TheRiver

"Isn't one dude enough for you?"

The answer to that was another

out the process, grumbling over each

detail. That confounded laundry had

it a big event. She was watching the

lar showed a desperate struggle.

where he had walked out of it.

"What is it all about?"

the wild gestures.

I look like a guy?"

Gerty made wild signals for him to

to Tom's sack suit lying on the floor

"Ssh," whispered his wife. Again

"Well, aren't you satisfied? Don't

He could be heard distinctly in the

Rickard praised the miracles of the

nes of their old relation. "Exit Innes,"

Gerty ushered them immediately to

Lawrence! That dreadful dining

had hated it, though she had not

next room. Gerty gave it up in de-

touches to the table.

When the Colorado Burst Its Banks and Flooded the Imperial Valley & California

By EDNAH AIKEN

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GERTY HARDIN'S DINNER PROVES AN ORDEAL FOR ALL WHO ARE PRESENT.

Synopsis .- K. C. Rickard, an engineer of the Overland Pacific, is called to the office of President Marshall in Tucson. While waiting Rickard reads a report on the ravages of the Colorado river, which occurred despite the efforts of Thomas Hardin, head of the Desert Reclamation company. Hardin had been a student under Rickard in an eastern college and had married Gerty Holmes, with whom Rickard had fancied he was in love. Marshall tells Rickard the Overland Pacific must step in to save the Imperial valley and wishes to send Rickard to take charge. Rickard declines because he foresees embarrassment in supplanting Hardin, but is won over. Rickard goes to Calexico and, on the way, learns much about Hardin and his work. Rickard meets Mr. and Mrs. Hardin and Innes Hardin, the former's half sister. At the company offices he finds the engineers loyal to Hardin and hostile to him. Rickard attends a meeting of the directors and asserts his authority. Hardin rages. Estrada, a Mexican, son of the "Father of the Imperial Valley." tells Rickard the general situation and expresses forebodings that the work will fail. Innes Hardin is bitter against Rickard for supplanting her brother, out she tries to cheer up the latter. Hardin discovers that Rickard is planning a levee to protect Calexico and puts him down as incompetent. Gerty thinks her husband is jealous.

CHAPTER X-Continued.

She didn't need to pierce those canhotel. "Because of a headache!" A the flercest cattlemen in Missouri.

Tom's wife could not even shop what, even if we do live like gipsies." tect! openly! Bundles had always the air of mystery, never opened before Tom or herself. She must have yards of stuff laid away, kept for sudden emer-

"She can't help it. It's her disposition. She can't help being secretive. Look at your face, Innes Hardin!" a woman whom an accident of life had swept upon the beach beside her? Gerty was not her kind, not the sort the tears back as she put the last she would pick out for a friend. She was an oriental, one of the harem women, whose business it is in life to please one man, to keep his home soft, fussed herself to death over this din- They must not talk of the river; that his comforts ready, keep him con-vinced, moreover, that it is the desire of his life to support her. Herself dissatisfied, often rebellious, staying by him for self-interest, not for love-ah, that was her impeachment. "Not lov- tell Tom to clange his coat?" The safe topic, and by that natural route

Soberly she covered her plain braswhite waist or cotton ducking. A red leather belt and crimson tie she added self-consciously. "Where is my bloodstone pin?"

Hadn't she spent an hour at least matching that particular leather belt? But he was a man, in battle. The headgate held up; it was too bad. Silent, Bodefeldt, Wooster, Grant, all made an unintelligible excuse and silent Hardins. She would like Mr. of them fighting mad because of the darted behind the portiere. deadlock at the Heading. All up in arms, at last, against Marshall, because of this cruel cut to their hero, Hardin. Her eyes glowed like yellow lamps as she recalled their fervid partisanship.

