

A LIFE FOR SALE

BY SYDNEY HORLER

"Another instance of a jewel in a toad's head, then," commented Creighton. "Well, I'm sorry if I made a fool of myself, but being awakened and seeing a fright like Zepher, or whatever you call him, was enough to put the wind up anyone." He spoke in a tone of half-jesting casualness, in the wish to divert the man's attention from the all-important subject—that of the girl he hoped to meet again. That the Colossus did not intend for him to meet her was very plain, although why he should expect a normal man to credit that he was suffering from a delusion was not equally clear.

In this endeavor he appeared to be successful, for the man, who was now his employer, replied briskly:

"I can undertake that you won't be troubled with the Professor again, however. He does not stay here; it was merely a coincidence that he was in the house last night. In any case, he is eccentric, but why he should have troubled to enter your room I do not know. I am certain, however, that he did not mean you any harm; as my niece said, he is really the quietest of creatures."

Martin nodded. He didn't believe a single word the man had said, of course, but the present was no time to proclaim the fact.

"And now we will get down to business," said the Colossus, rising. "I have already prepared a little agreement, Mr. Creighton, setting forth the arrangement we came to last night, and if you will kindly step into the study, you can put your signature to it. Then everything will be in order."

Wondering what phraseology the other could have used in setting forth the statement that he had purchased another man's life, Creighton followed the speaker into a cosy library-study. There was a piece of paper on the table, and the Colossus, picking this up, passed it to his companion. "Please glance through this," he said.

Creighton could not prevent his hands shaking a little as he took the paper. This situation outdid in its note of sheer barrerie anything he had either heard of or even read. Once again it struck him how incredible the whole amazing affair really was.

The next moment he had sobered himself sufficiently to read through the document.

It was severely practical. It set forth that the undersigned Martin Creighton had entered into an agreement on that day to undertake certain duties, for which, if successfully accomplished, he was to receive at the end of twelve months the sum of \$5,000, less the amounts already advanced to him from time to time. There was no mention of his employer's name, and, after reading through the paper again, he commented on the fact.

"You may call me 'Jones,'" was the reply.

"And your niece?" asked Creighton.

"Miss Smith," was the equally serious answer.

Creighton nodded. The time had not come for him to call the other a liar. And "Jones," for his purpose, was as good a name as any other.

"All right, Mr. Jones," he now said; "I'll sign this,

since you wish me to." He did not know much about the law, but he was pretty certain of two things. The first was that this document wouldn't hold water in a court, and the second was that the man who so unassumingly called himself plain "Jones" would not wish to take it there. What the object of this byplay was, therefore, he could not determine.

Then came a hint at the solution.

"You will not only sign in the usual way—that is, by writing your signature—but you will make a thumb-mark legibly on the paper," said Jones; "there is an ink-pad."

This was spure nonsense, and he had difficulty in not laughing. It was not until he had complied with the last seemingly ridiculous request, and the Colossus had taken the document away to lock it in a drawer, that something like realization came. As he looked at the man's face, he felt a cold wave pass through him. What had he done? How had he committed himself?

"Why did you want my thumb-mark?" he asked sharply.

CHAPTER VI

Breakfast had been finished for half an hour, and the occupant of this comfortably furnished room overlooking St. James's street lit a fresh cigarette before turning once again to the front page of London's most famous morning newspaper.

"Queer!" commented Bunny Chipstead.

Adjusting a monocle, he re-read the advertisement which had attracted his attention. Chipstead, who knew his Europe as well as he knew his New York, was used to the strangeness of the modern adventure called Life, but this notice certainly was so much out of the ordinary that he made a curious little clicking sound with his tongue.

Old Public School Bay (27) wishes to sell his life. \$5,000. Desperate, healthy, adaptable. Box N. 4197 or Museum 10,000.

"Queer!" commented the reader again. Chipstead, because it was partly his business, and partly his pleasure, to collect little curiosities of this description, carefully cut out the advertisement from the front page Personal Column of the Morning Meteor and put it away in his pocket-book.

