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IRA L. BARE, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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THE PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

The President's message is devoted to two subjects, and about equally divided between the two, foreign affairs and financial affairs. In regard to other matters he is content to refer congress to the department reports with a general concurrence in their statements of facts and recommendations.

A great deal contained in the message is departmental in character, and would form the body of the report of the secretary of state if that official made annual reports like the rest of the cabinet. The original idea was that the Secretary of State was a kind of private secretary to the President and that his part was to help the President prepare his address to congress after the other chiefs have submitted their reports to the President. As a consequence, foreign affairs have to be reported upon in detail by the President, or not at all. Eight years ago no resume of foreign affairs was submitted to congress and the country.

The remarkable thing about the first half of the message is its tameness and utter lack of sympathy with little Venezuela in its controversy with big bully, John Bull, or with Cuba in its efforts to throw off the yoke of despotism. The Monroe doctrine is stated in a very mild and halting way and when it comes to poor Cuba not the slightest touch of the chord of sympathy comes from the President. His one anxiety is to prevent any violation of the neutrality law and the only result he looks forward to is the suppression of the uprising and the restoration of peace on the old basis of Spanish rule. Cuba has been held in colonial bondage nearly four centuries and President Cleveland looks upon its independence as out of the question. If France had taken that attitude toward our revolutionary fathers it is morally certain that they would have failed in their endeavor to throw off the yoke of colonial subjugation to Great Britain. Then, too, when Mexico and South America rose in rebellion against Spain, President Monroe took a very different attitude from that of his present successor in the analogous case now in point. Clearly Cuba has little to hope for from President Cleveland in the way of recognition, either of independence or belligerent rights.

The President warms up somewhat toward our imperiled missionaries in China and Armenia, and is not wholly indifferent to Mr. Waller, but even in these cases he is very tame and timid. There is none of the ring of Andrew Jackson. When the hero of New Orleans saw fit to knock at the door of any foreign office he did not give any gentle and apologetic tap as if frightened out of his boots by fear there was a bull dog in the hall, but taking that stout old hickory stick of his he pounded away until the door was opened, and he took no time beating about the bush. Waller would have been a free man long ago with a Jacksonian President, and with Monroe in the President's chair Venezuela would be in no danger of territorial robbery and Cuba would have been already recognized as a belligerent if not as an independent nation.

While the President shows some concern for our missionaries in Armenia he dismisses the subject with the remark that the great powers are bound by treaty to look after and protect all Christians, including Americans. It is evident that he has no thought of using our own navy for the purpose of protecting American citizens now in the Ottoman empire. He does not seem to have any recollection of Decatur and the way our war ships in the early days of the century were used for the relief of American citizens on the Barbary coast. The Dardanelles now take the place of the Strait of Gibraltar. We have as brave men now in our navy as we had then, but Grover Cleveland is now President.

The message in its first part has a good deal to say about foreign markets and the importance of getting them. The earmarks of free-trade notions are plainly visable. He tries to console the wool growers of this country for the removal of protective duties by assuring them that Argentine Republic has reduced the duties on certain products of this country. He refers to that of South America as "the country from which our woolen factories draw their needful supply of raw material." But the sheep raisers of that country need not flatter themselves that they are to remain in undisturbed possession of this market. Far from it. It will not be long before the President of the United States will be a man chosen to that office by a party which proposes that the expanse of sheep pasturage, shall be "the country from which our woolen factories draw their needfal supply of raw material." And what is it that the Argentine people take from us? Agricultural machinery, with which to bear the wheat markets of the world. That is the democratic idea of reciprocity.

The un-American tone of the President's discussion of foreign affairs will be theme no donbt of a good many congressional speeches and it is safe to say that his critics will be confined to the republican party.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

YELLOW JIM.

By MARTHA M'CULLOCH WILLIAMS.

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CHAPTER I.

The house at Summerlands was tall and square, with the low roof of a wide piazza cutting the front of it horizontally in two. All the bare upper space was thickly beset with windows. The house sat facing west. In summer sunsets every window flamed out a bloody eye.

The blood red was fading into dusk as Sheriff Smith stood upon the piazza, sorrowfully shaking his gray head. Tall, lean, wiry, there was strife amounting to contradiction between his iron mouth and his kindly, weather narrowed eyes. He stood with one hand, brown and sinewy, clutching the muzzle of his double barreled gun, the other laid lightly upon the shoulder of his prisoner, who writhed under the touch, for all the kindness of it.

