

Periwinkle House
By Opie Read

Illustrated by
R. H. Livingstone

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CHAPTER VI, Continued

"I gave him the five hundred dollars that he was to put in with the five hundred furnished by you to be invested in the factory at Vicksburg, and he took an early boat for that city. I think it is a fortunate thing for the South that they discovered a wild plant, a sort of jute, really better for making ropes and bagging than either flax or hemp. I had seen nothing about the discovery, but I am not a very close reader of the newspapers. But Shottle assures me that this wild jute can be grown on the poorest land and that it needs no tending. I am naturally cautious, Virgil, and I did not myself invest, but backing your judgment in the matter, I loaned Liberty five hundred. When do you expect active operations toward building the factory?"

Tyde forestalled Drace's answer: "Oh, I am sure it will succeed, and it will be a great thing, especially for Liberty. He has tried so hard, but somehow his energies haven't been properly directed. And he is so capable!"

She was so confident, and so hopeful for her luckless kinsman, that Drace played protecting villain to Shottle's purposes.

"Well, I don't know exactly when they are to begin work, but soon, I trust."

She gave him a grateful look for his trust, now perfectly assured of Shottle's useful future. But the General did not appear to be easy in his mind, and a little later when he and Drace were walking about the yard, beneath the trees, he referred again to the investment. Drace would have shuffled away from it, but the old gentleman cornered him with a question: "I want the truth. Did Liberty lie to me?"

"Yes, sir, he did."
"I began to think so the moment he left me. Well, it is a singular thing,



"I Want the Truth. Did Liberty Lie to Me?"

that when he is with me, I believe in him, but the moment he is gone my faith has gone with him. I have had much experience with men, Mr. Drace, in the army and elsewhere, but my wife's nephew is the most—I don't know how to define him. Let me thank you for protecting him in the presence of my wife, and I regret that I may have seemed in doubt. But Drace, that fellow makes me angry with myself. Confound him, he almost convinces me at times that I have no stability of character. And yet I am fond of him. I am always glad to see him come. And let me say that he illustrates one truth very clearly—that ability consists mostly in the fervor with which we go at a thing. I suppose he has cost you considerable."

"Oh, not very much. I am fond of him too, and I believe he is going to be of much help to me."

"Well, I've lost five hundred this morning, but I can stand it. I have ordered the mules hitched up, and am going to drive with you about the plantation. I am going to show you a government here in the delta."

During the drive the old gentleman was talkative, sometimes with the school man's hesitating precision, but more often as the free companion, agreeable rather than discursive. Drace evinced in everything a keen interest, but it was not real. His heart was not with him. It was in New Orleans, in a / boards

were nailed across a door. From what he had been able to gather from the General and by talking in seeming idleness to boatmen and to men along the river, Drace confirmed the information snatched by Shottle from the label on the Frenchman's wine case—namely, that old Stepho had a haunt somewhere in the neighborhood. A shrewd old negro had said that the outlaw lived in the swamp, in a house built of periwinkle shells. On the opposite shore, and several miles below the General's home, there lay a great wood of cypress and a thick tangle of salt cedar, a sort of everglade, a marsh with hundreds of knoll-islands here and there rising among the bayous. Here was indeed an outlaw's paradise, for Drace was told that not nearly all its lanes and crooked byways of brown water had been explored. Herein he began his search for old Stepho, day after day penetrating farther and farther into this moss-hanging wild. He did not confide in General Bethpage, for his mission was sacred unto himself alone, and by himself alone must it be accomplished.

At his feet in the canoe lay a rope, one end of it a hangman's noose, and he smiled at it, grim and firm of faith. Sometimes his canoe would stall in the carpet of scum. But he forced his way through into a narrow and unobstructed channel. Now he paddled swiftly. In front of him a great alligator arose and sank, the canoe grazing his scaly back. With a shriek great birds flew, flapping low, their long legs stretched out behind them. Drace was armed with a revolver, but did not wish to fire it, caution warning him. When he ceased for a time to paddle, how still everything was!

The adventurer liked to feel that no one had ever been there before. But now suddenly something caught his eye. In the green tangle on a low bank he saw a pole with wires strung to it, a sort of gate. The wires were covered with vines, trained about them. But for what purpose, here in this brushy tangle? He caught hold of a weed and pulled the canoe up closer, took hold of the pole and now he found a lower slit to which the wires were also attached. Farther along he discovered a sort of hinge attached to a snag almost hidden by briars.

"I'll open this gate and see what lies beyond," he mused, drawing the canoe back to the other end. He pulled at the pole, and it yielded. The gate opened, and through the weeds that appeared to have been bent by the passing of a boat, he saw a narrow channel.

