

The City of Numbered Days

By Francis Lynde

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CHAPTER XXIII—Continued.

"Great heavens!" he exclaimed. "Today's the day! In the bustle I had forgotten it, and I'll bet old David has—if he hasn't simply ignored it. That accounts for the reunion at the Metro-pole!"

"Don't worry," said Harlan easily. "The bank has gone, vanished, shut up shop. At the end of the ends, I suppose, they can make David pay; but they can't very well pinch him for not meeting his notes on the dot."

"Massingale doesn't really owe them anything that he can't pay," Brouillard asserted. "By wiring and writing and digging up figures, we found that the capitalizing stockholders, otherwise J. Wesley Schermerhorn, and possibly Schermerhorn, have actually invested fifty-two thousand dollars, or, rather, that amount of Massingale's loan has been expended in equipment and pay rolls. Three weeks ago the old man got the smelter superintendent over here from Red Butte and arranged for an advance of fifty-two thousand dollars on the ore in stock, the money to be paid when the first train of ore cars should be on the way in. It was paid promptly in New York exchange, and Massingale indorsed the draft over to me to be used in the directors' meeting, which was never held."

"Go over and flash Massingale's fifty-two thousand dollars at 'em. They'll turn loose. I'll bet a yellow cow worth fifteen cents that they're wishing there was a train out of this little section of Sheel right now. Hear that!"

The crash of an explosion rattled the windows, and the red loom on the Jack's mountain side of the town leaped up and became a momentary glare. The fell spirit of destruction, of objectless wreck and ruin, was abroad, and Brouillard turned to the stairway door.

"I'll have to be making the rounds again," he said. "The Greeks and Italians are too excitable to stand much of this. Take care of yourself; I'll leave Grif and a dozen of the trustees to look after the shop."

CHAPTER XXIV
The Terror

When Brouillard reached the sidewalk the upper avenue was practically deserted. But in the eastern residence district, and well around to the north, new storm-centers were marked by the increasing number of fires. Brouillard stopped and faced toward the distant and invisible Timanyous. A chill autumn breeze was sweeping down from the heights and the blockading wall of the great dam turned it into eddies and dust-pillared whirls dancing in the empty street.

Young Griffith sauntered up with his Winchester in the hollow of his arm. "Anything new?" he asked.

"No," said Brouillard. "I was just thinking that a little wind would go a long way tonight, with these crazy house-burners loose on the town." Then he turned and walked rapidly to the government headquarters, passed the sentry at the door of the mapping room; and out of the fireproof vault where the drawings and blue-print duplicates were kept took a small tin dispatch box.

He had opened the box and had transferred a slip of paper from it to the leather-covered pocket field book which served him for a wallet, when there was a stir at the door and Castner hurried in, looking less the clergyman than the hard-working peace officer.

"More bedlam," he announced. "I want Gassman or Hadley and twenty or thirty good men. The mob has gone from wrecking and burning to murdering. Pegleg John was beaten to death in front of his saloon a few minutes ago. It is working this way. There were three fires in the plaza as I came through."

"See Grislow at the commissary and tell him I sent you," said the chief. "I'd go with you, but I'm due at the Metro-pole."

"Good. Then Miss Amy got word to you? I was just about to deliver her message."

"Miss Massingale? Where is she, and what was the message?" demanded Brouillard.

"Then you haven't heard? The 'Little Susan' is in the hands of a sheriff's posse, and David Massingale is under arrest on some trumped-up charge—telling ore for his individual account, or something of that sort. Miss Amy didn't go into particulars, but she told me that she had heard the sheriff say it was a penitentiary offense."

"But where is she now?" stormed Brouillard.

"Over at the hotel. I supposed you knew; you said you were going there."

Brouillard snatched up the dispatch box and flung it into the fireproof. While he was locking the door Castner went in search of Grislow, and when Brouillard faced about, another man stood in the missionary's place by the mapping table. It was Mr. J. Wesley Cortwright.