Bunny Chipstead was a slight, wiry, immaculately dressed man of forty-four. At first glance he might have been taken for a soldier of fortune come into a rich inheritance, or a big-game hunter home on holiday after completing a hazardous trip. As a matter of fact, Chipstead was a little of both. He had soldiered in many countries, whilst the big game he had hunted had included many men who were more desperate than any wild beasts. His leand face, that had a wind-swept, bleak expression, was redeemed from utter grimness by humorous grey eyes. He was tanned almost to a leather hue; he weighed exactly one hundred and thirty-five pounds, could use his fists or a revolver with equal facility, once half-killed an Apache in a back-alley of Paris by a simple judicious trick, and owed his

should be kept in the barn or in a shady pasture until his appetite is normal. There is not much danger of losing a horse in hot weather as long as he is eating well and sweating freely at work. When he dries up and starts panting it's time to hit for the shade.

WATER FOR COWS

How would you like to get down on your knees on a hot day and take a drink from a hot, stagnant pool of water? No? Neither does a cow. We put drinking cups in our barns so our cows may have a drink whenever they want it, night or day, during the winter months, but our

nickname of Bunny to a curious circumstance.

Chipstead had had an American father and an English mother. His father, Samuel P. Chipstead, had worked his way up from a mechanic's bench to be a famous maker of motorcars; his mother had been one of the Derbyshire Knowitons. From his father he had inherited a hard-headed, dominant quality, typically American, and from his serene-eyed, beautiful mother, who was one of the most fearless riders to hounds of her time, a smiling disregard of all risk, which had brought him successfully through many desperate chances.

It was out of compliment to his English wife that the motor-car manufacturer had named his only child Buncombe, after Edith Knowlton's favorite brother.

He little recked at the time what a heritage he had passed to his son; but after the boy had fought practically everyone over his weight at his school, the derisive "Bunkum" had become an affectionate Bunny, and Bunny it had remained.

From an early age the youth, who had passed through Cornell University, evinced a total dislike for anything to do with a motor-car, except the capacity to drive one at a high speed. Bunny Chipstead belonged to that small army of modern day adventurers. He had dived with death in many ways and in many countries. During the European War, after being badly wounded, he was taken into the Intelligence Corps, and he displayed such extraordinary capacity for the work that, within an amazingly quick time, he had risen to very high rank.

It was a hazardous game, and Bunny responded to the thrill of it. When the whole business was over, he had adopted the suggestion made to him that he should become a free-lance of the American Secret Service. At Washington and elsewhere he had made the acquaintance of some highly placed officials of England's Intelligence Department, and with one of these at least, Sir Robert Heddingley, he had struck up a firm friendship. They were men of much the same type, although Sir Robert was chained to a desk, whilst Chipstead was essentially a man of action.

Blessed with an ample fortune and with absolutely no ties, Bunny traveled extensively, executing delicate commissions, not only for the American, but the British Government, working for the love of the job alone. He had a highly developed flair for this sort of thing, and the secret files in the two capitals testified to his many successes. The thought of any payment was out of the question, but Bunny always made one stipulation; he had to work entirely on his own, and refused to be fettered by and official rules.

Smoking his cigarette, Chipstead strolled to the big window. Below him the famous street was awakening to its daily life. Immediately opposite was the imposing entrance to a very celebrated club. Bunny smiled as he recalled how, three years before, he had placed the barrel of his revolver against the side of a certain gentleman who was a member of that club, and had requested him to step outside, without any fuss or cavil. Of such incidents did Chipstead's normal life consist.

He was interrupted in his brief reverie by the faint muffled whirring of the telephone—a discreet sign of modern civilization wholly in keeping with the dignified ease and comfort of that

luxurious bachelor flat, which Chipstead always made his London headquarters.

A manservant entered. "Sir Robert Heddingley on the telephone, sir."

"All right, Briks; I'll come."

Insensibly the speaker's face had hardened a trifle at the mention of the name. He walked now to a cabinet set into the wall of the hall, and, carefully closing the folding-doors behind him, picked up the receiver.

"Morning, Bob," he said, in a low tone.

The voice of the man at the other end of the wire sounded strained.

"I want to see you at once, Bunny. Can you come round?"

"Of course. Be with you in ten minutes." The short, clipped sentences seemed characteristic of the man.

With a quarter of a minute to spare, Bunny chipstead was seated in a small room in a certain Government building. Facing him, across a big desk, was a grey-haired man of distinguished appearance, whose exceedingly grave manner had somewhat brightened at the visitor's coming.

Sir Robert Heddingley offered a cigar, which Chipstead declined.

"Let's hear your news, Bob," he said.

