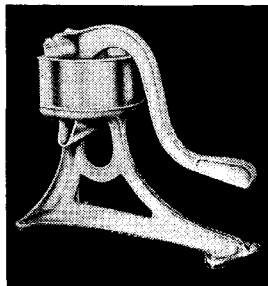
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RUBBER HEELS AND SOLES

Beauty and the Bull

Continued from page 20

a long period of rigorous training that began when they were quite young.

Conchita meets all the requirements in the latter respect. Her interest in the art first blossomed when she was eleven. As for temperament, she is delightfully free of that. She gets as much fun out of her performance as the spectators. Perhaps that's one reason why she has come so far.

It was through her love of horses and riding that her interest in bullfighting was awakened. One day when she was eleven—her home at the time was in suburban San Isidro, five kilometers out of Lima—she heard of a riding school that had been opened in the city by Ruy da Camara, a Portuguese who had gone out to Lima as consular representative of his country. She persuaded her parents to let her enroll for high school and equestrianism.

An Expert at Thirteen

Da Camara, her riding master, was impressed by her aptness and they talked much of horses. It was inevitable that bullfighting should be included in these talks. Da Camara had been a famous *rejoneador* back in Portugal, where the skill of the horse complements that of the man and the bull isn't killed. He told his pupil how horses were trained for the bull ring, of the fine co-operation between rider and mount to outwit, outrun and outmaneuver the bull.

Conchita caught the thrill of it and made up her mind to be a fine *matadora* as well as a fine horsewoman. Da Camara, sympathetic with the ambition he had stirred, proved a careful, methodical trainer. As the girl improved in her horsemanship, she was taught the basic routine of bullfighting, both on horseback and afoot. When she was thirteen her training was extended to include workouts with "some little cows," as she put it.

"But they were not just ordinary cows," she explained quickly. "They were cows of a breed that produces fighting bulls for the ring, and consequently afforded plenty of excitement at that stage of my training."

While she was still thirteen, Conchita made her first public appearance, as an amateur, of course, at Lima. A group of public-spirited women decided to sponsor a charity benefit with a bullfight as the closing event. It required no more than a suggestion from her trainer for Conchita to put her bullfight training into practice. She stole the show at the Lima benefit by engaging two small bulls from horseback. As in the fights in Portugal, there was no kill. That was in January, 1936.

A few months later—she was now going on fourteen—Conchita made her professional debut in Lisbon. Da Camara, who had returned to Portugal for a vacation, couldn't resist having his countrymen, who know bullfighting on horseback, see what his favorite pupil, and a girl at that, could do. He arranged two performances for her, cabled the news back to Lima.

During five months in Portugal, she fought several times, won her laurels and returned to Lima. Two years later, on July 28, 1938, she made her first professional appearance as a *matadora*, that is, a fighter on foot, in Peru. Not quite sixteen, she had come a long way in the technique of the ring. She was now a *rejoneadora matadora*.

Conchita's first fight in Mexico was on August 20, 1939, in the national capital, less than a month after she

turned seventeen. It all came about as the result of a visit to Lima of Jesus (Chucho) Solorzano, one of the ranking Mexican fighters. Solorzano saw Conchita fight, was impressed, invited her to Mexico to try out her skill on some of the bull-ring stock, cows at first, on his brother's rancho near Mexico City.

With her mother and her manager, she arrived in the capital July 31st. She tried the Solorzano cows, found them exciting, and Solorzano arranged two fights for her. She caught the fancy of the fans and was off like a whirlwind.

Nearly every Sunday since, Conchita has appeared in the ring somewhere in Mexico. She has fought three times in Mexico City; has appeared in the rings at Puebla, Pachuca, Ciudad Juarez where many Americans saw her, Saltillo, Monterrey, Torreon, Guadalajara, Querétaro—nearly every city of size that boasts an arena. In some of them she has fought return engagements, definite evidence of her popularity.

