



CHAPTER XII
-14-

TEAMS drove from the Hoot Owl toward town through the falling snow that evening. First went Ben Elliott, alone and sending his drivers at a spanking trot, wondering and at odds with himself.

Why was Dawn so obdurate in this matter of having him see her? Why that odd repression, as though she struggled to keep from saying the things that were bursting her heart?

His inability to answer those questions drove him into a dogged mood. He felt like blaming Brandon for this, as well as other troubles.

A half hour behind him came a team from camp, driven by Bird-Eye Blaine. A figure ahead stepped out of the ruts and awaited his approach.

"Town?" the man cried.

"Yup. . . Hello, Martin; Whoo."

Blaine lifted the heavy robes for the bookkeeper and then clucked his team on.

"Misther Elliott gone in?" he asked. "He has, eh? . . . 'Nd Misther Red Bart Delaney still persecutin' th' country with his presence likely. Ah, th' b'y, th' b'y!"

Ben turned his team into an alley, hitched and blanketed them, and then made his way between buildings to the town's principal thoroughfare, which was lighted by glaring store fronts. He purchased some articles in a clothing store and did not see Dawn McManus enter, observe him, and then withdraw. When he went out again he did not notice that the girl followed him.

From place to place he went, Dawn behind him in the flying snow and when she had been following so for half an hour, her eyes alert for others who might be watching Elliott, another fell into the train ahead of her. She saw this man step from a store entrance and follow Ben. She hastened to be close and not until she was abreast of him did she recognize John Martin, whom she had seen but once before. He did not turn his head and she dropped back. She had no doubts of his loyalty, from what Ben had told her of his bookkeeper.

For the better part of an hour this double stalking continued while the snow fell thicker and then Elliott turned into a side street and made the next turn into the alley where he had left his team.

Two figures followed him, hastening a bit as he disappeared into the gloom. Martin followed Ben, as Dawn trailed both.

And then, as Elliott drew close and spoke gruffly to his horses, another shadowy figure appeared: It was only a blur in the shadows, crouched and stealthy. The figure swept forward; an arm drew back and upward; it struck and with a muffled grunt Ben Elliott turned, falling sideways and backward under the impact of a blow.

Another voice lifted then in a sharp cry as John Martin ran forward and the indistinct figure which was poised over Elliott, about to strike again, turned, hesitated, whirled and fled.

"What is it, son?" Martin cried as he dropped to his knees beside Ben. Before a reply could come Dawn was there, moaning his name over and over.

"Knife!" Ben gasped. "In the neck . . . here . . ."

John Martin unbuttoned Elliott's thick jacket, ripped open the shirt and his fingers encountered a warm, sticky gush as he thrust them across the back.

"Knifed you! . . . Ah, son!" Dawn peered close into the bearded man's face as though fearful of what he might say next.

"We've got to get him somewhere right away," Martin muttered. "Got to. . . It's bad."

"My house is just around the corner!" she cried. "Bring him there. . . Oh, hurry!"

Together they lifted Ben to his feet. His teeth ground shut to keep back the moans. He was sick and weak with pain. He sagged against Martin as the man supported him.

"Tough, Dawn. . . to get you mixed up. . . in a mess. . ."

"Hurry!" she said. "He's so weak!"

He was weak, indeed. With their arms about his body for support, they moved through the snow. Elliott felt Dawn close to him and closed his eyes almost happily. He struggled to help himself so he would not burden her, but he stumbled and nearly fell and another gush of blood bathed his body. After ages of effort and pain a glare seemed to be all about, warm breath fanned his face . . . and Aunt Em, standing in the door-

way, was saying sharply: "In here. . . Your room, Dawn. . . I'll phone the doctor."

Emory Sweet worked rapidly, once there. "Deep!" he muttered. "Gad, what a blow. Missed the jugular by a hair."

The wound was only a slender slit in the skin, but the blade had driven deep, indeed, and the blood that flowed from it had drawn the bronze from Elliott's face, the strength from the splendid muscles that lay relaxed now beneath clear skin.

"Now!" said the physician when Ben finally lay back on Dawn's pillow, breathing shallowly, eyes closed. "I guess he'll be all right in a few days. . . But what an escape!" He shrugged.

Sweet looked at John Martin, then. The doctor's brows drew a bit; he seemed to lean forward and blinked slowly, incredulously. Then Martin moved and the other relaxed. Still, his expression was one of startled speculation.

The doctor began gathering his instruments. Martin stood staring at Ben in deep thought. Then his right hand went to the lobe of his left ear and tugged slowly in that characteristic gesture. He did not observe Emma Coburn standing in the doorway. He did not look at her until the woman gasped. It was a light, light gasp; so light that Emory Sweet did not hear. But Martin heard and turned and stood as though frozen in the posture, Aunt Em's head was held rigidly back, one hand pressed against a cheek.