"I didn't think I'd have to ask a favor of you again, Brouillard, but

needs must when the devil drives," he began, with an attempted assumption of his former manner. "We didn't know—the newspapers didn't tell us anything about this frightful state of affairs, and—"

Brouillard had suddenly lost his desire to hurry.

"Sit down, Mr. Cortwright," he said. "I was just coming over to see you—to congratulate you and Mr. Schermerhorn on your return to Mirapolis. We have certainly missed the mayor, not to mention the president of the common council."

"Of course—yes," was the hurried rejoinder. "But that's all over. You said you'd get us, and you did. I don't bear malice. If you had given me one more day I'd have got you; the stuff that would have broken your neck with the Washington people was all written and ready to put on the wires. But that's past and gone, and the next thing is something else. There is a lot of money and securities locked up in the Niquola bank vault. We've come to clean up, and we brought a few peace officers along from Red Butte for a guard. The miserable scoundrels are scared stiff; they won't stir out of the hotel. Bongras tells me you've got your force organized and armed—can't you lend us fifty or a hundred huskies to keep the mob off while we open that bank vault?"

Brouillard's black eyes snapped, and the blood danced in his veins. The opportunity for which he would have bartered Ormuz' treasure had come to him—was begging him to use it.

"I certainly can," he admitted, answering the eager question and emphasizing the potentiality.

"But will you? that's the point. We'll make it worth your while. For God's sake, don't say no, Brouillard! There's a pretty well up to a million in that vault, counting odds and ends and left-overs. Schermerhorn oughtn't to have left it. I thought he had sense enough to stay and see it taken care of. But now—"

"But now the mob is very likely to wreck the building and dynamite the vault, you were going to say. I think it is more likely, Mr. Cortwright, and I wonder that it hasn't been done before this. It would have been done if the rioters had had any idea that you'd left anything worth taking. And it would probably wreck you and Mr. Schermerhorn if it should get hold of you; you've both been burned in celly half a dozen times since you ran away."

"Oh, good Lord!" shuddered the magnate. "Make it two hundred of your men, and let's hurry. You won't turn us down on this, Brouillard!"

"No. It is no part of our duty to go and keep the mob off while you



Brouillard Got Between.

save your stealings, but we'll do it. And from the noise they are making down that way, I think you are wise in suggesting haste. But first there is a question of common justice to be settled. An hour ago, or such a matter, you sent a part of your sheriff's posse up to seize the 'Little Susan' and to arrest David Massingale—"

"It's—'it's a lie!" stammered Cortwright. "Somebody has been trying to back up me to you!"

Brouillard looked up, frowning.

"You are a good bit older man than I am, Mr. Cortwright, and I sha'n't punch your head. But you'll know why I ought to when I tell you that my informant is Miss Amy Massingale. What have you done with old David?"

The man who had lost his knack of bluffing came down and stayed down.

"He's—he's over at the hotel," he stammered.

"Under guard?"

"Well—y-yes."

Brouillard pointed to the telephone on the wall.

"Go and call up your crowd and get it here. Tell Judge Williams to bring the stock he is holding, and Schermerhorn to bring the Massingale notes, and your man Jackson to bring

the stock-book. We'll have a directors' meeting that was called, and wasn't held, three weeks ago."

It was a crude little expedient, but it sufficed. Cortwright tramped to the phone and cursed and swore at it until he had his man at the other end of the wire. The man was the lawyer, as it appeared, and Cortwright abused him spitefully.

"You've balled it—balled it beautifully!" he shouted. "Come over here to Brouillard's office and bring Schermerhorn and the stock and the notes and Jackson and the secretary's books and Massingale and your infernal self! Get a move, and get it quick! We stand to lose the whole loaf because you had to butt in and sweep up the crumbs first!"

When the procession arrived, as it did in an incredibly short time, Brouillard laid down the law.

