

The City of Numbered Days

By Francis Lynde

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SYNOPSIS.

Brouillard, chief engineer of the Niquola irrigation dam, meets J. Wesley Cortwright and explains the reclamation work to him. Cortwright organizes a company and obtains government contracts to furnish power and material. Steve Massingale threatens to start a gold rush if Brouillard does not use his influence to bring a railroad branch to the place, thus opening an easy market for the "Little Susan" mine ore. Brouillard tells Amy Massingale of his need for money to pay off his dead father's debts. She tells him to be true to himself. He decides for the extension. Mirapolis, the city of numbered days, booms. Cortwright persuades Brouillard to become consulting engineer of the power company in return for \$100,000 stock. Stoppage of work on the railroad threatens a panic. Brouillard spreads the Massingale story of placer gold in the river bed and starts a gold rush, which promises to stop the reclamation project. Amy tells Brouillard that her father is in Cortwright's financial clutches. He tells her he has made \$100,000 and declares his love. She loves him, but shows him that he has become demoralized. A real gold find is made. Brouillard sells his stock but does not pay his father's debts. Cortwright's son shoots Dave Massingale. Brouillard threatens Cortwright with exposure if he pushes Massingale to the wall. The magnate promises to give the old man a free field. Stories of the dam's abandonment revive. Foreclosure on the "Little Susan" is impending and Brouillard loans Dave Massingale his \$100,000 to clear him.

Old Man Massingale is loath to put himself under financial obligations that will involve Amy's marriage. Do you think that Brouillard will trick the father and save his conscience with the saying, "All's fair in love and war?"

CHAPTER XVI—Continued.

"There's one thing—and I've got to spit it out before it's everlastingly too late. See here, Victor Brouillard—Amy likes you—thinks a heap of you; a plumb blind man could see that. But say, that little girl o' mine has just natchly got to have a free hand when it comes to palin' up, and she won't never have if she finds out about this. You ain't allowin' to use it on her, Victor?"

Brouillard laughed.

"I'll make a hedging bet and break even with you, Mr. Massingale," he said. "That check is drawn to my order, and I have indorsed it. Let me have it again and I'll get the cash for you. In that way only the two of us need know anything about the transaction; and if I promise to keep the secret from Miss Amy, you must promise to keep it from Mr. J. Wesley Cortwright. Will you saw it off with me that way?—until you've made the turn on the ore mine?"

David Massingale shook hands on it with more gratitude, colored this time with a hearty imprecation. "Dad burn you, Victor Brouillard, you're a man—ever' single mill-run of you!" he burst out. But Brouillard shook his head gravely.

"No, Mr. Massingale, I'm the little yellow dog you mentioned a while back," he asserted, and then he went to get the money.

Left alone in the small retiring room of the bank where the business had been transacted, David Massingale



"You Borrowed to Meet These Notes?"

took the sheaf of bank notes from his pocket with trembling hands, fondling it as a miser might. Twice the old man made as if he would turn toward the door of egress, and the light in his gray-blue eyes was the rekindling flame of a passion long dead. But in the end he thrust the tempting sheaf back into the inner pocket and went resolutely to the cashier's counter window, finding Schermerhorn, the president, sitting at the cashier's desk.

"I've come to take up them notes o' mine with John Wes. name on 'em," Massingale began, pulling out the thick sheaf of redemption money.

"H'm, yes, here they are. Brought the cash, did you? The 'Little Susan' has begun to pan out, has it? I didn't know you had commenced stopping ore yet?"

"We haven't," David Massingale

made the admission and regretted it in one and the same breath.

"You've borrowed to meet these notes?" queried the president, looking up quickly. "That won't do, Mr. Massingale; that won't do at all. We can't afford to lose an old customer that way. What's the matter with our money? Doesn't it look good to you any more?"

Massingale stammered out something about Cashier Hardwick's peremptory demand of a few hours earlier, but he was not permitted to finish.

"Of course, that is all right from Hardwick's point of view. He was merely looking out for the maturing paper. How much more time will you need to enable you to get returns from your shipments? Sixty days? All right, you needn't make out new notes; I'll indorse the extension on the back of these, and I'll undertake to get Cortwright's approval myself. No; not a word, Mr. Massingale. As long as you're borrowing, you must be loyal and borrow of us. Good afternoon. Come again when we can help you out."