He was as tall as the sheriff, as lean, too, but with the greyhound's thoroughbred leanness. Even standing at rest you could not help but see how lithely supple was his strength, how deep his chest, how superb his swelling muscle. He had the finest thin olive skin, with no stain of color save at the lips. They were thin and firm and showed a vital scarlet under the fringe of a silky mustache, black as was the fine, soft hair lying so lightly upon his head.

Just back of him stood the sheriff's posse, behind them, framed in the wide doorway, a slim woman in a white gown, with eyes like dewy violets with lurid light behind them. She was pale—a creamy pallor such as shows in the camellia's heart. With her lids dropped you said involuntarily, here is a saint, unless, indeed, you saw her smile; then something more of the eyes' lambent flame hovered and wavered about her clear, pink lips.

Mrs. Carroll Austin, it had been whispered the county through ever since her wedding day, was a born worker of charms. The whisper, of course, was a mighty well hushed one. The Austins shot straight and had a habit of answering with a bullet any slur upon their womankind, particularly Carroll Austin, last of the name, in the law's eye last of the race. The law, you see, could take no account of Yellow Jim, though all the world knew that he was his master's half brother and saw that the two were in face, voice, stature and speech almost exact counterparts. Jim was the elder by 18 months. His mother died when he was 3 months old—some folks said of heartbreak because Carroll's mother was just brought home a bride. She was a barbaric beauty, although she had barely an eighth of African blood. There had been a suggestion of the palm tree and the desert in her flexible length, the warm languor of her eyes.

None of this came to the little lad left motherless. Except for the peculiar blue white of the eyes and some trifling stain under the nails—things which persist through 20 generations—he was all Austin, and no discredit to the race. He grew up in the house, was Carroll's playfellow and protector throughout his first five years and after that his companion in every boyish sport. When Carroll was sent to college, Jim went along as a sort of guardian angel. The two had studied together always. So it is not strange that the slave lad got very nearly as much out of the college course as did his young master.

His old one meant to set him free and send him abroad. The tie between them was not the less strong that it was unacknowledged. But Jim would have none of freedom that took him away from home and friends. Folks outside said that was not wonderful, seeing that he did exactly as he pleased, and was, even before Squire Austin's death, more master of Summerlands than its legal owner.

Carroll had loved Jim next to the honor of the Austins until he met the dewy fire of Lisette Weir's eyes. The wooing took a week, the wedding a month. Perhaps the new Mrs. Austin loved her husband supremely. Certainly she was of those women who love insatiably all men's love.

That was five years back, and those who looked to the heart of things wondered that the tragedy had been so long in coming. It had come at last in decent Austin fashion. Handsome Charley Clayton had for three years past dangled at Mrs. Austin's apron strings, yet her name was not mentioned in the quarrel between him and her husband. It was purely political, all admitted, as they also admitted that in shooting him Carroll Austin had done murder in the first degree.

Yet after it he had ridden home unchecked and in no hot speed. Sheriff Smith had overtaken him just outside his own gate and had permitted him to go in for a last word with his wife, though his better judgment said it was a hazardous thing to do.

He had left the town behind him pulsing with the thrill of vengeance. The very air was a threat. It was court day, with half the county thronging the streets. Still it was impossible to deny the one plea of a prisoner who might easily have defied the law, to which instead he submitted with such grace as moved one of the posse to say aside to his elbow neighbor:

"Dad rat it, ef thar ain't somethin in stock, after all! This yere boy's the regler old ruffle shirted Austin breed, no mistake erbout it. Jes' look at 'im—as cool an perlite ter us that's come ter take 'im ter jail as ef we had come instid ter tell 'im we wanted 'im ter go ter congress for us."

Lisette had met them at the door. Before her husband could speak she cried out sharply and flung herself upon his breast. His arms had closed tight about her. Then he put her gently away, called Jim and spoke with him briefly apart. Then he came in front of his captors, saying, with the barest undernote of tremor:

"I hope, sheriff, you will all drink with me before we go. There is a little of my father's old Madeira left. We may as well"—

"No, no!" the sheriff said, his voice coming thin and sharp. "We can't, my boy. We oughter rid like the devil wus behind when first we come up with you. Somethin worse'n the devil is behind. Thar comes the Clayton clan, shore's you're a foot high."

"I am glad of it! It is better so—very much better," Austin said, looking down the road that led in from the turnpike a mile away. All the land between was his own, and had belonged to an Austin since the days of Choctaw and Cherokee. Now there came across it half a hundred men, armed, mounted, crying out for vengeance.