"We don't need these," he said curtly, indicating the two deputies who came to bring David Massingale. And when they were gone: "Now, gentlemen, get to work and do business, and the less time you waste the better chance there will be for your bank salvage. Three requirements I make: you will turn over the stock, putting Mr. Massingale in possession of his mine, without incumbrance; you will cancel and surrender his notes to the bank; and you will give him a document, signed by all of you, acknowledging the payment in full of all claims, past or pending. While you are straightening things out, I'll ring up the yards and rally your guard."

Cortwright turned on the lawyer. "You hear what Brouillard says; fix it, and do it suddenly."

It was done almost before Brouillard had made Leshington, in charge of the yards, understand what was wanted.

"Now a note to your man at the mine to make him let go without putting us to the trouble of throwing him over the dump," said the engineer, when he had looked over the stock transfers, examined the canceled notes, and read and witnessed the signatures on the receipt in full.

Cortwright nodded to the lawyer, and when Williams began to write again the king of the promoters turned upon Brouillard with a savage sneer.

"Once more you've had your price," he snarled bitterly. "You and the old man have bilked us out of what we spent on the mine. But we'll call it an even break if you'll hurry that gang of huskies."

"We'll call it an even break when it is one," retorted Brouillard; and after he had gathered up the papers he took the New York check from his pocket-book, indorsed it, and handed it to Cortwright. "That is what was spent out of the hundred thousand dollars you had Mr. Massingale charged with, as nearly as we can ascertain. Take it and take care of it; it's real money."

He had turned again to the telephone to hurry Leshington, had rung the call, and was chuckling grimly over the collapse of the four men at the end of the mapping table as they fingered the slip of money paper. Suddenly it was borne in upon him that there was trouble of some sort at the door—there were curses, a blow, a mad rush; then . . . it was Stephen Massingale who had fought his way past the door-guarding sentry and stood blinking at the group at the far end of the mapping board.

"You're the houn' dog I'm lookin' for!" he raged, singling out Cortwright when the dazzle of the electric lights permitted him to see. "You'll rob an old man first, and then call him a thief and set the sheriff on him, will you—?"

Massingale's pistol was dropping to the fringe level when Brouillard flung away the telephone earpiece and got between. Afterward there was a crash like a collision of worlds, a whirling, dancing medley of colored lights fading away to gray and then to darkness, and the engineer went down with the avenger of wrongs tightly locked in his arms.

After the period of darkness had passed and Brouillard opened his eyes again upon the world of things as they are, he had a confused idea that he had overslept shamefully and that the indulgence had given him a bad headache.

The next thought was that the headache was responsible for a set of singular hallucinations. His blanket bunk in the sleeping shack seemed to have transformed itself into a white bed with pillows and snowy sheets, and the bed was drawn up beside an open window through which he could look out, or seem to look out, upon a vast sea dimpling in the breeze and reflecting the sunshine so brightly that it made his headache a darting agony.

When he turned his face to escape the blinding glare of the sun on the sea the hallucinations became soothingly comforting, not to say ecstatic. Someone was sitting on the edge of the bed; a cool hand was laid on his forehead; and when he could again see straight he found himself looking up into a pair of violet eyes in which the tears were trembling.

"You are Amy—and this is that other world you used to talk about, isn't it?" he asked feebly.

The cool hand slipped from his forehead to his lips, as if to warn him that he must not talk, and he went through the motions of kissing it. When it was withdrawn he broke the silent prohibition promptly.

"The way to keep me from talking is to do it all yourself; what happened to me last night?"

She shook her head sorrowfully.

"The 'last night' you mean was three weeks ago. Stevie was trying to shoot Mr. Cortwright in your office and you got between them. Do you remember that?"

"Perfectly," he said. "But it still

seems as if it were only last night. Where am I now?—not that it makes any difference, so long as I'm with you."

"You are at home—our home; at the 'Little Susan.' Mr. Leshington had the men carry you up here, and Mr. Ford ran a special train all the way from Denver with the doctors. Stevie's bullet struck you in the head, and—and we all thought you were going to die."