David Massingale turned away, dazed and confused beyond the power of speech. When the mists of astonishment cleared he found himself in the street with the thick wad of bank notes still in his pocket. Suddenly, out of the limbo into which two years of laborious discipline and self-denial had pushed it stalked the demon of the ruling passion, mighty, overpowering, unconquerable. The familiar street sights danced before Massingale's eyes, and there was a drumming in his ears like the fall of many waters. But above the clamor rose the insistent voice of the tempter, and the voice was at once a command and an entreaty, a gnawing hunger and a parching thirst.

"By gosh! I'd like to try that old system o' mine just one more time!" he muttered. "All it takes is money enough to foller it up and stay. And I've got the money. Besides, didn't Brouillard say I was to get an extension if I could?"

He grabbed at his coat to be sure that the packet was still there, took two steps toward the bank, stopped, turned as if in the grasp of an invisible but irresistible captor, and moved away, like a man walking in his sleep, toward the lower avenue.

It was the doorway of Haley's place, the Monte Carlo of the Niquola, that finally halted him. Here the struggle was so fierce that the bartender, who knew him, named it sickness and led the stricken one to a card table in the public bar-room and fetched him a drink. A single swallow of whisky turned the scale. Massingale rose, tossed a coin to the bar, and passed quickly to the rear, where a pair of baize doors opened silently and engulfed him.

CHAPTER XVII The Abyss

It was at early candle-lighting in the evening of the day of renewed and unbridled speculation in Mirapolis "front feet" that Brouillard, riding the piebald range pony on which he had been making an inspection round of the nearer Buckskin ditchers' camps, topped the hill in the new, high-pitched road over the Chigringo shoulder and looked down upon the valley electric.

Brouillard let the pony set its own pace on the down-hill lap to the finish, freshened himself at his rooms in the Niquola building, and went to the Metropole to eat his dinner with Murray Grislow as his vis-a-vis. The buzzing throngs in the Metropole cafe and lobby annoyed him, and even Grislow's quiet sarcasm as applied to the day's bubble-blowing failed to clear the air. At the club there was the same atmosphere of unrest; an exacerbating overcharge of the suppressed activities impatiently waiting for another day of excitement and opportunity. Corner lots and the astounding prices they had commanded filled the air in the lounge, the billiard room and the buffet, and after a few minutes Brouillard turned his back on the hubbub and sought the quiet of the darkened building on the opposite side of the street.

He was alone in his office on the sixth floor and was trying, half absently, to submerge himself in a sea of desk work when as distinctly as if she were present and at his elbow, he heard, or seemed to hear, Amy Massingale say: "Victor, you said you would come if I needed you. I need you now." Without a moment's hesitation he got up and made ready to go out.

The Massingale town house was one of a row of stuccoed villas fronting on the main residence street, which beyond the city limits became the high-road to the Quadajmal bend and the upper valley. Brouillard took a cab at the Metropole, dismissed it at the villa gate, and walked briskly up the path to the house, which was dark save for one lighted room on the second floor—the room in which Stephen Massingale was recovering from the effects of Van Duce Cortwright's pistol shot.

Amy Massingale was on the porch—waiting for him, as he fully believed until her greeting sufficiently proved her surprise at seeing him.

"You, Victor?" she said, coming quickly to meet him. "Murray Grislow said you had gone down to the Buckskin camps and wouldn't be back for two or three days!"

"I changed my mind and came back. How is Steve this evening?"

"He is quite comfortable, more comfortable than he has been at all since the wound began to heal. I have been reading him to sleep, and when the night nurse came I ran down to get a breath of fresh air in the open."

"No, you didn't come down for that reason," Brouillard amended gravely. "You came to meet me."

"Did I?" she asked. "What makes you think that?"

"I know what happened," said Brouillard, speaking as soberly as if he were stating a mathematical certainty. "You left that room upstairs and came to me. I didn't see you, but I heard you as plainly as I can hear you now. You spoke to me and called me by name."

She shook her head, laughing lightly. "You have been overwrought about something, or maybe you are just plain tired."

"You are standing me off," he declared. "You are in trouble of some sort, and you are trying to hide it from me."

"No, not exactly trouble; only a little worry."

"All right, call it worry if you like and share it with me. What is it?"