As their yells smote through the duskening air Lisette darted to her husband's side, clung about his neck and set her mouth full on his.

"Carroll! Carroll!" she said in his ear. "What does—why are these men here? Surely you are safe?"

"I shall be—very soon," Austin said, shrinking away from her. Then he looked to the bottom of her eyes, and at once caught her in a smothering embrace. "Goodby, my life!" he whispered, then flung her from him, faced about and stood with folded arms at the side of the sheriff.

The lynchers had reached the inner gate within easy gunshot of the piazza. As they made to rush through it the sheriff shouted:

"Halt! What do you want?"

"Want! We want Carroll Austin! What's more, we mean ter have him," the leader shouted back.

"Whut for?" demanded the sheriff.

"You know well enough—to save you the job o' hangin him," a dozen vengeful voices cried. Austin made a forward step.

"Let them take me. The sooner it is over the better. I have thought so from the first," he said very low. "It will save trouble to—all of us—me especially."

"I'll see both of us shot before I do," the sheriff said, his lips narrowing to a line. His gun was at his shoulder. The foremost of the lynchers had halted just inside the gate. There were thunderous murmurs in the crowd behind. A big fellow pushed through it and came a little way in front of the mob's leader to say:

"See here, sheriff. Don't make a bad matter worse. We'll have Carroll Austin, dead or alive. More than that, we'll see you through whatever comes of your givin him up. An a heap more than that, we'll hold you to account for all that happens to anybody this night because of him."

"Let me go," Carroll said, making to step over the sill. The sheriff caught him roughly and thrust him back into the hands of the posse. Then, holding his gun muzzle down he went up to the mob. In spite of the dusk, the foremost could see that his face was white and working.

"Boys," he said, "you're my friends an neighbors. You all know I'd rather cut off my right hand than it should do one o' ye the least bit o' harm. But I'm the county's officer too. I've sworn ter do my duty, ter protect my prisoners with my life. I'm goin ter do it no matter whut it costs. Let me beg you now ter go home peaceable—ter wait fer law an justice—ef you don't may God have mercy on us all—this night's work will be so black no man livin will ever hear the last on it."

"If it is, you'll make it so," some one called from the rear. The leader laughed loud and derisively.

"We oughter nab you right now," he said. "It would make things easier. Oh, no, we won't do it!" as the sheriff flung up his gun. "We'll let you go—for we like you—like you so well we give you five minutes long to make up your mind that you'll give up your prisoner."

"Five years ain't long enough fer that," the sheriff said, clasping his hands over the butt of his gun, which rested muzzle downward upon the ground in front of him. "Boys, boys," he went on, "fer God's sake an mine an yours, listen ter reason! You're 10—20 ter 1, I know, but our backs are at the wall, an, by the Lord that made me, not one o' ye lays hand on Carroll Austin so long as I'm livin!"

"Oh, go back! You'll think better of it," the leader sang out. The muttering behind grew fiercer. Sheriff Smith, walking backward, said over his shoulder to the posse:

"Stand solid, boys! Don't shoot unless—until they're right on us."

With the last word yet in air there came a wild inrush of feet, oaths, shouting, inarticulate savage cries. Twenty yards off the stream of vengeance staid its course a breath's space as those foremost called aloud:

"One minute! Just one, then we will come and take him!"

Again the sheriff cried:

"Halt! The man that comes a step nearer"—

A fierce yell smothered his speech. In solid column the lynchers dashed at him. Instantly the five dark muzzles belched flame and smoke and hot leaden hail. The blurred booming filled all the clear fields with rolling echoes that swelled to the sky and wavered back to silence, undervoiced by hurrying hoofs as the lynchers slunk away.

Something ghastly remained behind. Three dead men lay stark and bloody upon the trampled turf. The prisoner had vanished. At the very moment of the firing Yellow Jim had rushed at him and half dragged him away. All thought of him seemed gone from the sheriff's mind. As he looked through the soft dusk at the white staring faces of the dead he said slowly and with dry lips:

"Boys, who wants ter be the county's officer? I've had enough o' it fer all my life."

Nobody answered him in words. A great owl flapped overhead, calling weirdly through the darkness:

"Whoo-oo! Whoo-oo! Whoo-oo!"

CHAPTER II.