"Only one man who can save the valley, and that's Tom Hardin." Wooster had said that; but they all believed it. The loyalty of the force made her ashamed of her soft woman fears. For there were times when she questioned her brother's ability. He had a large, loose way of handling things. He was too optimistic. But those men, those engineers must know. It was probably the man's way of spair. She dabbed some more powder sweeping ahead, ignoring detail. The on her nose and went out looking like verdict of those field-tried men told a martyr-a very pretty martyr! her that the other, the careful, planning way, was the office method. Rick- tent. Gerty's soft flush reminded Inard, as a dinner neighbor, she had found interesting; but for great un- she was thinking, when Tom, red and dertakings a man who would let a perspiring, brought another element Gerty Holmes jilt him, ruin his life of discomfort into the room. for him! The whole story sprang at last clear from the dropped innuendos. the table. She covered the first min-

smoothly brushed hair. Slowly she her small chatter. Somewhere she walked over to the neighboring tent. had read that it was not well to make Gerty frowned at the white duck. apologies for lack of maid or fare. "You might at least have worn your Besides Mr. Rickard remembered

"You're elegant enough for the two room, the ever-set table! How she of us. Isn't that something new?" Gerty said carelessly that she had known how fearful it was until she had it for a long time. For she had had escaped. had the material a long time! It "We are simple folk here, Mr. Rickwasn't necessary to explain to her ard," she announced, as they took husband's sister that it had been their places around the pretty table. made up that week. She hoped that That was her only allusion to deficienshe didn't look "fussed up." Would cles, but it covered her noiseless move-Mr. Rickard think she was attaching ments around the board between any importance to the simple little courses, filled up the gaps when she visit? For it was nothing to him, of made necessary dives into kitchen or course. A man of his standing, whom primitive ice chest, and set the key the great Tod Marshall ranked so for the homeliness of the meal itself, had been observing that he was not many men. high, probably dined out several times The dinner was a triumph of apparent taller than her brother He looked each week, with white-capped maids simplicity. Only Innes could guess taller. He was lean, and Tom was the line projected by Hardin to Mar- the entire output of the Tacna and and candelabra! If Tom had only the time consumed in the perfection growing stocky. She wished he would shall the year before, a spur across Patagonia quarries. He had ordered made the most of his opportunities, of detail, details dear to the hostess' not slouch so, his hands in his pock- the desert, dipping into Mexico be steam shovels to be installed at the What a gamble, life to a woman!

and took a reassuring survey in her salted them. The cheese straws were an impression of virile distinction, of government had agreed to pay five the gravel bed—that was a find! As mirror. The lingerie frock would look her own. She did not make the mis- grace, a suggestion of mastered mus- thousand dollars a mile were the road he paced the levee west of the towns. simple to a man who would never take of stringing out endless courses, cles. He had known that it was her completed at a certain period. Estrada he was planning his campaign. Porsespect it of hand-made duplicity. An improvised buffet near at hand brother he was supplanting-did he was keping his men on the jump to ter was scouring Zacatecas for men; For glass declared the hand-whipped made the serving a triumph. medallions casual and elegant. And Rickard praised each dish; openly it was the busband of the woman who pay the price. The completion of the transportation; the O. P. he knew asserted that the bear sheds tears a long time ago, a lifetime ago, Rick- he was admiring her achievement. had jilted him? Anyway, she did not road meant help to the valley; sup- would back him. He was going to when severely wounded. The giraffe ard had told her that she always Innes, remembering the story Gerty like him. She could never forgive a plies, men, could be rushed through to throw out a spur-track from the Head- is not less sensitive and regards with

his own table, "Poor sulky Achilles," she thought. "Dear, honest old bear!"

"Innes!" cried Mrs. Hardin.

She turned to find that the guest was staring at her. She had not heard his effort to include her in the conversation

"Mr. Rickard asked you if you like

"Thank you-why, of course !" answer sounded pert to herself.