"I think you know without being told. I am afraid I have finally lost the 'Little Susan.' That is one of the worries and the other I've been trying to call silly. I don't know what has become of father—as if he weren't old enough to go and come without telling me every move he makes!"

"Your father isn't at home?" gasped Brouillard.

"No; he hasn't been here since nine o'clock this morning. Murray Grislow saw him going into the Metropole about one o'clock, but nobody that I have been able to reach by phone seems to have seen him after that."

"I can bring the record down to two o'clock," was the quick reply. "He ate with me at Bongras', and afterward I walked with him as far as the bank. And I can cure part of the first worry—all of it, in fact; he had the money to take up the Cortwright notes, and when I left him he was on his way to Hardwick's window to do it."

"He had the money? Where did he get it?"

Brouillard put his back against a porch post, a change of position which kept the light of the street electric from shining squarely upon his face.

"It has been another of the get-rich-quick days in Mirapolis," he said evasively. "Somebody told me that the corner opposite Poodles' was bought and sold three times within a single hour and that each time the price was doubled."

"And you are trying to tell me that father made a hundred thousand dollars just in those few hours by buying and selling Mirapolis lots? You don't know him, Victor. He is totally lacking the trading gift. He has often said that he couldn't stand on a street corner and sell twenty-dollar gold pieces at nineteen dollars apiece—nobody would buy of him."

"Nevertheless, I am telling you that he had the money to take up those notes," Brouillard insisted. "I saw it in his hands."

She stood fairly in the beam of the street light. The violet eyes were misty, and in the low voice there was a note of deeper trouble.

"You say you saw the money in father's hands; tell me, Victor, did you see him pay it into the bank?"

"Why, no; not the final detail. But, as I say, when I left him he was on his way to Hardwick's window."

Again she turned away, but this time it was to dart into the house. A minute later she had rejoined him, and the minute had sufficed for the donning of a coat and the pinning on of the quaint cowboy riding hat.

"I must go and find him," she said with quiet resolution. "Will you go with me, Victor? Perhaps that is why I—the subconscious I—called you a little while ago. Let's not wait for the Quadajmal car. I'd rather walk, and we'll save time."

From the moment of setting out the young woman's purpose seemed clearly defined. By the shortest way she indicated the course to the avenue, and at the Metropole corner she turned unhesitatingly to the northward—toward the region of degradation.

As was to be expected after the day of frantic speculation and quick money changing, the lower avenue was ablaze with light, the sidewalks were passages of peril, and the saloons and dives were reaping a rich harvest. Luckily, Brouillard was well known, and his position as chief of the great army of government workmen purchased something like immunity for himself and his companion. But more than once he was on the point of begging the young woman to turn back for her own sake.

The quest ended unerringly at the door of Haley's place, and when David Massingale's daughter made as if she would go in, Brouillard protested quickly.

"No, Amy," he said firmly. "You mustn't go in there. Let me take you around to the Metropole, and then I'll come back alone."

"I have been in worse places," she returned in low tones. And then, with her voice breaking tremulously: "He my good friend just a little longer, Victor!"

He took her arm and walked her into the garishly-lighted bar-room, bracing himself militantly for what

might happen. But nothing happened. Disipation of the western variety seldom sinks below the level of a certain rudo gallantry, quick to recognize the good and pure in womankind. Instantly a hush fell upon the place. The quartets at the card tables held their hands, and a group of men drinking at the bar put down their glasses. One, a Tri-Cire cowboy with his back turned, let slip an oath, and in a single swift motion his nearest comrade garroted him with a hairy arm, strangling him to silence.

As if guided by the same unerring instinct which had made her choose Haley's out of the dozen similar haunts,



"It's All Gone, Little Girl; It's All Gone."

Amy Massingale led Brouillard swiftly to the green baize doors at the rear of the bar-room. At her touch the swinging doors gave inward, and her goal was reached.

Three faro games, each with its in-laid table, its impassive dealer, its armed "lookout" and its ring of silent players, lay beyond the baize doors. At the nearest of the tables there was a stir, and the dealer stopped running the cards. Somebody said, "Let him get out," and then an old man, bearded, white-haired, wild-eyed, and haggard almost beyond recognition, pushed his chair away from the table and stumbled to his feet, his hands clutching the air like those of a swimmer sinking for the last time.