It was easy enough to shove through the weeds and to enter the new canal. Soon it broadened, winding about among the enormous cypress trees. Now he came upon a widening that looked like a millpond, except that in the midst of it arose an island of tall cane. It was an attractive sight, and he ceased paddling to look. Slowly he drifted toward the island's shore. He took hold of a cane root and pulled the nose of the canoe hard into the bank. Then he got out, parting the stiff and stubborn cane in a shade as dense as night. But now through this parting hallway he could see sunlight beyond, and knew that he was about to come into an open space. And out into it he looked with a start; for there, a few feet from the edge of the fringe of cane, stood a small house made of minute shells cemented—periwinkles. Its roof was of thatch, the long rushes gathered from the swamp; and about the door was a cypress vine, its red blooms dazzling in the sun. And then a banded cane Drace held was crushed in his hand, for through



Through the Door and Out Beneath the Vine Came the Barbaric Rose-Maid, Nadine La Vitte.

the door and out beneath the vine came the barbaric rose-maid, Nadine la Vitte.

CHAPTER VII

She did not take fright when she saw him. She was startled, but did not run into the house; she stood dazed, her marvelous eyes in wide stare. Slowly he came forward, gazing his hat in his hand. He dropped the hat, stooped, caught it up and now stood before her.

If she were agitated, he could not

discover it. She stood where the red blooms brushed her brow. He held forth his hand, and slowly she shook her head.

"Monsieur, how foolish to come! If you do not go now, in a short time you will die. My father! He will shoot you. I should like it not to see you dead, you are so brave. My father, he will think you come for him."

"But I will tell him that I did not."

He moved nearer, but with her hand raised, palm toward him, she motioned him away.

"You do not know what you talk. Nothing could you tell him, for the gun fire, and you will be no more. Please go away now."

"Oh, it is because you want to get rid of me."

"No, no, no. It is not that. I like you much. You are so brave — and handsome. It is because I fear for you. My father would be angry to have me talk with a northern man. Go now, and for my sake, come no more."

"Mr. Boyce," said Drace then, "is not a northern man?"

She shot a sudden startled look at him. "Mr. Boyce—but he is my father's friend. My father expects me to marry Mr. Boyce. And if my father

should come back and find me here talking with you, he would—Please, Mr. Drace, go at once, before it is too late. See, the sun is almost set. The stars come soon, and then through the cane he came. Oh, won't you please be kind to me and go at once!"

"Kind to you? God bless you, I would die for you."

"Oh, you make love soon! But won't you please go now! Quick, I hear something."

"You hear my heart. Let me stay ten minutes, and then I go."

"Ah, but why would you give me ten minutes of fear?"

He saw that her anxiety was real, and his heart smote him for cruelty to this dazzling creature whose father he would hang with a rope brought from the North.

"Yes, I will go. I wanted to tell you something, but my regret at going is so deep that I forget what it was. But I must come again when the sun is not so low. No, tell me please, when that shall be?"

"Never would a man before talk like this to me. . . . But if you must come when I beg you no, let it be next Thursday. My father then will be in the hills to buy cattle."

"This is Friday, and that will be a week, lacking one day. You have set doomsday for my return."

"If you come before, you will not find me. And now it is the good-by."

She drew back quickly through the door, and down into the fringe of tall cane he went, parting his way to the canoe that lay nosing the mossy bank.

Only now that she was gone and night had come did he remember—remember that this girl who had bewitched the swift minutes with him was the daughter of his sworn enemy Stepho la Vitte.

A voice called him as he was cursing himself for a traitor to his father's memory. On a point of land he saw three men standing. One of them beckoned him, and he turned in toward them. One of them spoke:

"Would you be kind to set us across? The night he comes, and we would not be lost in the swamp. We will get to the river. Would you, please?"

"Yes, but I don't know that my canoe will hold four. We may get a ducking."

He pulled alongside and steadied the canoe while they got in. Now he paddled carefully. The man who had talked, and whom the other two addressed as Toney, requested to be set on a bushy shore where the water was so shallow that the canoe was almost stuck in the ooze. With his paddle Drace propped his craft steady, for them to get out. Toney got out—and with the quickness of a cat snatched a rope from beneath his coat and threw a noose about Drace's arms. Then the two men in the boat threw themselves upon him. There was a hard struggle in the canoe and then out into the water, but they brought him ashore, wound about with the rope.

Now they made haste to tie him securely. The canoe was dragged ashore; Drace stretched out in it, and now they took it on their shoulders and hastened through the tangled underbrush. He had fought hard, but had not cried out. But as he was carried along, he swore bitterly at himself for not looking at first with suspicion on the brutes who now had him in their power.

"Ah, you would steal about and spy," said Toney. "But you steal about no more. The carpetbaggers, they say, 'You brave?' and you say, 'Yes, I am brave.' Then they say, 'You find old Stepho.' And you go to find him. He is not at home. But his men, they come just in time."

"You are liars. I was—"
"Ah, you come with the joke. Tomorrow, we will laugh. Will you? No, you will not laugh."

(To Be Continued.)

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EXTENSION ROAD NO. 22
To Whom It May Concern:
A consent road as follows:
Commencing at the corners to sections 4, 5, 8 and 9, township 12, north range 20, west of 6th P. M. running thence west on line between sections 5 and 8, and 6 and 7, two miles, to connect with extension of road No. 42. Anyone having objections thereto or claims for damages by the reason of the establishing of the above described road must file same in the office of the County Clerk of Lincoln County, Nebraska, on or before 12 o'clock noon of the 10th day of Nov. 1922 or said road will be allowed without reference thereto.
Witness my hand and official seal this 28th day of September 1922.
A. S. ALLEN,
County Clerk.