"I'm not," he asserted, in feebly desperate determination. "I'm going to



She Slipped an Arm Under His Shoulder and Raised Him.

live and get to work and earn a hundred thousand dollars, so I can say, 'Come, little girl—'

Again the restraining hand was laid upon his lips, and again he went through the motions of kissing it.

"You mustn't talk!" she insisted. "You said you'd let me." And when he made the sign of acquiescence, she went on: "At first the doctors wouldn't give us any hope at all; they said you might live, but you'd—never—never remember—never have your reason again. But yesterday—"

"Please!" he pleaded. "That's more than enough about me. It was that more than happened."

"That night, you mean? All the things that you had planned for. Father got the mine back, and Mr. Leshington and the others got the riot quelled after about half of the city was burned."

"But Cortwright and Schermerhorn—I promised them—"

"Mr. Leshington carried out your promise and helped them get the money out of the bank vault before the mob sacked the Niquola building and dynamited it. But at the hotel they were arrested on the order of the bank examiner, and everything was taken away from them. We haven't heard yet what is going to be done with them."

"And Gomorrhah?" he asked.

She slipped an arm under his shoulder and raised him so he could look out upon the mountain-girt sea dimpling under the morning breeze.

"There is where it was," she said soberly, "where it was, and is not, and never will be again, thank God! Mr. Leshington waited until everybody had escaped, and then he shut the waste-way gates."

Brouillard sank back upon the pillows of comfort and closed his eyes.

"Then it's all up to me and the hundred thousand," he whispered. "And I'll get it . . . honestly this time."

The violet eyes were smiling when he looked into them again.

"Is she—the one incomparable she—worth it, Victor?"

"Her price is above rubies, as I told you once a long time ago."

"You wouldn't let pride—a false pride—stand in the way of her happiness?"

"I haven't any; her love has made me very humble and—and good, Amy, dear. Don't laugh; it's the only word; I'm just hungering and thirsting after righteousness enough to be half-way worthy of her."

"Then I'll tell you something else that has happened. Father and Stevie have reorganized the 'Little Susan' Mining company, dividing the stock into four equal parts—one for each of us. You must take your share, Victor. It will break father's heart if you don't. He says you got it back for him after it was hopelessly lost, and that is true."

"Kiss me, Amy, girl, and then go and tell your father that he is a simple-hearted old spendthrift, and I love him. And if you could wire Castner, and tell him to bring a license along—"

"Oh boy—foolish boy!" she said. "Wait; when you are well and strong again . . ."

But she did not make him wait for the first of the askings; and after a healing silence had fallen to show the needlessness of speech between those who have come through darkness into light, he fell asleep again, perhaps to dream that the quieting hand upon his forehead was the touch of Love, angel of the bright and shining way, summoning him to rise up and go forward as a soul set free to meet the dawning day of fruition.

THE END.

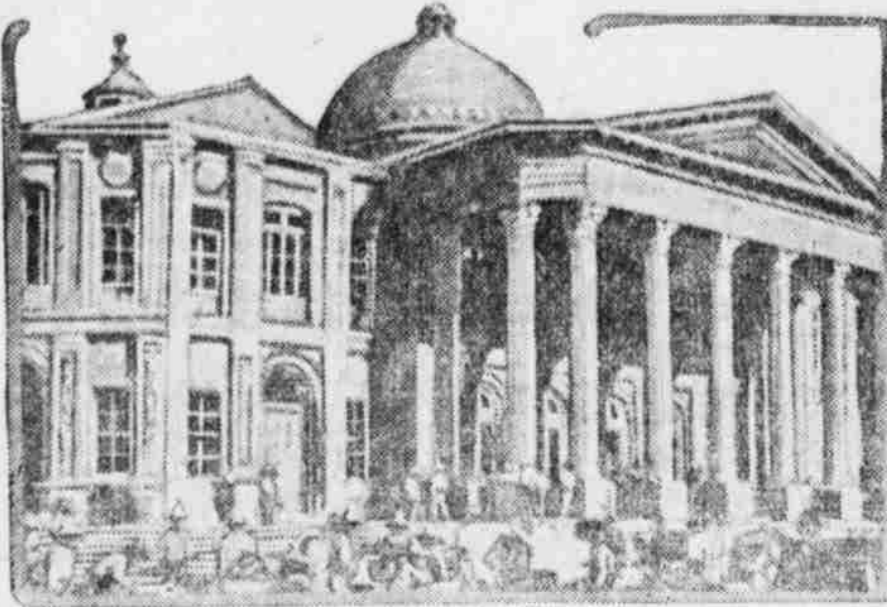
Patriotic.