With a low cry the girl darted across the intervening space to clasp the staggering old man in her arms and draw him away. Brouillard stood aside as they came slowly toward the doors which he was holding open for them. He saw the distorted face-mask of a soul in torment and heard the mumbled repetition of the despairing words, "It's all gone, little girl; it's all gone!" and then he removed himself quickly beyond the range of the staring, unseeing eyes.

For in the lightning flash of revelation he realized that once again the good he would have done had turned to hideous evil in the doing, and that this time the sword thrust of the blind passion impulse had gone straight to the heart of love itself.

CHAPTER XVIII The Setting of the Ebb

Contrary to the most sanguine expectations of the speculators—contrary, perhaps, even to those of Mr. J. Wesley Cortwright—the upward surge in Mirapolis values, following the visit of the "distinguished citizens," proved to be more than a tidal wave; it was a series of them. Day after day the "curb" markets were reopened, with prices mounting skyward; and when the news of how fortunes could be made in a day in the Miracle city of the Niquola got abroad in the press dispatches there was a fresh influx of mad money hunters from the East.

Now, if never before, the croaker was wrathfully shouted down and silenced. No one admitted, or seemed to admit, the possible impermanence of the city.

To the observer, anxious or casual, there appeared to be reasonable grounds for the optimistic assertion. It was an indubitable fact that Brouillard's force had been cut down, first to one-half, and later to barely enough men to keep the crushers and mixers moving and to add fresh layers of concrete to the huge wall of sufficient quantities to prevent the material—in technical phrase—from "dying." The Navajos had been sent home to their reservation, the tepees were gone, and two-thirds of the camp shacks were empty.

Past these material facts it was known to everybody in the frenzied market place that Brouillard himself was, according to his means, one of the most reckless of the plungers, buying, borrowing, and buying again as if the future held no threat of a possible debacle. It was an object lesson for the timid. Those who did not themselves know certainly argued that there must be a few who did know, and among these few the chief of the reclamation service must be in the very foremost rank.

CHAPTER XVIII The Setting of the Ebb

Brouillard ought to know what's what. Does his action indicate that he is aware the dam never will be finished, or that the wonder city will never be abandoned and destroyed?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

ADVANTAGES IN SQUARE DESIGN

Sensible Way to Build, Since for One Thing It Solves the Heating Problem.

MANY OTHER GOOD POINTS

Construction of House Shown in Illustration Allows a Large Airy Basement—Inside Arrangements Have All Been Carefully Planned.

Mr. William A. Radford will answer questions and give advice FREE OF COST on all subjects pertaining to the subject of building, for the readers of this paper. On account of his wide experience as Editor, Author and Manufacturer, he is, without doubt, the highest authority on all these subjects. Address all inquiries to William A. Radford, No. 187 Prairie Avenue, Chicago, Ill., and only enclose two-cent stamp for reply.

By WILLIAM A. RADFORD.

Probably the most economical house design for the northern sections of the country is a square-built two-story house with a good basement. It is a good, sensible way to build, and it solves the heating problem in winter with greater satisfaction than any other style of house known to the American builder.

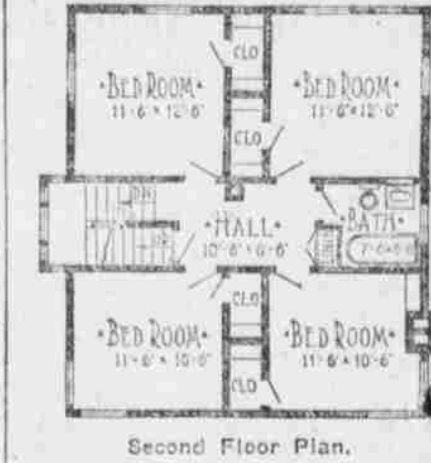
The principle of the circulation of warm air applies splendidly in a compact two-story house. The tendency of hot air is to rise, because hot air is lighter than cold air. In applying this principle the cold air is taken in from outside through the cold-air boxes and is sent through the furnace to the rooms on the first floor during the whole twenty-four hours. The upstairs registers usually are closed during the daytime in cold weather because the surplus heat from the first floor finds its way to the upper rooms through the stairway. The upper rooms are also warmed to a certain degree through the floors. This is written with a warm-air furnace in mind. The same principle applies to a certain extent when the hot-water system of heating is employed.

The house shown in this design is set well up on a concrete wall, in a way to make a splendid basement that

so that the two rooms may be made into one by opening both doors clear back.