EXTENSION ROAD NO. 240
To Whom It May Concern:
The special commissioner appointed to locate a public road as follows:
Commencing at the termination of road No. 240 near the north line of section 36 township 12 range 28 running thence east across the canyon and continuing on east side of canyon in a southerly direction through section 36, township 12, range 28 and through sections 12-11-13-14-24-25-36, township 11, range 28. Road to follow east fork of canyon, which forks about 200 yards north of south line of section 36, township 11, range 28, in a southeasterly direction through northeast corner of section 1 township 10, range 28 and through north 1/2 section 6, township 10, range 27, crossing divide near line between north and south halves of section 6, township 10 range 27, and continuing in an easterly direction through section 6, township 10, range 27, connecting with road 299, near its intersection of line between sections 5 and 6, township 10, range 27, terminating there. Proposed road to be 70 feet wide, has reported in favor thereof, anyone having objections thereto or claims for damages by reason of the establishing of the above described road must file same in the office of the County Clerk of Lincoln County, Nebraska, on or before 12 o'clock noon of the 10th day of November, 1922, or said road will be allowed without reference thereto.
Witness my hand and official seal September 28th, 1922.
A. S. ALLEN, County Clerk.

EXTENSION ROAD NO. 30
To Whom It May concern:
A consent petition for the establishment of public road as follows:
Commencing at the west line of Dawson county, on the southeast corner of section 13 and the northeast corner of section 24 township 13, north of range 26, west of the 6th P. M. and running west along said section line between sections 24 and 13, sections 14 and 23, all in township 12 range 26, west of the 6th P. M. and terminating at the southeast corner of section 15 and northeast corner of section 22 all in township 12 range 26. Anyone having objections thereto or claims for damage by the reason of the establishing of the above described road must file same in the office of the County Clerk of Lincoln county, Nebraska, on or before 12 o'clock noon on the 10th day of November 1922.
Witness my hand and seal September 28th 1922.
A. S. ALLEN, County Clerk.

NOTICE OF FINAL REPORT
Estate No. 1875 of William Graves, deceased in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.
The State of Nebraska, to all persons interested in said Estate take notice that the Administratrix has filed a final account and report of his administration and a petition for final settlement and discharge as such Administratrix, which have been set for hearing before said court on Oct. 24 1922, at 10 o'clock a. m. when you may appear and contest the same.
Dated Oct. 2, 1922.
Wm. H. C. Woodhurst,
County Judge.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Estate No. 1902 of Martha Koester, deceased in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.
The State of Nebraska, ss: Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation and filing of claims against said Estate is January 10, 1923, and for settlement of said Estate is September 7, 1923; that I will sit at the county court room in said County on October 10th, 1922, at 10 o'clock a. m. and on January 10th, 1923 at 10 o'clock a. m., to receive, examine, hear, allow, or adjust all claims and objections duly filed.
Dated September 7th, 1922.
WM. H. C. WOODHURST,
County Judge.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Estate No. 1875 of William Graves, deceased in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.
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Dated Oct. 2, 1922.
Wm. H. C. Woodhurst,
County Judge.

Wm. E. Shuman, Atty.
NOTICE TO CREDITORS.

In the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

In the Matter of the Estate of Rose M. Knox, Deceased.

Notice is hereby given to any and all persons having claims and demands against the estate of the said Rose M. Knox, deceased, that the 17th day of January, 1923, has been set and appointed as the day for the reception, examination, adjustment and allowance of lawful claims and demands of all persons, against said estate and that the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska, will at said time receive, examine, adjust and allow all such claims against said estate, as provided by law, at the County Court Room in the Courthouse, in the City of North Platte, Lincoln County, Nebraska, and all persons so interested in said estate, will appear at said time and place and duly present their said claims and demands in the manner required by law, or show cause for not so doing, and in case any of said claims or demands shall not be presented on or prior to the said 17th day of January, 1923, the same shall be forever barred.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have signed this notice and affixed the seal of said Court this 18th day of September, 1922.

WM. H. C. WOODHURST
(SEAL) County Judge

NOTICE OF PAVING ASSESSMENT.

Notice is hereby given that the Mayor and City Council of the city of North Platte, Nebraska, will on the 17th day of October 1922, between the hours of 8 and 9 o'clock p. m. of said day and so much longer as may be necessary to transact said business, sit as a Board of Equalization for the purpose of equalizing and assessing against abutting and adjacent property owners, the cost of paving in Paving Districts No. 4 and 5 as the same are now organized. And all persons interested are hereby notified to appear and show cause, if any why said equalization and assessment should not be made, on or before the 17th day of October, 1922 at eight o'clock p. m.

Witness my hand and the seal of said city this 25th day of September, 1922.

O. E. ELDER,
City Clerk.

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