Recently, by reason of the prolonged vivas of the fans, she was awarded the gold trophy as best performer at the traditional *Corrida de Covadonga* at Tampico. This annual affair, in the best Spanish tradition, is one of much gaiety, reminiscent of the grand, brave days of the past. The girls appear in beautiful old Spanish dresses; there is laughter and fun and much applause. Conchita was presented with the *Medalla de Covadonga* at a ceremony in the Spanish center that night after the fight. The inscription reads: "Honor to Art and Valor." Chucho Solorzano fought that day in the same *corrida*.

Matadors are Jealous

But Conchita didn't get the headlines in the reports of the fight sent to the Mexico City press. As has been hinted, it is still a man's world in Mexico and certain prerogatives must be preserved. As, for instance, the past February when Conchita was under contract to appear in the Mexico City ring but didn't because one of the big-shot *toreros* had temperamental pains. It's understandable, though.

Suppose, just for the sake of illustration, Conchita should have first billing in a *corrida* with some of the stellar male performers. Let's say that she should play her bulls perfectly, dispatch them neatly to the wild huzzas of the fans. Then suppose one of the male fighters, following her, should have a poor day. The emotional fans always quick to express disapproval of a poor showing, might yell: "Let Conchita show you how to do it!" Popular bullfighters have to take such things into consideration.

But Conchita takes it in her stride. She has friends among the fighters and countless fans among the populace. "The public is the most important, so far as a fighter's popularity is concerned," she commented. "And the most important thing so far as the fight is concerned is never to lose sight of the bull." She has been grazed, brushed on occasions by a charging bull, but never really hurt. She keeps her eyes on them.

As for her horses, two of them have long scars as souvenirs of ripping horns. But the wounds are nicely healed. Conchita saw to that. To observe her with her stable of highly trained mounts is to know that horses are a major interest in her life. She uses four at present.

Conchita and Manager Da Camara declined at first to put a value on the stable. There are so many things to be

considered besides the mere worth of horseflesh. Then they put their heads together and said 30,000 pesos for the four would be somewhere close to the figure. That's \$5,000 at today's exchange rate.

"When I was training back in Peru," the girl recalled while the subject of mounts was on her mind, "I used a mare, which is very unusual, for mares are seldom, if ever, used in bullfighting. But she was an unusual mare. Her name was Miss Ruth. It was hard for the Peruvian tongue to get the name right, so she became 'Mizraw.' Prior to leaving for Lisbon, I used her in my farewell fight in Lima. Eight days before I sailed she died. She was one of the best."

The smart, colorful fighting costume used by the girl is of Portuguese cut and make. She also uses the Portuguese saddle, with its heavy wooden stirrups and a lot of shining brass embossing, into which she fits snugly but without restriction of leg or body movement.

Conchita is earning through her skill and daring considerably more than most girls of her age. She gets from 7,000 to 10,000 pesos a performance, which, roughly speaking, is \$1,100 to \$1,600. Four Sunday afternoons a month at that figure make very interesting reading.

Conchita so far, taking into consideration her performances in Peru and Portugal, has dispatched more than sixty bulls. Judging by her youth and her love of the art—and counting on luck—this is only the beginning.

There have been tentative feelers from Hollywood, offers to appear in bloodless bullfights in the United States, a proposal to make a full-length screen story in Mexico of her life under the title

of Bullfighting Blood. The horses and bullfighting have the inside track where her ambition and plans are concerned.

She has her particular field almost to herself. There have been, there are today, a few women exponents of the art of bullfighting. But full-fledged *matadoras*, especially full-fledged *rejoneadoras matadoras*, are very rare. Having earned the title, the slender Peruviana's desire to brighten it up with continuing conquests is not difficult to understand.

The fans call her a Peruviana because she has spent most of her life in Peru. The impresarios so bill her for the obvious reason that origin in a Latin country is as important for a bullfighter as a Russian name is for a ballet dancer.

But between us, in a little flag-waving session, she's really an American. Her father, Francisco Cintron, Jr., was born of Spanish parents in Puerto Rico and graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point. He's now a businessman of Lima where he lives with the other and youngest member of the family, seven-year-old David.