Her sister-in-law hastened to add that Miss Hardin was very lonely, was man" was actively hostile. There had insisted on her making her home with fore Rickard had left the towns, black.

had been to cut her college course in cost them their places. By this time the job out there." order to make a home in the desert the cause of the desert was as comfor the brother who had always so pelling to these hardy soldiers as were gently fathered her, who had helped the lily banners of France to the folher invest her small capital that it lowers of the Little Corporal. might spell a small income. She re-Gerty teasing Tom to wear his Tuxcalled in a mortgage; who could watch | fect of his return was that of a pervas walls to know that there had growled her surly lord. Innes recog- yearn to helo? Not a Hardin. She He knew what he would find, ample been feverish activity for this dinner, nized the mood and shrank from the still gloried in remembering that she reasons why! He was not given the A new gown would appear tonight, ordeal ahead. It was the mood of had at least driven one pile into that satisfaction of locating any particular made secretly. An exquisite meal, the Hardin in the rough, the son of rebellious stream, even if when she act of disobedience. The men preand no one must comment on its elab- his frontier mother, the fruit of old left the valley it would be as a bread- sented a blank wall of politeness, reaeration. Twice Tom and she had Jasper Gingg, whose smithy had been winner. She was prepared. She was sonable and ineffectual. Silent exbeen asked to take their lunch at the the rendezvous for the wildest roughs, a good draftsman; she would go as plained briefly that he had not been an apprentice in an architect's office, able to collect enough men. Most of "I'd let him see you knew what's She had already settled on the archi- the force was busy in the No. 6 dis-

> growl. Innes could hear him dragging soon?" She heard the new manager that year's crops were entirely ruined. address his host. "I'm taking orders!"

torn his shirt. He hadn't a decent There was another awkward mocollar to his name. Where was his ment when Hardin pushed back his gion, where they were excavating for black string tie? If Gert would keep plate declaring he had reached his the new headgate. his things in the lowest drawer! Hang | limit; it was too big a spread for him! What was it to her, the pettiness of that button! Gerty emerged from the It was the stupid rudeness of the glad to pick a flaw in such a perfect encounter, her face very red. Innes small bad boy; even Innes flushed for pattern. "You might have withdrawn could see her biting her lips to keep her sister-in-law.

> With resolution Gerty assumed control of the conversation. Her role "She's tired out," thought the sister sounded casual; no one could have of Tom Hardin. "She's probably suspected it of frequent rehearsal. was taboo. Railroad matters were A few minutes later Rickard ar- also excluded. Equally difficult rived in a sack suit of tweeds. Gerty's would be reminiscences of Lawrence greeting was a little abstracted. How days. So she began brightly with a could she make Innes understand to current book. The theater proved a duty of a host, she suddenly remem- they reached New York. Innes, who bered, was to dress down rather than had never been farther east than Chiup to the chances of his guest. She cago, was grateful to play audience. regretted bitterly her insistence. Was Hardin, who knew his New York perever anyone so obtuse as Innes? Mr. haps better than either, refused to be

> Rickard would see that they thought drawn into the gentle stream. Things must be kept sprightly. Had curtain where Tom would emerge. Mr. Rickard met many of the valley And his coat was a style of several people? And it was then that she seasons ago and absurdly tight! She threw her bomb toward the listening, Rickard to meet some of their friends.

He sald that he would be delighted, Tom's face was apoplectic. He was wrestling with a mussed tie; the col- but that he was planning to leave shortly for the Heading.

"Of course." She did not give her change his clothes. She waved a husband time to speak. She meant hand indicating Rickard; she pointed afterward! She was planning to give something a bit novel in his honor. She refused to see the glare from the angry man in his outgrown dinner coat. She did not glance toward the sister. What did Mr. Rickard think about a progressive ride?

"It sounds very entertaining, but what do you do?"

There was a loud guffaw from Tom. he could meet all the guests.

so many nice people in here; it cer- fuse to see the insubordination of the find congenial people in a new country diers. He needed them, must win your stoves, your beds." That was the sugar in the channel. An infant Col

and the morning glories. His eyes levee. A good soldier had made a betever went to that hotel!