Quickly, Martin's finger went against his lips in a sealing gesture. He held so an instant and then slowly shook his head, a movement of unmistakable warning.

Dawn entered the hallway from the living room and these two relaxed from the rigidity of their strange pantomime.

"Now, the boy's going to be all right," the doctor said. "I'll look in tomorrow. Quiet is going to be essential for a few days. You two women all right?"

A close observer might have noticed that Aunt Em's eyes were oddly averted from John Martin's searching gaze and that her breathing was quick.

"Why, it might be handy to have a man in the house tonight," she said, evenly enough. "I'm . . . I'm wondering if Mr. Martin would stay. He could sleep on the couch in the living room."

"I'd be glad to," the man said and cleared his throat sharply. "There might be something I could do . . . for you."

He had looked at Dawn on this last and it seemed that his voice caught ever so slightly.

So it was arranged that he should stay through the night and the doctor left.

Aunt Em carried the light out of the sickroom and placed it on a table in the hall. She bustled here and there, occupied with a variety of minor errands and finally drove Dawn to bed despite the girl's protests of sleeplessness.

Alone, she fixed blankets on the living room couch while Martin sat in the darkened bedroom. That done, she beckoned to him from the hallway.

They confronted one another there a long moment. The woman's face worked queerly and she seemed at a loss for words.

"What shall I say?" she asked, in a whisper.

"Nothing," the man replied. "There is nothing at all to be said . . . is there?"

"Oh, you gave me a start!"

"You're the first one. . . I'm . . . I'm too full of things to talk, now, Emma."

He made an odd gesture toward the wall and looked about.

"We're in the upstairs front room if we're needed," she said. "Is there anything you need yourself?"

He did not reply for a moment. Then, heavily:

"Yes. . . Your help, likely. . . A little later. . ."

The woman did a strange thing, then. She snatched up her apron and pressed it tightly against her eyes.

"She didn't remember!" she sobbed. . . "Oh, what'll happen in this house next?"

"I wonder," Martin muttered. "Yes. . . I wonder!"

She left him, and he moved almost hesitatingly into the living room. He stood a long time just within the threshold and then went slowly about, from picture to table, from book shelf to mantel, hands in his coat pockets. Before this old photograph he stood for a long interval; beside that worn rocker he remained with bowed head, as one might who is suffering . . . or wor-

shipping. When he approached the couch where he was to sleep that night his legs seemed to fall and he half fell, half slumped to his knees. He let his face down to the blankets and his fingers clutched them, gripping, gripping until the knuckles showed white. . . . And a great, shuddering moan slipped from his deep chest.

Grimly, Bird-Eye Blaine prowled Tincup that night. He had let John Martin out as he drove through the main street; then proceeded to a livery barn where he stabled his team.

On the way he had sighted Ben Elliott but later, although he took up a position before the post office and watched passers on either side of the street carefully, he did not see him. He began making inquiries and found that Elliott had been about town but evidently Blaine was always some little time behind him.

Falling thus, he went to locate Ben's team and stood in the swirling snow waiting. Stores closed. Bird-Eye chewed and stamped to keep warm and watched and listened. And after a long hour's vigil proved fruitless he moved aimlessly away, along down the alley.

At the rear of Joe Piette's hotel he watched movement through a lighted window which gave into a back entry. A man was there, closing an inside stairway door behind him. He turned and buttoned his mackinaw with hasty movements and Blaine drew back into the shadows. The man within was Red Bart Delaney. . . . The door opened; the man stepped out. He crossed between Bird-Eye and the lights, carrying snowshoes. Blaine followed as the other went swiftly down the alley and then struck out past the depot toward the tracks.

"Well, now!" Bird-Eye muttered to himself. "Saints . . . Why all this rush, I'm wonderin'!"

A chill which had nothing to do with the temperature of the night struck through him. Red Bart, fleeing town? Surely, he went as a frightened man might go. . . . Or as one whose errand is completed.

Out into the street, then, went the Irishman, and into the pool room.

"Has anybody here seen Misther Elliott?" he asked loudly and men looked up from their games at the

talked with Jeffers and Blaine, saw him shake his head and spread his hands as one will who has no answer for a pressing question.

Old Tim turned to the crews and motioned them to him. The men gathered close and listened while he spoke briefly. Then the compact huddle broke. Jeffers emerged and started for the main street, that body of shanty boys falling in to move shoulder to shoulder behind him.

In was a strange spectacle, for that peaceful Sunday morning! Doors were opened; men and women peered out. Then they emerged and stood to watch. Hastily caps and coats were donned and along the sidewalks followed a growing crowd of the curious.

The breath vapor of the men rose in a cloud. No one spoke. They swung into the main street, old Tim wallowing in the long drift at the corner, his men tramping it down behind him. On down past Abe's office, past the pool room and then, without a word or signal they halted. . . . The halt was before the bank over which Nicholas Brandon had his offices and his living rooms.