For this reason the buffet sideboard is built against the back of the dining room to avoid any unnecessary obstruction in the main part of the room. The living room and dining room are both made especially light and airy by two triple windows and three single windows. The present fashion is to have plenty of light in the living rooms, and it is a good fashion that should remain in vogue for the next thousand years. The history of house windows reads wider with each century.

An interesting feature of this house is the manner in which the stairway is built. To commence with, there is a grade entrance at the side of the house which leads down into the cellar and up into the kitchen, a combination that is used in a great many modern houses. The same economy of space and travel is employed in the stairway to the second floor and to the attic. It doubles back from a landing half way between floors. The landing is provided for by an extension built as a space saver to give plenty of length of stair run with wide treads and easy risers.



Second Floor Plan.

The extension also contains windows to light the stairway, and as it is artistically designed it adds to the general appearance of this side of the house.

A study of the second floor plan will show that every square foot of floor space works to advantage. There are four bedrooms and four clothes closets all arranged on straight lines without shutting the light from any window and without any useless corners. Such a splendid arrangement of rooms is considered quite a triumph of skill on the part of an architect.

There is practically no wall space in the upper hallway. It is all taken up by the necessary doors. Even the linen closet is filched from the bathroom, al-

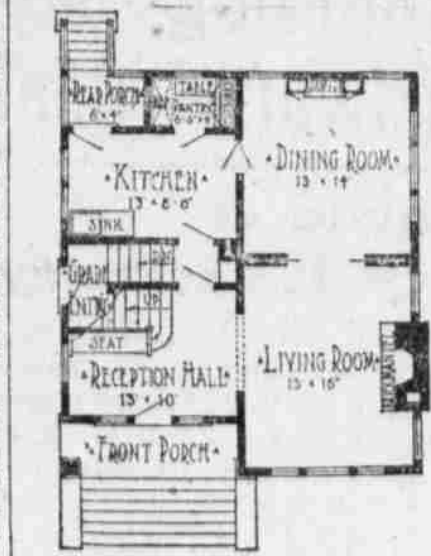


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is light and airy because of the large basement windows.

The front porch and front entrance show moderately massive construction which taken together with the general clean-cut appearance gives the house a rather prosperous look as seen from the street.

The tendency the last few years has been to make wider front walks and wider steps, as though house owners were growing broader in their views of life and more generous in hospitality. The front steps here shown are ten feet wide in the clear between the ramps, and the front door is built in proportion. The door is four feet six



First Floor Plan.

In width and is flanked on both sides with the old-fashioned front door side lights. Such front entrance doors used to be plentiful, but they went out of fashion 20 or 30 years ago. They are now coming back into use because of real merit.

The floor plans of this house are just as interesting as the perspective. There are three living rooms and a reception hall on the first floor and there are four good square bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor. The large living room and dining room are connected by an archway wide enough

though the two small linen closet doors open into the hallway.

The attic is of use only for storage purposes and for the drying of clothes on stormy washdays. For this reason there is a sensible stairway leading up to the attic and a door at the foot which closes it off from the rest of the house.

It is necessary to have a good wide lot for a house built after this design to show it to advantage. On general principles a full two-story square house may be put on a smaller lot than a wide spreading or squatty building, but any good dwelling deserves room enough to look right. When buying a lot for a home or planning a house for a lot already purchased it is well to keep in mind that any house looks best when it fits the lot.

The lawn around a good full two-story house requires different treatment from a low dwelling with an overhanging roof. Shrubbery and vines are needed for the proper finish of any dwelling, and rooms for these should be provided for when the plans are being drawn and the lot purchased.

New Facts About Moses.

Bible questions were put to 60 pupils in the Sedgewick county rural schools, says a Kansas City correspondent of the New York Sun. Describing the funeral of Moses one boy wrote:

"It was on a still night when the rush of a train broke the silence and at daybreak he was buried at the foot of a mountain and let the dirt roll down on him."

Two of the answers to a Prodigal Son question were:

"The Prodigal Son went away from home and after a while he came back and said, 'Father, thou art a sinner.'"

"While he was yet a great way off his father came to meet him and fell on his dirty neck and kissed him."

Not an Essential One.

"Ya, what's the difference between the Wall Street bulls and bears?"

"All the difference between a top up and a light squeeze."