"Is this a good car?" asked the prospective purchaser.

"It is the ne plus ultra, ma'am," answered the cultivated salesman.

"Oh, I don't wish a car of foreign make. I'll have an American car, or none at all."

Lower California



THEATER IN LA PAZ

THERE have been many rumors of late that Lower California would secede from Mexico and become a republic.

Vague notions prevail of what constitutes Lower California. Physically, it is a peninsula 700 miles long and a hundred miles or so across from the Pacific to the gulf. The peninsula is a jagged one with a mountain range paralleling the Pacific. The sterile heights are not inviting, nor is the cactus-covered tableland. Few passes bisect the mountain range. There is little timber and less water, but the peninsula is not all barren waste. There are regions in which the wealth of tropical vegetation is riotous, and here are great stretches of land which, by means of irrigation, can be made the sources of productive agriculture, writes Charles M. Pepper, in the Washington Star.

It is the coast, however, that is of chief international importance. This was charted by Admiral Dewey when he was Captain Dewey. It has also been charted by other officers of the United States navy, and its characteristics are not unknown to the Japanese navy. There are few good harbors either on the Pacific side or on that of the gulf, and that is another reason which makes those that do exist of such international importance.

A wealth of romantic tradition clusters around the peninsula. It has been called "the mother of California." Cortez sent exploring parties there after pearls and gold. The Jesuit fathers established themselves, and all the romance of the mission days is due to them.

Porfirio Diaz gave Lower California the best government it ever had, which was that of a benevolent, but iron-handed, military dictatorship. The peninsula was constituted into a territory, which it still is, and was divided into two districts for administrative purposes. The headquarters of the northern district are at Ensenada, not very far from San Diego, with which steamship communications are maintained. The headquarters of the lower district are at La Paz on the gulf.

Resources of the Territory. The bulk of the population is in the southern part of the peninsula. The total number of inhabitants is said to be between thirty and thirty-five thousand, of whom possibly three-fourths are in the south.

Under the Diaz policy of encouraging foreign capital to develop the material resources of Mexico, a marked progress was observed in Lower California. The gold mines proved to be largely legendary, but there are several productive silver mines operated by American capital.

Lower California is one of the world's principal sources of copper production. The great mine known as Santa Rosalia is situated near the gulf coast. It is controlled by the French branch of the Rothschild family, and the majority of the foreigners there are Frenchmen. Santa Rosalia has been described as a French municipality in a Spanish and Indian environment.

The pearl fisheries of the gulf at one time were quite valuable, although the reports of the revenues which the Spanish crown derived from them were, as usual, wildly exaggerated. The center of the pearl fishing industry is at La Paz. It has dwindled a good deal in recent years, but is still a source of revenue to the government.

The agricultural resources of the peninsula never have been systematically exploited. This is partly because it only could be done on a scale requiring a large amount of capital and partly because of the political uncertainties. The country itself is not such as to invite many colonists from the United States, though there have been a few adventurous spirits who took their chances. What is needed in order to insure colonization is irrigation.