Conchita's mother was born Loyola (shortened to Lola now) K. Verrill, in Connecticut, one of four children of Alpheus Hyatt Verrill, author, illustrator, naturalist and explorer, who since 1924 has been with the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York. As for that item about Irish influence in Conchita's life, it is Grandmother Verrill who was named McCarthy.

Despite her youth, Conchita is rather on the serious side. She speaks English and Spanish without accent and with equal fluency. In the bull ring, on horse or afoot, she fights in all languages, including the Scandinavian.

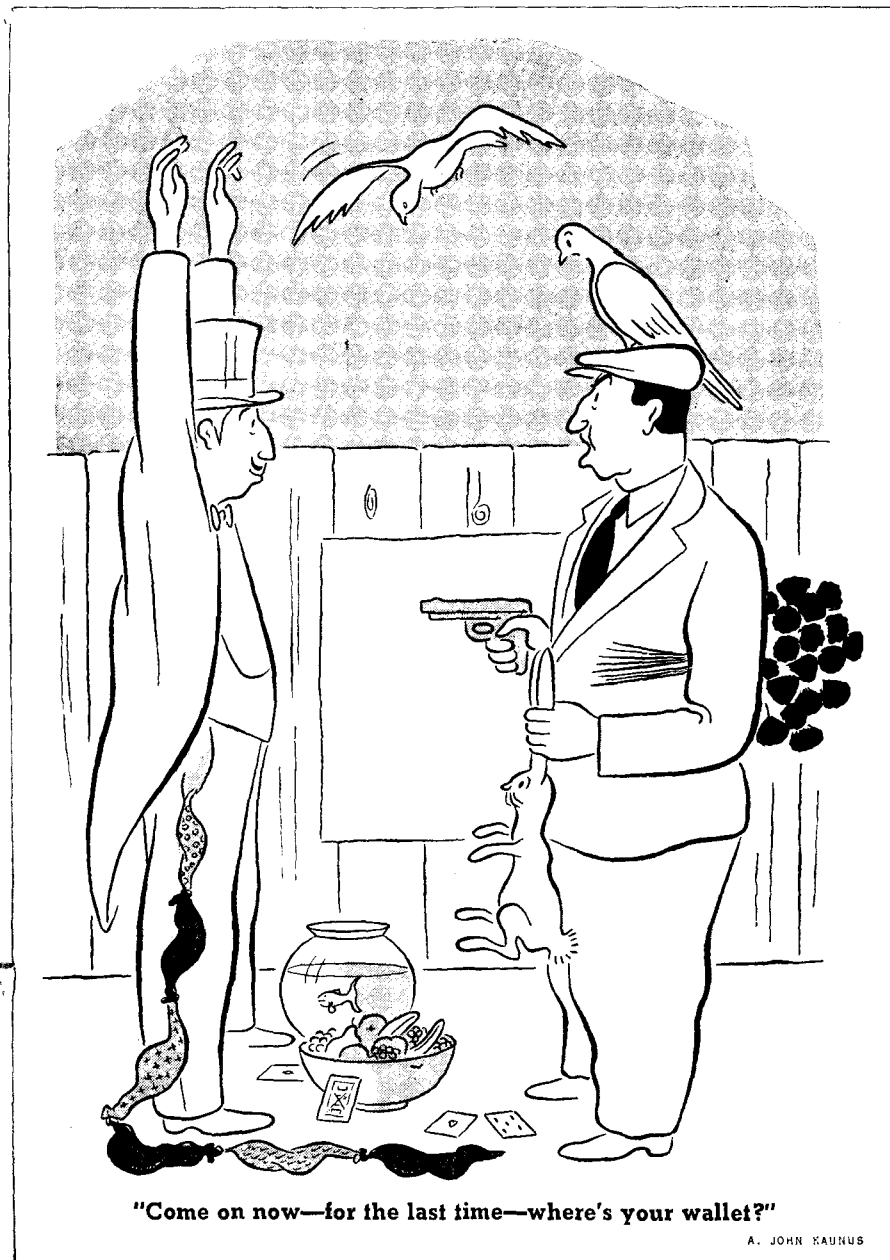
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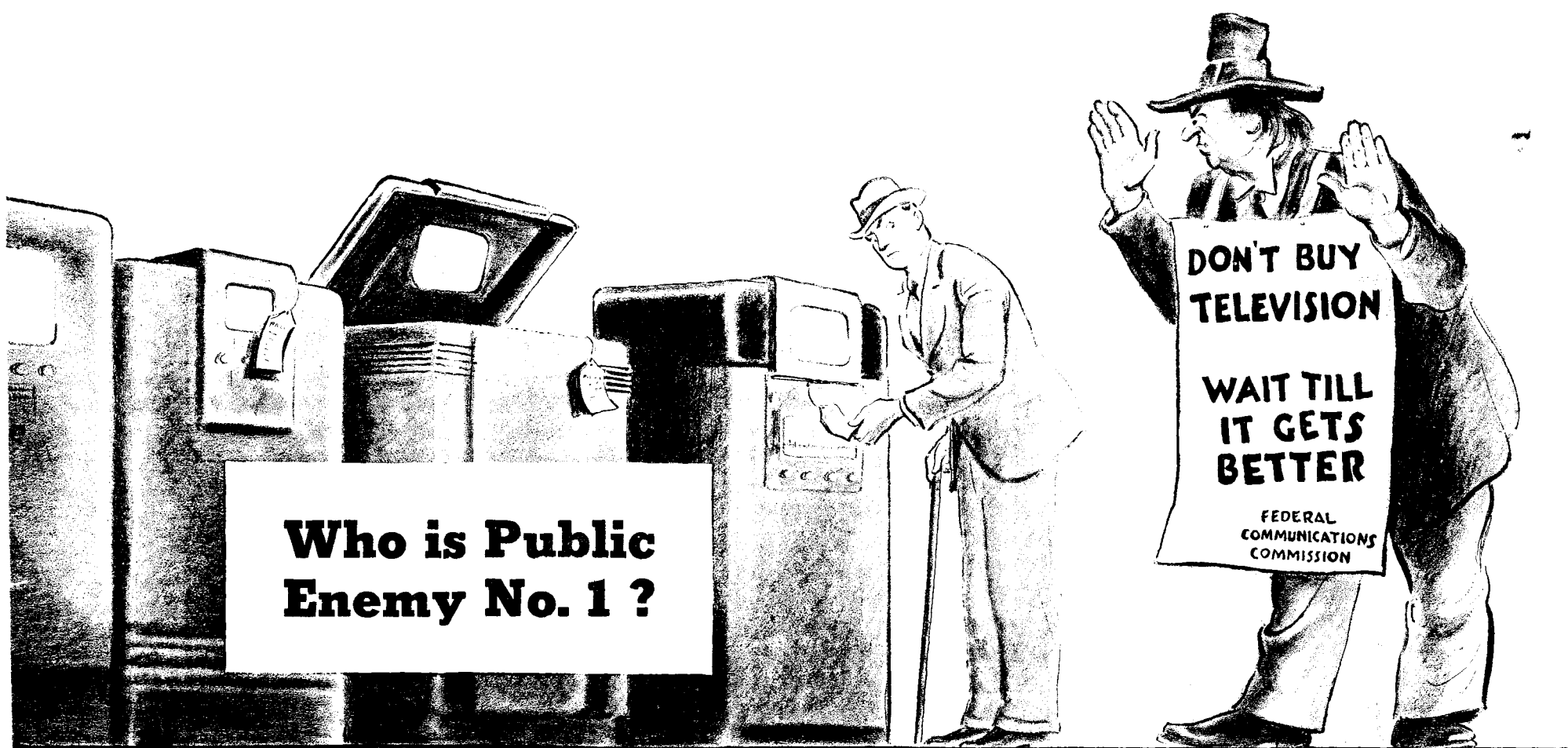
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Under the chairmanship of one Frank R. McNinch, the FCC did its best to set up government censorship over radio programs, while piously disclaiming any such intention.

