

# BLACK SOMBREIRO

by CLIFFORD KNIGHT

Elsa Chatfield, Hollywood artist, is dis-fab-erated by her Aunt Kitty, who died from an overdose of morphine. Hunt Rogers, professional sleuth, and Barry Madison, an amateur detective, go to Mazatlan, Mexico, to solve what they believe to be Kitty Chatfield's murder. On arrival, they find that Elsa's party had preceded them by plane. During a festa at the ranch of Sam Chatfield (Elsa's father), James Chesebro is murdered. Lombardo, chief of the Mexican police, questions Pedro, the pulque man, after questioning all the guests. They re-enact the prologue to the death of Chesebro. While this is going on Pedro, the star witness, makes his escape into the mountains.

## CHAPTER XI

"It's a nice little puzzle so far, Barry," observed Rogers. "We'll not solve it tonight—probably not tomorrow. It can very quickly be solved if Lombardo and his man Friday will catch up with Pedro. Suppose we sleep on it."

We did sleep on it, rocking gently in our stateroom on board the Orizaba anchored in the harbor. In the light of a new day, after a leisurely breakfast with Margaret and Dwight, at which time we spoke softly and with respect for the now murdered James Chesebro, we waited for the launch to take us ashore.

Suddenly Dwight's body stiffened. "Look! Did you see that?" he cried. "Look!"

Before our eyes some hundreds of yards away a huge fish leaped clear of the water and then fell back with a great splash. "There's your marlin, darling," said Margaret sweetly, "come to play with you."

"Let's go fishing now," Dwight's voice was excited. "Come on, fellows."

"Sorry," said Rogers. "I'd planned some other things—about Chesebro's slayer."

"Well, go on, then; the launch is waiting for you. As soon as it's back I'm going after that fellow. Hunting me up, is he? Wanting to play with me?" said Dwight as Rogers and I went down the ladder. We landed at the wharf, found one of those ancient two-wheeled aransas like the one Elsa had ridden in that first day, climbed in and set off.

"It's probably like hunting for the needle in the haystack, Barry," he remarked, after an extended conversation with the driver which explored the fellow's acquaintances among the pulque sellers. At first the driver, a sleepy-eyed fellow with a bushy mustache, had not been able to comprehend why we should search for a pulque seller when liquor of many kinds was easily obtainable almost anywhere. When he realized, however, that we were looking for a particular dealer in pulque, he believed that he knew several Pedros. And so we started out.

We stopped at one thatched hut which our driver said was the home of Pedro, the pulque seller. The man who answered Rogers' summons was fat and small, with a smile that was well nigh irresistible. Did we wish to buy pulque? He indicated a nearby contrivance which was just a frame on wheels with holes for the brown clay jars. No, we did not. We sought Pedro, the pulque seller, who was a thin man with small eyes. He knew such a man farther down the street, and counted the houses for us and bade us a courteous good morning. But the second Pedro was not our pulque man, either.

At last our dispirited horse pulled up with a sigh before a thatched hut near the end of the street. A small shy woman came to the door when Rogers knocked. "Does Pedro, the pulque seller, live here, senora?" Rogers inquired in Spanish. "Yes, sir," the woman replied hesitantly, a frightened look in her deep, dark eyes. "Is he Pedro, the pulque seller, who last evening went to deliver pulque at the rancho of Senor Chatfield?" "Yes, sir."

is away, sir. I do not know when he will return."

A man was lurking inside the house as we talked, just beyond our view. I had heard him and so had Rogers. At last overcome by curiosity he appeared suddenly behind the woman in the doorway. It was not, however, Pedro as I suspected, but a man whose face was familiar. Rogers glanced at him.

"Good morning," he said and smiled. The man returned the greeting hesitatingly.

"My brother, Jose," the woman said. "And did the old dog die, senor?" inquired Rogers. I recognized then the individual who the morning of Elsa's attack on Chesebro was putting to death with chloroform an old dog near the stables.

"Oh, yes, sir. Quickly, as you said he would."

"Senor," began Rogers, "the chloroform—tell me again who gave it to you."

"Senora Chatfield, sir."

"Yes. She of the golden hair—"

Rogers suddenly elevated Pepe to the thatch of the roof where with a flutter of wings and wildly clutching feet he re-established himself, wheeled about to stare down at us with his wicked little eyes and uttered a squawk of pleasure. We prepared to take our departure; Rogers bowed and smiled.

"I wish your husband a safe journey, senora, and a speedy return," he said, and we withdrew to our arana, tagged by the still silent children, while the pulque seller's wife stood in the doorway of the hut to observe our departure.

We had joggled along for some distance in the direction of the business district when I remarked, "Some grist for the mill there."

"Our opinion, reached after considerable reflection, senor, is that it is vital to capture Pedro, the pulque seller, who fled last night when we were about to require him to identify the slayer."

"Yes, of course," was the laconic response. "Undoubtedly Pedro knows who the slayer is."

"I believe so, gentlemen."

"We understand that he fled last night to the mountains."

"Ah, so?" Lombardo's eyebrows shot upward. "You know that too?"

"Yes, from your wife. You, of course, have questioned her?"

"Of a certainty, senor. Already the order has been given to bring the man back from the mountains."