Gerty's eyes were shining as deep across the ditch into Mexicall. pools of water on which the sun plays. hope you'll come again!"

Of course he'd come again!

for my party?"

heart. The almonds she had blanched, ets! In Tucson, before she knew that tween the lean, restless sandhills, quarry back of old Hamlin's. That She made a trip into her bedroom of course, herself; had dipped and she must dislike Rickard, she had had from Calexico to Yuma. The Mexican rock pit would be his first crutch, and should wear blue, because of her eyes. had told her in dots and dashes, the hurt that was done to her own. She the break. innes from the next room could hear story of the old rivalry, glanced cov- was a Hardin,

browned fingers. Her eyes did not laughing scrutiny. "Good night, Mr. Rickard,"

> CHAPTER XI. The Fighting Chance.

"Casey's back, spying!" announced time the feeling against "Marshall's The man's off his head." Fanned by much talk during his ab-Innes had with difficulty restrained sence, it had burst into active blaze. His face was ugly with passion, a denial. After all, what other home They were ready to show their resent-

Rickard was not expected. He had called his resistance when she had been gone less than a week. The efthat mad scapegoat of a river playing son who returns suddenly into a room, trict, trying to push the shattered Wis-"Are you going to Los Angeles taria through by a new route before A gang was at Grant's Heading; the floor needed bracing. Another squad, Irish's, was in the Volcano Lake re-

"No hurry for that." Rickard was those men and put them to work on

the levee." that."

The chief pretended to accept the reason; else it were a case of chang- yet know her diplomatic lesson. ing horses in midstream. What he



Her Eyes Did Not Meet His.

had seen at the Heading, his peep at their confidence if he could. If not, training of the good executive, of men orado could wash it away. However,

He gathered all the recruits he out to them by the new white boss, Innes did not get his answer. She of the manager. He could not spare gether such recklessness?

ertly at Tom sulking at the head of | "Innes! Mr. Rickard said good jultimate failure the growing belief in the omnipotence of the Great Yellow She gave him the tips of her cool, Dragon as the Cocopans visualized it, Estrada's work was as intense as meet his; she would not meet that though he were hastening a sure victory. The dauntless spirit of the elder Estrada pushed the track over the hot sands where he must dance at times to keep his feet from burning. Many of the rails they laid at night.

"Rickard's gone hog-wild," Hardin told his family the next morning. Wooster at mess one evening. By that "Building a levee between the towns!

"There isn't any danger?" Gerty's really all alone in the world; that they been a smudge of slumbering fires be- anxiety made the deep blue eyes look

Innes looked up for Tom's answer. "Danger! It's a bluff, a big show

had she? Still the truth had been de- ment against the man who had sup- of activity here because he's buffaflected. She recalled the sacrifice it planted Hardin, their Napoleon, if it loed; he doesn't know how to tackle

more than one. It was talked over the river to talk with him. The man's at Coulter's store; in the outer office snavity, his narrow silts of eyes, the of the D. R. company where the engineers foregathered; among the chair elty falling from them, had repelled tilters who idled in front of the Des- his visitor. The mystery of the place ert hotel. "The man does not know followed him. Why the 'dobe wall how to tackle his job!" A levee, and which completely surrounded the pranks with desert homes and not hushing an active babel of tongues. the gate beid up! What protection to small, low dwellings? Why the eauthe towns would be that toy levee if tious admittance, the atmosphere of the river should return on one of its suspicion? Rickard had seen the wife, spectacular sprees? A levee, and the a frightened shadow of a woman; had intake itself not guarded? He was seen her flinch when the brute called whispered of as incompetent; one of for her. He had questioned Cor'nel Marshall's clerks. He was given a about the half-breed. He was rememshort time to blow himself out. A bering the wrinkles of contempt on the bookman, a theorist.