The swamp was somberly terrible, even when a midsummer sun stood straight overhead, sending lances of light down into its dark places. At moonrise it was ghostly—a world of black sown here or there with blotches of silver. In the blackness great tree trunks swam in wraithlike colonnades holding high above the oozy earth a vaulted intricacy of leaves. Big rough barked vines writhed and clung about the great bolls. Now and again a vagrant arm of them made a dangerous loop across the blind path that led in from the firmer land.

It was the barest ghost of a footway, more sinuous than a serpent's trail. The blacks alone knew its windings. Of them only a few could follow it to its end—the runaway's refuge, deep in the swamp's heart. It crept, writhed, twisted, from root to tussock, from tussock to fallen stem. He who strayed from it took his life in his hand, for on either side lay mire and quicksand yawning to swallow him and leave no trace.

Swiftly yet cautiously Yellow Jim ran along it, half bent, a staff in his hand, with which he tried each farther foothold. His master at his back walked upright and confident, as though he trod a dancing floor. Yet he knew to the full his peril—the deadly ooze, the deadlier things that lurked and crawled therein. The passion of atonement had fallen away from him. To his heart he began

His hand clinched hard about his poor weapon.

to say that his bullet was sent well home. What if the dead man had not quite despoiled his home? He deserved death for the treacherous thought of it.

No—he would escape! Jim would keep him safe tonight. Tomorrow he would—but why plan before the event? They had been walking two hours; now as they came to a little open glade he stopped short, saying hushedly, though none could possibly hear:

"Wait, Jim. I must talk to you a little—as soon as I can catch breath."

"No, no, Marse Carroll—we mustn't! It's dangerous!" Jim panted over his shoulder. "We can talk as we go—but, oh, me! All I can say is—if—if this had to be done, why not have let me do it?"

"We will not speak of that," Austin said. "What bothers me now is my will. I made it the year after I brought my—brought Lisette home. If I die childless, everything but my bank stock goes to my father's nephew, Austin Reid. Even you will belong to him. I cannot bear to think of that"—

"I like Marse Austin," Jim said soothingly. "Don't you worry about that. He's as much Austin as w—you are. Besides, you will get safe out of this. Once we are come to the creek I can block the trail so the sharpest nosed hound in the county can't follow it."

"What! They would dare to set them on my track!" Carroll said hotly.

Jim nodded, saying sorrowfully, under his breath:

"I know they will. That is why we dare not stop."

"Lead on, then!" Carroll cried, making a great forward stride that landed him knee deep in the morass. Jim caught his arm and drew him to firmer footing, then ran forward, staff in hand, bending lower than before to scan and search their pathway.

"Oh, if only you had let me do it!" he murmured again, half under his breath, prodding what seemed a coiling root in front of him. At the touch it sprang to life—there was a swift lance-like spring, a deadly uncoiling, a slipping into the murk of something as elusive as the flickering moonbeams. Jim fell as though shot, moaning out:

"The cotton mouth! The cotton mouth! It struck me here—on the big vein—in the neck. I am as good as dead now. O God up in heaven, let me live long enough to save my"—

"Jim! Jim! You cannot die! You must not! I say you shall not!" Carroll cried, dropping down on the earth beside him and raising his head. "I say you shall not!" he repeated. "Here, let me suck the wound, then I will run back for help. Never mind what it means to me. You shall not die in this fearful place!"

"Don't, if you love me—don't!" Jim moaned, writhing where he lay. "You cannot save me—nothing can. There is fire in my head now. It will soon be in my heart. Don't, don't leave—not till the end!"

"Oh, Jim, my dear old Jim!" Carroll said, catching both his hands. "My Jim, I will not leave you, but how can I let you go this way? There must be some help. At least let me try?"

"There is none. You ought to know that as well as I," Jim said, gripping his master's hands hard between his writhings.

His speech began to come thick, his teeth to set. He half raised himself upon his elbow and said in the other's ear:

"Carroll, I'm dying fast. Call me—brother once—just once—before the end!"

"Brother—my brother! The best, the most faithful in all the world!" Carroll said, with dry lips, raising the poor head to his breast. "We are going away together," he said, after a breath. "I am glad of it. I had rather take you with me even thus than to die knowing that my thoughtlessness had left you another man's property."

A minute Jim lay still. Then he dropped deliriously to earth, laid his ear to the path and cried aloud:

"The hounds! The hounds!"

"They will find two dead men!" Carroll said, thrusting his hand to his side. It fell down blank and empty. He had quite forgotten that he had no weapon of any sort.