The other man lit his cigar before replying. He appeared to require the soothing influence of tobacco.

"I got your note last night, Bunny," he said, "and I don't think I have ever been more pleased in my life. It's a Godsend for me that you are in London at the present time"—looking fixedly at the other—"I want your help, and I want it damned badly!"

Chipstead contented himself with nodding.

"Something entirely new has broken out," continued the other, the gravity in his voice increasing—"something so big that it almost takes one's breath away. We know all about an individual being blackmailed, Bunny, but what about a whole Government?"

No emotion was betrayed in his voice, but the speaker's eyes showed a sharper gleam.

"Tall! It's ghastly! Bunny, I've been put in charge of this thing, and—and—well, it almost frightens me!"

"Just for the sake of something to say, you might try to explain exactly what you mean by a whole Cabinet of Ministers being blackmailed."

The reply was surprising.

"That's just what I can't do, Bunny. Although I am in charge of this business, I am being kept, to all intents and purposes, in the dark. What I have already told you is merely conjecture on my part—but a conjecture which, I feel sure, is substantially true. Williamson, the Secretary of State, was—" The speaker stopped. Rising quickly to his feet he walked across the room and turned the key in the lock before returning to his place.

"What I am going to tell you now, Bunny, is in the strictest confidence, of course, but Williamson, the Home Secretary, was found this morning poisoned."

"Dead?" questioned Chipstead.

(To Be Continued)

MATURING PULLETS

It takes seven months for the heavy breeds and five months for the lightweight breeds to mature. Early laying of the pullets is not to be encouraged, as it has a serious effect on the birds' organs and frame and also on the size of the eggs. Moving birds about will prevent them from laying. A pullet is in her best condition for exhibition just before she lays her first egg.

dividual cases, a lack of suitable water?

CUT DOWN ON GRAIN

With the advent of good weather and the lessened requirements for food to supply body heat, it is possible to reduce the quantity of hard grain fed to your laying hens. They will then consume more mash, which will cheapen the feed cost, help to sustain high egg production and more nearly meet the bird's requirements for food balance.

U. S. Lacking in Anchorage

By M. E. Tracy in New York World-Telegram.

Though it must be approved by the Canadian parliament and United States Senate before going into effect, we can afford to regard the St. Lawrence treaty as an accomplished fact and improvement of the great river as virtually authorized.

The project will take 10 years to complete and cost 800 million dollars.

President Hoover describes it as "the greatest internal improvement yet undertaken on the continent of North America," and he is right. Instead of feeling cocky, however, we should feel very much ashamed. It is a disgrace to our resources, intelligence and boasted civilization that we have not undertaken greater things long ere this.

"The greatest internal improvement yet undertaken on the continent of North America," and it wouldn't pay our movie bill for six months or our candy bill for more than a couple of years.

With the exception of a few skyscrapers and the Panama Canal, we have built nothing that could be described as a monument—nothing to compare with the pyramids or the Acropolis, especially when our wealth and ingenuity are taken into account.

The Babylonians did more for rowboat traffic on the Euphrates than we have done for steam traffic on the Mississippi.

By and large, our energy has been squandered on temporary construction, particularly of the sort which caters to physical thrill. To put it mildly, we suffer from a "shoot the chute" complex. We lack the capacity to think of solidity and permanence.

There are very few structures in this country that will last 100 years and very few that could not be dispensed with, except as they have been woven into our speculative, instalment-buying system of credit.

We have not built and are not building for the future. This has been so definitely woven into our habit of thought that we dislike to think of anything more than a week or a month ahead.

As a nation we lack objectives. Even our ideas of developing trade have shrunk to a level of sheer opportunism.

If a market opens up we may enter it, and if a war breaks out we may join the fray, but we are never quite sure.

It is high time that the United States took interest in some single enterprise which costs as much as 800 million dollars, high time that it gave the American people something substantial and impressive by way of example.

We need nothing so much as projects, structures and standards which speak of durability. How else can we hope to create confidence in our institutions and type of life?

Our social and economic order lacks anchorage. Its basic conception is one of motion, change and replacement. We are becoming mental nomads without realizing it. Considering the enormous sums of money that have been spent on them, we have shoddy towns, shoddy buildings and shoddy wares. There are old frame houses, built by our forefathers, which will be livable when some of our steel structures are dust. There are chairs, beds and desks that have been in use for more than a century and that will still be in use when much of our modern furniture has gone to the junk heap.