"As well put sentinels a few miles from prison and leave the jail doors open!" This was Wooster's gibe. All Coyote!" saw the Colorado as a marauder at large. "And a little heap of sand stacked up to scare it off! It's a

meet with diplomacy the confidences Hamlin and Cor'nel, might be pulled which inevitably came her way. As out of his romantic fabric. Hardin's wife she was expected to enjoy the universal censure the new man red look out for trouble!" He doubtwas acquiring. Gerty's light touches, ed that they ever ran red. He would "I was given no authority to do too slight for championship, passed as ask Cor'nel. He had also spoken of a sweet charity. Her own position a cycle, known to Indians, of a hunthose days was trying. She did not dredth year, when the Dragon grows

Apparently unaware of the talk, hundredth year. Rickard spent the greater part of his front and was needed there.

stant goading. The extra pay was headgate at the Crossing. he turned his back, the work on the he wanted to be fair. levee would stop; and all the reasons excellent! Some emergency would be shall," Rickard was thinking, as he cooked up to warrant the withdrawal walked back to the hotel. "I wonder fling resistance, the polite silence of work had been done, it was true, yet flat."

machinery toward his problem. He knew that that organization, like wellready for them. The camp, that was another rub. There was no camp! It a thousand feet-yet he had spoken With deepened color Gerty told her the exposed valley, his gleaning of was not equipped for a sudden infla- of that to Marshall: "Calculate for idea. A drive, changing partners, so the river's history had convinced him tion of men. The inefficiency of the yourself the difference in expense that in haste and concentration lay projectors of this desert scheme had since the flood widened the break. It "I think it will surprise you to find the valley's only chance. He must re- never seemed so criminal as when he is a vastly different problem now. had surveyed the equipment at the in- Disaster island, which they figured on tainly did me. One doesn't expect to engineers, the seasoned desert sol- take. "Get ready first; your tools, for anchor, is a mere pit of corroding

Rickard remembered that he had they must save the valley anyway! like Marshall and MacLean. Nothing a lot of work has already been done, to get back to his hotel. He had let- The imperturbable front of Silent, his to be left to chance; to foresee emer- and a lot of money spent. There is a ters to write. It had been a splendid bland, big stare, exasperated him; gencies, not to be taken by them un- fighting chance. Perhaps the bad year She adjusted a barrette in her utes which might be awkward with dinner! And what a wonderful home easier to control the snapping terrier aware. The reason of Hardin's down- is all Indian talk." she had made out of a sand-baked lot, of a Wooster. He had told Silent dis- fall was his slipshod habits, How could out of a tent! He spoke of the roses | tinctly to gather his men and rush the be a good officer who had never It was pure gamble what the tricky drilled as a soldier? There was the Colorado would do. Anyway, he had fel. on the open plane, the reading ter guess than his, and had stopped gap at the intake, Hardin's grotesque given the whole situation to Marshall table with the current magazines, the casual work at Black Butte, or folly, widened from one hundred feet Now he couldn't understand why they had found Indians! Thoughtfully to ten times the original cut; widening Rickard followed that last suggestion every day, with neigher equipment nor the office—from Tod Marshall. "Take of half the original magnitude. Cut-She looked almost infantile as she needed that morning. The Indians, ting away, moreover, was the island, tismal water the Colorado. The last A few Mexican laborers were bribed floods had played with it as though it "And you will let me know when to toss up earth to the west of the were a bar of sugar. There was no you return, so that I may set the date town. Estrada, at his request, put a rock at hand; no rock on the way, no squad of his road force at the service rock ordered. Could anyone piece to-

Rickard knew where he would get The railroad had already started his rock. Already he had requisitioned In spite of his haunting sense of pit, on to the main road at Yuma. wounded it,

Double track most of the way; sidings every three miles. Rock must be rushed; the trains must be pushed through. He itched to begin. It never occurred to him that, like Hardin, he might fall.