The poison was mercifully deadly. Jim had sunk from raving to stupor. His breath came quick and short. Now and again long shivers of agony went through him. Afar out in the swamp a whippoorwill was singing. Under the cry of it came the noise of hounds—the savage, deep chorus that tells they are hot on the scent. Carroll flung himself beside the dying man and tried to realize how it would seem when they came upon him.

It could not be long now—ten minutes at most. Escape was out of the question. A bullet, the halter even, was merciful compared with smothering in the ooze or starving there if by any miracle he could keep a footing. He was surely fronting his death. At the thought a great surge of wrath rose in him against those who had driven him to this extremity of helplessness. The fact of death was as nothing compared with it. If only he might sell his life as became an Austin, he would meet his doom blithely as a bridegroom.

The dogs were coming at a furious rate. Their baying filled all the swamp. It pierced even through the veil of death. Jim stirred, gave a long, long sigh, then lay inert. And with the sight there came to the watcher a thought so wild, so impossible, it took away his breath. It meant life, but at what risk! He began to shake as though ague stricken. Big, cold drops gathered on his forehead, his hands clinched hard. It was all over with poor Jim. In five minutes now the end must come. The dogs came as though winged. If—if he dared that which he had thought, there was not a second to lose.

Suddenly wild and clear above the baying dogs he caught the yell of those following. At once he dropped down beside the dead man and began to work with the strength of a giant, the swiftness of a hurricane. In three minutes he stood again upright, but breathless and shuddering. The leaping dogs came on like so many demons of the ooze, ready to seize and rend their prey. He could see the foremost couple, a moving black blur between the great bolls. To his sharpened delirious sense it seemed as though their tan markings stood out as bloody lines upon the shining black of their lithe frames. Far and faint behind he caught the flickering flare of torches. Still he did not stir. He had caught up a heavy knotted dead branch. With that he would defend the dead man at his feet from the fangs of his pursuers.

He caught the shine of the foremost couple's eyes. His hand clinched hard about his poor weapon. They made at him, gathering as if to spring at his throat, but all at once gave a low joyful bark and crouched fawning at his feet. Snuffing the dead man, they set up a weird howling. All the pack echoed it. At once the men behind ran forward.

"Why! What's this?" the foremost cried. "Jim, what ails your master? He's asleep, I see. Never mind! We know the way to wake him."

"I'm afraid not, sir—unless you are the angel Gabriel," the standing figure answered low and thickly. As the rest came crowding in, some one flashed a torch in the dead man's face. It was purple and swollen out of all recognition, but on one of the clinched hands there gleamed dully the big intaglio ruby that was known the county through as the seal ring of the Austins.

CHAPTER III.

Charley Clayton and the sheriff's victims had a funeral train three miles long. Only the Austin slaves followed the coffin that was thought to hold the last Austin. Yellow Jim, of course, took charge of everything. Mrs. Austin was too much prostrated by the horror of it all to think of leaving her room. She kept it indeed until the new master came and she was summoned to hear the reading of her husband's will. As she left her chamber she found herself face to face with Jim and started back, crying out:

"How dare you come in my sight? Carroll is dead. I hate the look of you! I will not have you gaze at me with his very eyes."

"Are you glad he is dead, Miss Lisette?" the man asked, looking down. She gave herself a quick impatient shake.

"It was the one thing for him," she said querulously, "after he had been so foolish—so wicked, indeed! He never cared for me, I am sure of that, or he would never have put me in such a position. To think how it might have been! Why, if he had not died as he did, people would have drawn away from me always. Nobody will countenance a woman whose husband has been"—

"Please, ma'am, they are waiting for you in the library," Jim said respectfully, still without raising his eyes. But they burned after her as she went down the stairway, a picture of grief, decorous and beautiful in her trailing crape covered sable robes.

The heir of Summerlands, Austin Reid, thought he had never seen a woman who bore herself so thoroughbredly through such trying conditions. Though she said her husband's will gave her less than she had right and reason to expect, she would ask, would take, no penny beyond what it allowed. She had been obedient in life. She could do no less than accept his wishes now that it was no longer possible for him to modify the expression of them. She was very grateful for all his cousin's generous offers, but she must go away, back to her own people. With them she would find safe shelter. Yes; she would take her own maid, Julianna, whom she had brought with her when she came to Summerlands a bride. As for the rest of the black people, she would only beg Cousin Austin to remember

[CONCLUDED ON PAGE 3.)

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