There was the Mae West "Adam and Eve" broadcast excitement—an alleged radio indiscretion, which should have been left to the listeners-in to rap with warning letters to the program's sponsors if they wanted to, not raised by the FCC to the dignity of a national issue.

The FCC encouraged busybodies and professional croakers to agitate against horse opera and superman radio serials for children. This furor culminated in the Orson Welles Martian invasion hoax hullabaloo. The FCC kicked up such a dust about that that the broadcasters, never a very gallant crew, hamstrung themselves with a so-called self-governance code so namby-pamby as to make Will H. Hays of the movies look like the big, bad wolf.

All this was bad enough, in that it was a series of assaults on American intelligence and the right of free speech and free discussion.

Now, however, the FCC has a new chairman, a Mr. James Lawrence Fly, and since Mr. Fly's accession to power last September the FCC has raised itself from a mere monumental public nuisance to the status, in our estimation, of Public Enemy No. 1.

This Mr. Fly is exactly the sort of person we can't see as virtual czar over the nation's 800-odd radio stations and 55,000-plus amateur stations. Born near Dallas, Texas, in 1898, Mr. Fly qualified for the country's biggest radio job by, so far as we can make out, having nothing to do with communications all his life except for a short spell as a telephone-switchboard operator in his early youth.

He is a lawyer; was one of Felix Frankfurter's bright boys at Harvard; wangled a government job in the Department of Justice under President Hoover, and held over into the New Deal. Fly handled some antitrust cases, and did come within shouting distance of electricity by serving several years on the Tennessee Valley Authority's legal staff.

General Hugh S. Johnson calls Fly "The cockiest Fourth New Deal wight who ever figuratively and gleefully cut a tory's throat or scuttled an economic royalist's ship," and thinks that Flip (no, Henry, not Flit) would be a better name for him than Fly.

It was this gent who commandeered \$10,000 worth of the NBC's choicest Red Network time one evening a while ago to warn the American people against buying present-day television sets, on the ground that these sets might soon be obsolete. And this was the act, as we see it, that qualified Fly's FCC as Public Enemy No. 1—honorably excepting one member, T. A. M. Craven, who habitually files minority reports flaying the indiscretions of the FCC majority.

Suppose Ford, Winton, Duryea and the other pioneers of the automobile's Bronze Age had been hobbled by government warnings against purchase of their cars, because they would soon be making better cars. Perhaps 1,000,000 of us would now have cars and they would have cost anywhere from \$2,000 up apiece, and they would be about as efficient as cars actually became in the year 1910 or thereabout.

Because the automobile industry didn't have a Fly in its ointment, there are now about

30,000,000 cars in this country, most of them superb pieces of machinery and all of them bought at reasonable prices.

Suppose the government, back in the early 20's, had thrown its weight against people's desires for radio receiving sets with morning-glory loud-speakers and an infinite capacity for picking up static on the plea that better sets would presently be obtainable and we'd all be happy. A corporal's guard of us would now own radio sets and these sets would still be primitive, and poverty-stricken stations would still be broadcasting little besides vaudeville ham acts and phonograph records.

The inventors and promoters of any present-day comfort, convenience or mechanical appliance have got to get capital to work with, and the public has got to find the flaws and squawk about them, or the article's development will be badly delayed if it is not prevented altogether.

Fly, by this attempt to slit the economic throats of the alleged royalists of radio, has committed a crime against the economic, mechanical and scientific progress of all of us in this country.

We know of only one remedy. That is for Congress to hamstring Fly and his Communications Commission.

The FCC has one necessary function, and only one; namely, to allot wave lengths so that there will be the least possible duplication and jamming as between radio stations.

Congress should simply cut the FCC's work down to the bare bones of this one necessary function by a statute that cannot be misunderstood.

If these bureaucrats are permitted to go on grabbing more power, as bureaucrats do whenever and wherever they can, they will cripple our radio industry. Thereby, they will ruin one of our important means of communication in peace and war, of mass entertainment, and of mass education.