We need standards of solidity to counterbalance our appetite for change, and we need them in no place so badly as in government activities.

IS GRAVEYARD OF DEAD SHIPS

Busy Commerce Plies Over the Corpses of Sunk Vessels

San Francisco — (UP) — Some with their masts awry, some with their scuppers eternally brimming, and some with their bows stove in—but all with green seas in their holds, a motley company of wrecked vessels sway in the tides of the bay here, fathoms under the busy commerce.

Between 60,000 and 70,000 persons cross the bay daily, but few know of the ghostly wrecks beneath them.

Somewhere in the vicinity of the Vallejo piers is the hulk of the ferry Julia, which exploded February 27, 1898, and sank with a loss of 30 lives.

Somewhere off Fort Point, at the bay's entrance, lie two famous wrecks, the City of Rio de Janeiro and the City of Chester. The Rio de Janeiro, a \$500,000 vessel, carrying a \$400,000 cargo, struck a rock in deep water, and sank within 10 minutes, carrying 128 persons to their deaths.

The City of Chester went down August 22, 1888, five minutes after colliding with the steel steamer Oceanic, from Liverpool. Sixteen lost their lives.

Somewhere in San Pablo bay lies the wreck of the schooner Secretary, whose boilers exploded April 15, 1854. Fifty were lost. The bark Atlantic lies somewhere along the edge of the Golden Gate, where she sank in 1896, carrying down 27. In the bay, off Alcatraz island, is the Aberdeen, which went down in 1916, drowning eight.

Stranded on the rocks off Land's End is a portion of the freighter Lyman Stewart, wrecked when it collided with the Walter A. Luckenbach, October 7, 1922. Water shoots through the rusty plates and up the pipes of the vessel as its hulk rolls in the pounding surf. Less than a mile away lies the steamer Coos Bay, which drove far up on the

beach at Land's End in a heavy fog five years later.

There are many others resting about the fringes of the bay. The Port Saunders, the Golden City, the Trifolium, the Red Wing, the Aberdeen—barges, schooners, fishing boats, trim motorboats, sailing boats—all are there, mute objects in a kind of marine museum.

"Dusty's" Dream of Ring Was Too Realistic

Fresno, Cal. — (UP) — A bell changed. "Dusty" Miller, one-time heavyweight, left his chair and charged forward, throwing blows at the man he saw before him.

Another bell changed, sweet music to the cauliflower ears of Dusty who, by that time, was somewhat weary. He returned to his chair.

Another bell, and another swift dash to the fray. Then something hit him. He went down. Dimly, he saw someone bending over him heard him counting. Dusty shook his head, arose slowly, and at the count of nine, swung back into action viciously. One of his blows struck the "referee," who went down for a long count.

And then pallers at the "drunk tank" of the county jail moved Dusty to a solitary cell, where his too-realistic dreams of the prize ring wouldn't endanger fellow prisoners, one of whom nursed a swollen jaw.

WHEN IN ROME

Here is a brand new racket, folks. Just listen and rejoice; The radio beauty parlors, now, Will change a speaker's voice.

Just plug in proper gadgets, timed With trusty microphone And pink tea chaps, eke Bashar bulls Will speak in pleasant tone.

And this device our speakers greet May one and all be stealing; They'll use the stunt in politics, To rouse that sectional feeling.

The candidate in old Vermont May use a Yankee twang; While down in Dixie and out west He'll hit a breezy twang.

But what will help—what will allow The voice of truth to tone Up to a pitch where it be heard Above a futile moan. —Sam Page

NEW DANGER FOR CRIMINALS

Cambridge, Mass. — (UP) — That it may be possible before long to recognize and classify criminals by their facial peculiarities and shape of their bodies has been indicated by research conducted by Prof. Ernest A. Hooten, Harvard anthropologist, whose studies of 16,000 inmates of penal institutions and insane asylums throughout the country disclosed that certain physical features tend to be associated with specific types of crime.

Rattler Alarm Clock Aroused Sleeping Woman

Tulare, Cal. — (UP) — Mrs. J. L. Sweeney is an authority on rude awakenings.

A guest at a summer home near here, she was partly awakened during a nap by feeling something crawling over her legs. Thinking, drowsily, it was one of the harmless variety of lizards found around here, she shook it off. Then a whirring sound awakened her completely.