And then Tim lifted his clear, strong voice.

"Brandon!" he shouted. "Nick Brandon!"

"Come out, Nick!" a teamster shouted, voice thick with repressed excitement. "Ay, come out!" another cried.

Movement, then, where they had expected movement. Up above a face appeared in a window, Nicholas Brandon looked down upon them. They could see his lips compress as he discerned that crowd.

"Come down, Brandon!"

"This was Tim again, his voice edged with sharpness, as he might speak to a rebellious man of his crew.

Brandon moved and threw up the sash.

"What do you men want?" he demanded sharply, in the tone of one who has been long accustomed to make demands.

"We want Ben Elliott!" Jeffers answered.

"Elliott? He isn't here. What would he be doing here? What could I know of him?"

A mumbling, a stirring behind Tim.

"We want him. We want you to help us find him!"

"You're d--n right!" . . . "Tell us, you skunk!" . . . "Show him to us or we'll wreck your whole blame town!"

Tim held up a silencing hand against this outbreak. Then he addressed Brandon.

"Elliott came to town last night. He hasn't been seen since. His team was found where he left it. There's only one man in town who'd have an object in getting him out of the way. We've come to that man; to you, Brandon. We want Elliott!"

Brandon's lips writhed.

"I tell you, I know nothing—" He slammed down the sash and cut the rest of his sentence from their hearing so those men did not know that his voice broke sharply as panic laid its hold on him.

He turned his back deliberately to the window. Then, in a frantic lunge, he reached the telephone and rang the bell.

"Give me the jail!" he said excitedly. "Quick! The jail!"

Outside a growing, mounting roar sounded, like the voice of an approaching wind. Then came a sharp shout; a loud curse. Then quick silence again as Tim Jeffers reasserted his leadership and demanded that they move only as a unit. But this order prevailed for a brief moment.

"Smash in the door; it's locked!" someone cried. "Take him until he gives Ben up!"

"Good boy!"

The ball of ice, case in the street from some horse's foot, now picked up and flung stoutly, crashed through an office window.

Brandon covered as a yell of approval went up, and pressed his face close to the telephone.

"Hickens? . . . Art! This is Brandon! There's a mob out here and—"

"I've seen it! The sheriff's voice 'I saw 'em come in. I don't know what—"

"Get down here, then, and be quick about it! Get down here and scatter them!"

Brandon waited for the ready acquiescence which always had come from the men he had made, from officers of the law and judges and public officials both high and low.

"Are you there?" he demanded sharply as a shrill yip came from the street.

"Yes, Mr. Brandon. I hear you but . . . But what d'you expect me to do against a mob alone? I—"

"Alone! You're sheriff, you fool! You've the law behind you! Bring a gun and hurry!"

"But that crowd, Nick! Why, they're the best men in the north. They'd tear me to ribbons! They're good men and they're mad. You better get out the back way if you can!"

With an oath Brandon flung the receiver from him as another window pane exploded to fragments. Abandoned to that muttering mob, and by a man whose political career he had shaped with his own hands! From a safe vantage point he looked out. A half dozen men were pulling at a sign post.

He ran down the hallway and looked out a window in the rear. A grim guard of three men stood there, ready and waiting for him to attempt flight that way.



"Knife!" Ben Gasped.

Dental Hygiene

The Road to Health

By DR. R. ALLEN GRIFFITH

THE SIXTH-YEAR MOLAR

THE first permanent teeth to erupt in the mouth are called the "sixth-year molars" because they come in during the sixth year.

They also might be called the most important teeth in the mouth. These teeth are of the utmost importance, as they present a large masticating surface, and if permanently lost, always cause a collapse of the dental arch and frequently cause the face to be contracted. To the orthodontist (a dentist who straightens teeth) they are the key to the arch. By looking at their relation to each other.

The premature loss of these teeth is a calamity to any individual and they should be watched with jealousy and care. They come in during the most irresponsible period of childhood, and no child of that age can be expected to pay any attention to the care of these important teeth without the watchful guidance of the parent.

If you care for the preservation of your child's health, there is every reason in the world why the baby teeth should receive as much care and attention to the permanent teeth. There is no possible excuse, no reason under the sun why either the baby teeth or the sixth-year molars should be neglected. The baby teeth are easily forgotten by the child where they are so healthy and clean that they are lost in the natural way. If properly cared for they are lost as nature intended. They are not so easily forgotten by the child when they are allowed to become a jagged, broken, decayed and abscessed lot and are lost through pain and sleeplessness.

