# BLACK SOMBREI

Elsa Chatfield, Hollywood artist, is dis- | inherited 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 flesta 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 reenact 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 aranas 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 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 but which our driver said was the home of Pedro, the pulque seller. But 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." "May we speak with Pedro, senora?" inquired Rogers, smiling.

The woman shook her head vague-

ly. Finally she said: "He is not at home, sir." "Where can I find him?"

"He is away, sir." "When will he return?"

The woman shook her head and did not reply. "He is away, sir," she repeated.

We were getting nowhere. Rogers suddenly looked up at the little green parrot overhead, held up a forefinger invitingly against the green breast and the parrot promptly climbed on and was lowered to the level of our eyes. "What is he called, senora?" Rog-

ers asked.

"He is called Pepe, sir." "He is not a young bird, senora, the yellow patch of feathers on his head is large. It is, like gray hair with us, a sign of age."

"Yes, sir; he is very old." "Did your husband return home last night from his trip to the rancho of Senor Chatfield?"

"Briefly, sir; and then made haste

to depart." "Did he go far, senora?" "To the mountains, sir," she re-

plied, with a gesture that indicated the distant range.

"And he will return soon?" The woman shook her head. "He

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 hesitantly.

"My brother, Jose," the woman

"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." "Senora Chatfield?"

"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 ut-



'What is he called, senora?"

ter 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 jogged along for some distance in the direction of the business district when I remarked. "Some grist for the mill there."

"Yes, Barry. There is confirmation of the conclusion we reached last night. Pedro ran out on us at Sam Chatfield's, hurried home, remained briefly and then fled to the mountains for an indefinite stay. He carried with him the belief that he not only saw the murderer of Chesebro, but can identify him. He fears the consequences if he is made to identify him."

"You're right, of course." I sighed. "But where does that leave us, Hunt?"

"It leaves us with a simple explanation of the crime-when Pedro is captured and returned to Mazatlan. To the jefe del policia, Senor Otilio Lombardo, will fall the honor of solving the murder of Kitty Chatfield, as well as that of Chesebro. when his men bring in Pedro."

"But there's no evidence that the two were done by the same hand."

"No," admitted Rogers, as we drove along the shady streets, "there is no evidence of it; there's only a hunch on my part, and a very, very faint hunch at that. Perhaps no more than a wish that it be so. Simplify things enormously, wouldn't it, Barry?" he said, looking at me with a twinkle in his mild blue eyes. "Let's go and talk with Lombardo and urge upon him our belief, and perhaps spur him on to greater effort in bringing back Pedro." He turned to the driver and said in Spanish: "Senor, take us, please, to the police station."

Rogers asked for Lombardo at a small desk, and the courteous occupant assured us that we should see the jefe at once. But it was some ten minutes before we were shown into a small room where Lombardo sat alone.

"We came," Rogers said slowly, "only to offer what help you think we can give toward the solution of the murder of our friend, James Chesebro."

"That is very kind of you, gentle-

"Our opinion, reached after con siderable 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 the man's 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 hesitantly. "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-"

"Barton!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, Senor Madison. It was not difficult to discover the fact that he is guilty. There was the testimony of Pedro last night; not testimony in so many words, gentlemen, but by his actions. He was terrified of having to identify the murderer who was at the moment re-enacting the role before our eyes."

"But-" Rogers attempted to protest. Lombardo ignored the effort courteously and with the same magnificent smile.

"Moreover, senores, yesterday Senor Barton and Senor Chesebro quarreled violently in the office of the mining company. Senor Barton was discharged; there were threats exchanged. The quarrel was over Senorita Chatfield. All this has been told us by Senor Costillo, the clerk in the office, who was a witness."

Reed Barton was sitting in his cell smoking a cigarette with the air of one upon whom has descended a vast and philosophic calm. His dark blue eyes indicated that there had been no strain, no loss of sleep. His handclasp through the bars of his cell was vigorous and warm, and he looked at us with a faint expression of amusement at our concern for his predicament.

"I didn't dream, Reed." I said. "when we parted at Sam Chatfield's last night, that we would find you here this morning."

"Neither did I, Barry. Mexico not only is a land of romance, but, in the threadbare observation, anything can happen in it."

"And does, apparently," remarked Huntoon Rogers, a wry twist to his lips. "I'm sorry that this has happened, Reed. It is much too soon to make an arrest."

We spoke in English, to which the guard lounging near by paid no attention. "When were you arrested, Reed?"

I inquired. "At the very moment when I was sleeping my best, just before sunrise. They came knocking on my door, made me dress and brought

me here." "But they haven't anything in the way of evidence that a good attorney couldn't shoot holes through-at least, back home it would be so." I said.

Reed cocked his head and looked at me. "This is different, Barry," he remarked. "I don't know what they've got. Except for one thingthe police picked up a paper knife in my room while I was dressing. It seemed to have its effect."

"Yes, it was a small, thin-bladed weapon that killed Chesebro. But there's more than that, of course." Rogers explained. "Lombardo seems to have been swayed a great deal by what a clerk in your office needs. told about you and Chesebro quarreling."

"Costillo?" said Reed. "He would, of course. We did have quite a gothe Chief and I. I guess I told you thing we had been storing up for Chiefly concerning Elsa, you know; en a civilian product. but, even if I do say it, he rather started talking about Elsa. Down here, of course, things like that amount to fighting words."

Steps along the corridor interruptmore erect in his chair and shot a Walking rapidly around the corner came the short, rather thick figure came directly toward us, a smile lighting his rather serious face. (TO BE CONTINUED)

#### Factory-Made Coops Aid Chicken Raisers

#### Trimly Designed Houses Come in Various Sizes

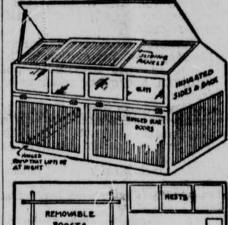
Householders, moved by the red meat shortage, are being converted by the thousands into backyard chicken fanciers. The chicken "population" increase this year over last -in rural areas alone-is about 132 million head. At an all time high, the present chicken population of the country is above 500 million. 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 lum-

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



REMOVABLE ROOSTS

three "departmentalized" nests, removable roosts, and has compartments for charcoal, grit, water and mash. The second story front is 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 55pound 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

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 maabout it, Barry. We unloaded every- chinery for hire. The certificates will bear a preference rating of each other for several months. AA-2, the highest which can be giv-

#### Good Poultry Houses Experience has shown that the es-

sentials of a good poultry house are ed our conversation; the guard sat a dry floor that can be easily cleaned, walls that give protection glance at us as if he meditated from wind and excessive cold, bringing our conference to a halt, enough light, provision for ventilation, and, of course, a firm foundation and a tight roof. As about threeof Sam Chatfield. He saw us stand- fourths of the heat lost by conducing outside Reed Barton's cell and tion from a poultry house is lost through the roof, the ceiling is the first part of the house that should be insulated.

## Howehold

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.

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