"Though it's no pink tea," he told himself, "it's no picnic." At Tucson he knew that the situation was a grave one, but his talk with Brandon, who knew his river as does a good Indian, made the year a significant, eventful one. Matt Hamlin, too, whose shrewd eyes had grown river-wise, he, too, had had tales to tell of the tricky river. Maldonado, the half-breed, had confirmed their portents while they sat together under his oleander, famous throughout that section of the country. And powerfully had Cor'nel, the Indian who had piloted Estrada's party across the desert, whom Rickard had met at the Crossing, deeply had he impressed him. The river grew into a malevolent, mocking personality; he could see it a dragon of yellow waters, dragging its slow, sluggish length across the baked desert sands; deceiving men by its inertness; luring the explorer by a mild mood to rise suddenly with its wild fellow, the Gila, sending boat and boatmen to their swift doom. Rickard was thinking of the half-

breed, Maldonado, as he inspected the new stretch of levee between the towns. He had heard from others besides Estrada of the river knowledge of this descendant of trapper and squaw, and had thought it worth while It had begun to look that way to to ride the twenty miles from down lips thin and facile, deep lines of cruold Indian's face as he delivered himself of an oracular grunt.

"White man? No. Indian? No!

Though he suspected Maldonado would lie on principle, though it might be that two-thirds of his glib tissue were false, yet a thread of truth co-Mrs. Hardin found it difficult to incident with the others, Branden and

"When the waters of the Gila run restless; this he had declared was a

Following his talk with Maldonado time superintending the levee. He and the accidental happy chance meetcould trust no one else to do it, no ing with Coronel at the Crossing Rickone unless it were Estrada, who was ard had written his first report to Tod rushing his steel rails through to the Marshall. Before he had come to the Heading he had expected to advise Things were moving under his con- against the completion of the wooden showing results. He should be at the had given him a new viewpoint. There Heading now, he kept telling himself, was a fighting chance. And he wanted but he was convinced that the instant to be fair. Next to being successful

"It's time to be hearing from Marof the hands. Chafe as he might at what he will say." He felt it had the situation, it was to be guerrilla been fair to put it up to Marshall; warfare. Not a fight in the open, he personally, he would like to begin with knew how to meet that, but that baf- a clean slate-begin right. Clumsy the office when he entered-"Well, there were urgent reasons now for they'll be doing my way pretty soon, haste; and the gate was nearly half or my name isn't Rickard. That's done! He had gone carefully over the situation. The heavy snowfall, un-He was fretting to be at work, to precedented for years, a hundred, ac start the wheels of the O. P., its vast cording to the Indians-on the Wind Rover mountains—the lakes swollen with ice, the Gila restless, the summer drilled militia, was ready for his call, floods yet to be met; perhaps, he now The call lagged, not that he did not thought, he had been overfair in emneed men, but there was no place phasizing the arguments for the head gate. For the hundred feet were now

A guess, at best, whatever they did! In his box at the hotel was a telegram which had been sent over from camp adequate to push through a work the fighting chance. But remember to speak more respectfully of Indians."

"Marshall all over," laughed his sub stood by the two tall men, her head lazy Cocopahs, crept out of their huts Disaster island; it had received apt ordinate. "Now it's a case of hustle! perched birdlike. "Good-by! and I to earn a few of the silver dollars held christening by the engineers, its bap- But dollars to doughnuts, as Junior says, we don't do it!"

> Was it Hardin's luck? Rickard scouted the idea and charged it to pure inefficiency. Whatever the cause, fate and Hardin's failure to carry out instructions seemed to have combined to wreck Rickard's plans. Don't miss the next installment.

> > (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Creatures That Weep Among the creatures that weep most easily are the ruminants. All hunters get any satisfaction from the fact that fill the contract, to make his nation he himself had offered, as balt, free know that the stag weeps, and it is ing, touching at the quarry and gravel tearful eyes the hunter who has