The uncleanness of the baby teeth is surely transferred to the sixth-year molars, and the memory of pain endured and the physical scars will be carried through life. A child whose teeth are allowed to go to wreck and ruin through ignorance or neglect on the part of parents, who are responsible for both his mental and physical welfare, has every right to hold them responsible for his suffering. The baby teeth should remain as white and sound as little pearls. It is absolutely criminal for parents to neglect these.

"QUOTES"

COMMENTS ON CURRENT TOPICS BY NATIONAL CHARACTERS

USE OF GAS IN WAR
By CAPTAIN G. J. FISHER
Chemical Warfare Service.

THE next war is not much more likely to be fought on a chemical basis than the last. We don't expect the number of deaths from chemicals to be materially greater than in the last war.

The military effort required to fly chemicals against cities is such that it is doubtful whether military commanders would feel justified in directing men and materials to that purpose.

The progress made in developing gases since the World War has not been as great as the general public has been led to fear. Those who point out that one ton of mustard gas is capable of killing 30,000,000 people run dead up against the fact that in the World War a ton of this gas actually killed but three persons.

CUBAN DIFFICULTIES
By SUMNER WELLES
Assistant Secretary of State.

THE solution of their political difficulties lies now solely in Cuban hands. We have abrogated the Platt amendment. We have renounced the rights of intervention which we had previously secured, and we have made it emphatically clear that this government would interfere neither directly nor indirectly in the internal concerns of the Cuban people.

When any people has suffered economic prostration coincident with a political dictatorship, and the dictatorship is overthrown by popular uprising, it is almost inevitable that for a period of time that country will pass through varying stages of political unrest.

PENDING RAIL LAWS
By W. W. ATTERBURY
President Pennsylvania Railroad.

PROPOSED legislation, if enacted, would place an insupportable burden upon the railroads without advantages to the employees. Any treatment of their problems which omitted consideration of the overhanging threat to the integrity of the industry, would be tantamount to the destruction of efforts looking toward recovery in the field of railroad transportation. Such legislation would mean ultimately less employment in the railroad industry rather than an increase in employment, as contended by the sponsors of this legislation.

ONLY PASSING PHASE
By ANDREW W. MELLON
Pittsburgh Banker.

EVEN at 80, one does not acquire the gift of prophecy, but I look forward to seeing the return to normal conditions again within my own time.

America is going through a bad quarter of an hour, but present conditions, however distressing, especially in terms of human suffering, reflect only a passing phase in our history.

New generations are coming on and new inventions and the advance in human intelligence will solve many problems that now seem insurmountable.

OUR TAX BURDEN
By MARK GRAYES
New York Commissioner of Taxation and Finance.

IN 1929 the national income was \$90,000,000,000, while last year it had fallen to about \$45,000,000,000. The tax burden in each year was approximately \$10,000,000,000. I believe it should be obvious that we are suffering today because nearly one-quarter of our income is taken for taxes of one kind or another, direct or indirect, whereas the share was only about one-ninth of our income at the beginning of the depression.

ARMS FOR PEACE
By ADOLPH HITLER
German Chancellor.

FOR in this hour the German government renews before the German people, before the entire world, its assurance of its determination never to proceed beyond the safeguarding of German honor and freedom of the reich, and especially does it not intend in re-arming Germany to create any instrument for warlike attack, but, to the contrary, exclusively for defense and thereby for the maintenance of peace.

PERMANENCE FOR CCC
By PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT.

IT IS my earnest hope that the work carried on by the Civilian Conservation corps will find a permanent place in our government.

Only in that way can the nation, through future generations, enjoy the full benefit of what already has been accomplished and the full measure of all that ultimately will be achieved.

Dress and Jacket for the Summer

PATTERN 9963

There will be a notable representation of straight, loose jackets, according to latest fashion reports. Here's one added to a short sleeved frock of the type you can enjoy all summer, thus creating an ensemble of comfort for all degrees of temperature and all occasions, from street to afternoon. In the detail sketch you will note the draped front girdle which slenderizes and flattens, as do the flared revers. The jacket may be made bolero length if you prefer. A triple sheer material or a heavy rough crepe, the bodice

9963

and revers in contrasting color, would be attractive.

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ON THE JOB

Citizen—The legislature makes too many laws—useless laws.

Legislator (eagerly making a memorandum)—I will put through a law against that, but of course, it will be quite useless.

In Reverse

Lawyer (to feminine witness)—How old are you?

Witness—I'm just turned twenty-four.

Lawyer—Ah, I see—that means you are forty-two.

Doesn't Matter Anyway

Teacher—Your son is very backward in geography.

Father—That does not matter. He has no money for traveling.

Shurrup!

He—And who was the silly chump who said you couldn't drive?

She—The coroner.—Answers Magazine.

Who, When and Why

"Do you know Percy Smith?"

"Yes! What do they call him?"

"Who?"—London Dispatch.

Fine For Digestion

WRIGLEY'S PEARMINT
THE PERFECT GUM

Fine For Teeth