Magdalena Bay and La Paz. Attention has been centered on the proper interest of the United States in Lower California through the Magdalena Bay incident. That was a case in which Washington could not afford to view the international situation with unconcern.

Naval officers know the harbor as one of the finest in the world, just as the old-time New Bedford whalers knew it. They know that the United States, in due regard for its own rights, never could acquiesce in any arrangement by which any Asiatic power, or for that matter, a European power, would be allowed to convert Magdalena Bay into a naval station. For that reason they, perhaps, were suspicious of the nature of the pro-

posed land and colonization scheme around Magdalena Bay. The investigation made by the state department under the direction of Secretary Knox did not disclose that any foreign government was directly interested in the project. A full report was made to the senate on the subject. Nevertheless, the senate thought it wise to pass the resolution introduced by Senator Lodge, which was in substance a declaration that the United States would regard the establishment of any foreign power at Magdalena Bay as an unfriendly act. This was a notice to Mexico, as well as to Europe and Asia.

Magdalena Bay itself is thoroughly known to the American navy. When President Roosevelt started the American fleet around the world, Porfirio Diaz seized the opportunity to show his friendship for the United States and to demonstrate that he had no fears of ulterior purposes on our part. He extended the hospitality of Magdalena Bay as a naval station for three years.

La Paz, which is on the gulf, has been used as a coaling station by the United States. The station is not far from the old cove which was the rendezvous of the Dutch pirates in the days when the Gulf of California was known as the Sea of Cortez.

La Paz is actually the metropolis of Lower California. The United States maintains a consulate there, and there used to be a small American colony engaged in business. There were also some adventurous Americans who did not know just why they were there.

Should the military leaders of what exists of the Mexican army in Lower California decide to set up a dictatorship and call it a republic, La Paz would be the center of a good deal of interesting news. But there would also be interesting news from Ensenada, on the Pacific coast, which is much nearer to American territory and with which communication is much easier.

KOVEL A STRATEGIC CENTER

Junction Point for Several Railways and Capital of Rich Agricultural District.

Kovel, a town of 30,000 people at the beginning of the war, owes its immense strategic importance to the fact that it is the junction point for railroads which radiate, like the spokes from the hub of a wheel, in five directions. To the northwest, 77 miles distant, is the strongly fortified city of Brest-Litovsk, over whose possession the Germans were fighting the Russians back through Poland after the first Slav drive early in the war, says a National Geographic society bulletin.

To the southeast, 84 miles away, is Rovno, a fortress with a population of 40,000 at the outbreak of the war and at that time the headquarters of the Eleventh Russian army corps. Lublin, with 65,000 inhabitants, is 100 miles due west, on the railroad running to Warsaw, 200 miles away. Then to the south is Vladimir-Volynski, 35 miles distant, and to the east runs the line which passes through Sarni on its way to Kiev.

In addition to these railway connections, Kovel is situated on the banks of the Turija, one of the tributaries of the Pripryt river, whose extensive marshes lie to the north where forests of Kovel, however, agriculture is well developed and at the beginning of the war fully one-fourth of the land contiguous to the city was devoted to the production of cereal crops. The peasant farmers in the district of which Kovel is the capital, like those of Volynia generally, are more fortunate than the peasants in most of the Russian provinces, for here they own nearly 50 per cent of the land.

West of Kovel is the famous battlefield of Dubienka, on the banks of the Bug and ten miles south of Dorochuk, a town on the Lublin-Kovel railroad. It was here that Kosciuszko, at the head of 4,000 men with ten cannons, offered a heroic resistance to 18,000 Russians with 60 guns. After holding the superior force in check for five days, the "hero of Dubienka" retired unmolested to Warsaw. This brilliant achievement took place just nine years after a grateful American congress had offered its public thanks to this Polish artillery officer, conferred upon him the rank of a brigadier general, extended him the privileges of American citizenship, and given him landed estates in appreciation of his distinguished services to this country as adjutant to General Washington during the Revolutionary war.