"It would be helpful, gentlemen," he said carefully, "if you could provide us with additional motives to be put with those we already have when it comes to the trial."

"You—" he began hesitatingly. "Is it possible you have reached a decision, senor?"

"We have made the arrest, this morning. The murderer is now in custody, gentlemen. I would appreciate it if you could supply, perhaps, additional motives, although what we have are ample, I am sure."

We both were silent, stunned a little at this announcement of an arrest in the case so early, before even Pedro had been returned to Mazatlan. "May we ask, senor—" began Rogers. "Of course," Lombardo replied, his white even teeth showing in a magnificent smile. "I have arrested Senor Reed Barton—"



## Factory-Made Coops Aid Chicken Raisers

### Trimly Designed Houses Come in Various Sizes

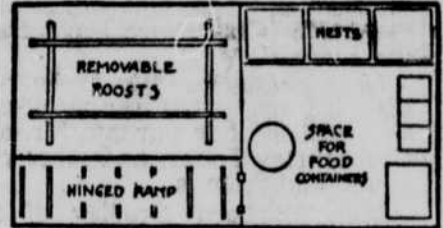
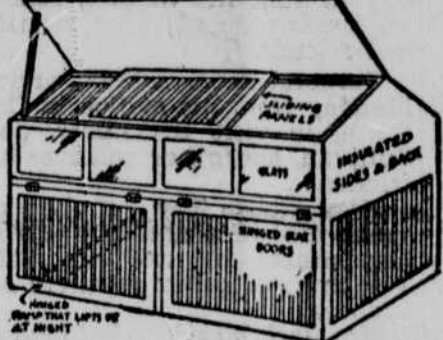
Householders, moved by the red meat shortage, are being converted by the thousands into backyard chicken fanciers. The chicken "population" increase this year over last—in rural areas alone—is about 132 million head. At an all time high, the present chicken population of the country is above 500 million. No census is taken on urban raised chickens, where the rate of increase is greatest.

Interest in chicken raising, dealers say, is now spurred by the introduction and display of small ready-made houses in retail stores. As these become easily procurable in complete units or prefabricated for quick assembly, it is thought interest will zoom higher. The designs now being shown range from two-story compact types, about the size of a piano box, to large roomy ones big enough to double as hunters' cabins.

Because of the labor shortage and limitations affecting many kinds of building material, the public is finding the ready-made chicken house most easily obtainable. The commercial fabricator on the other hand may use various kinds of substitute material advantageously or remnants and knotty pieces of lumber.

One of the smaller chicken houses exhibited in the Merchandise Mart, Chicago, was designed to accommodate nine laying hens, or 50 small chicks, and is approximately 6 feet by 3 feet and 4 feet high. The ground floor is a scratching area and is connected by a ramp to the sun deck which is equipped with

### De Luxe Chicken House



three "departmentalized" nests, removable roosts, and has compartments for charcoal, grit, water and mash. The second story front is built of glass, while the slanting top is built of sliding slat panels of wood. Above this is a second top which may be lifted to admit sunlight. By the lowering of this top-lid and the raising of the ramp, drafts and cold are excluded.

The larger house is 8 by 12 feet, overall height 7 feet 1 inch; in front 6 feet 7 inches, in rear 56 inches. Of the prefabricated type, it comes in eight sections. Main door is 6 feet high by 22 inches and is fitted with hinges and hasp for lock. Equipped with hardwood floors, ventilators and sliding door for chicken outlet, the house has triple windows, 4 lights each, 9 inches by 12 in size. Side walls are made of 1/2-inch Nu-wood, insulated sheeting, coated with asphalt inside and out. The roof is made of 1/2-inch Gypsum board sheeting covered with 85-pound rolled roofing.

## Small Farm Engines Get Preference Rating

Farm rationing committees of county war boards again have authority to assign preference ratings for delivery of small engines needed in essential food production. This will apply to about 37,000 air and liquid-cooled internal combustion engines of 20 horsepower and under which will be manufactured during the current year. No state or county quotas will be established for the distribution of these engines, since the production is estimated to be sufficient to meet all essential needs.

The only distribution control will be at the county level, where county farm rationing committees will issue preference rating certificates to farmers or operators of farm machinery for hire. The certificates will bear a preference rating of AA-2, the highest which can be given a civilian product.

### Good Poultry Houses

Experience has shown that the essentials of a good poultry house are a dry floor that can be easily cleaned, walls that give protection from wind and excessive cold, enough light, provision for ventilation, and, of course, a firm foundation and a tight roof. As about three-fourths of the heat lost by conduction from a poultry house is lost through the roof, the ceiling is the flat part of the house that should be insulated.



To make your extension cord last longer, coil it around a mailing tube when not in use.

Plastic cups for furniture legs and casters will prevent dents in linoleum and make it wear longer.

Cooked chicken should be cooled as rapidly as possible and stored promptly in the coldest part of the refrigerator.

If the handle of your iron gets hot, cover it with a piece of corrugated cardboard held in place with strips of adhesive tape.

## FALSE TEETH OWNERS CAN LOOK YOUNGER

—BY WEARING YOUR PLATES EVERY DAY —HELD COMFORTABLY SNUG THIS WAY

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"GREENS" for winter service uniform  
"SQUARED AWAY" for everything shipshape  
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