

The RAGGED EDGE

by Harold MacGrath

She remembered that she had not gone to bed until two o'clock in the morning. She had carried a chair into the room veranda and had watched and listened until the night silences had lengthened and only occasionally she heard a voice or the rattle of rickshaw wheels in the courtyard.

The great ordeal—that which she had most dreaded—had proved to be no ordeal at all. The kindly American consul-general had himself taken her to the bank, where her banknotes had been exchanged for a letter of credit, and had thoroughly advised her. Everything had so far come to pass as the withered old Kanaka woman had foretold.

"The Golden One knows that I have seen the world; therefore follow my instructions. Never glance sideways at man. Nothing else matters."

The prison bars of circumstance, they no longer encompassed her. Her wings were oddly weak, but for all that she could fly. That was the glorious if bewildering truth. She had left for ever the cage, the galling leash; she was free. The misty caravans of which she had dreamed were become actualities. She had but to choose. All about her, hither and yon, lay the enticing Unknown Romance! The romance of passing faces, of wires that carried voices and words to the far ends of the world, of tremendous mechanisms that propelled ships and trains! And, oh the beautiful books!

She swiftly knelt upon the floor and once more gathered the books to her heart.

CHAPTER V

At dinner the spinsters invited Ruth to sit at their table, an invitation she accepted gratefully. She was not afraid exactly, but there was that about her loneliness to-night she distrusted. Detached, it was not impossible that she would be forced to leave the dining room because of invading tears. To be near someone, even someone who made a pretense of friendliness, to hear voices, her own intermingling, would serve as a rehabilitating tonic. The world had grown dark and wide, and she was very small. Doubts began to rise up all about her, plucking at her confidence. Could she go through with it? She must. She would never, never go back.

As usual the substantive sister Prudence—did all the talking for the pair; Angelina, the shadow, offered only her submitting nods. Sometimes she missed her cue and nodded affirmatively when the gesture should have been the reverse; and Prudence would send her a sharp glance of disapproval. Angelina's distress over these mischances was pathetic.

None of this by-play escaped Ruth, whose sense of humour needed no developing. That she possessed any sense of humour was in itself one of those human miracles which metaphysicians are always pothering over without arriving anywhere; for her previous environment had been particularly humourless. But if she smiled at all it was with her eyes. To-night she could have hugged both the old maids.

"Somebody ought to get hold of that young man," said Prudence, grimly, as she nodded in Spurlock's direction. "Look at him!"

Ruth looked. He was draining a glass, and as he set it down he shuddered. A siphon and a whisky bottle stood before him. He measured out the portion of another peg, the bottle wavering in his hand. His food lay untouched about his plate. There was no disgust in Ruth's heart, only an infinite pity; for only the pitiful understand.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"I have no sympathy," replied Prudence, "with a man who deliberately fuddles himself with strong drink."

"You would, if you had seen what I have. Men in this part

of the world drink to forget the things they have lost."

"And what should a young man like this one have to forget?" Prudence demanded to know.

"I wonder," said Ruth. "Couldn't you speak to him?"

"What?—and be insulted for my trouble? No, thank you!"

"That is it. You complain of a condition, but you leave the correction to someone else."

The spinster had no retort to offer such directness. This child was frequently disconcerting. Prudence attacked her chicken wing.

"If I spoke to him, my interest might be misinterpreted."

"Where did you go to school?" Prudence asked, seeking a new channel, for the old one appeared to be full of hidden reefs.

"I never went to school."

"But you are educated!"—astonished.

"That depends upon what you call educated. Still, my tutor was a highly educated scholar—my father." Neither spinster noticed the reluctance in the tones.

"Ah! I see. He suddenly realized that he could not keep you for ever in this part of the world; so he sends you to your aunt. That dress! Only a man—and an unworldly one—would have permitted you to proceed on your venture dressed in a gown thirty years out of date. What is your father's business?"

The question was an impertinence, but Ruth was not aware of that.

"Souls," she answered, drily.

"A missionary! That illuminates everything." The spinster's face actually became warm. "You will finish your education in the East and return. I see."

"No. I shall never come back."

Something in the child's voice, something in her manner, warned the spinster that her well-meaning inquisitiveness had received a set-back and that it would be dangerous to press it forward again. What she had termed illuminative now appeared to be only another phase of the mystery which enveloped the child. A sinister thought edged in. Who could say that the girl's father had not once been a fashionable clergyman in the States and that drink had got him and forced him down, step by step, until—to use the child's odd expression—he had come upon the beach? She was cynical, this spinster. There was no such a thing as perfection in a mixed world. Clergymen were human. Still, it was rather terrible to suspect that one had fallen from grace, but nevertheless the thing was possible. With the last glimmer of decency he had sent the daughter to his sister. The poor child! What frightful things she must have seen on that island of hers!

The noise of crashing glass caused a diversion; and Ruth turned gratefully toward the sound.

The young man had knocked over the siphon. He rose, steadied himself, then walked out of the dining room. Except for the dull eyes and the extreme pallor of his face, there was nothing else to indicate that he was deep in liquor. He did not stagger in the least. And in this fact lay his danger. The man who staggers, whose face is flushed, whose attitude is either noisily friendly or truculent, has some chance; liquor bends him eventually. But men of the Spurlock type, who walk straight, who are unobtrusive and intensely pale, they break swiftly and inexplicably. They seldom arrive on the beach. There are way-stations—even terminals.

There was still the pity of understanding in Ruth's eyes. Perhaps it was loneliness. Perhaps he had lost his loved ones and was wandering over the world seeking forgetfulness. But he would die if he continued in this course. They were alike in one phase—loveless and lonely. If he died, here in this hotel, who would care? Or if she died,

who would care?

A queer desire blossomed in her heart: to go to him, urge him to see the folly of trying to forget. Of what use was the temporary set-back to memory, when it always returned with redoubled poignancy?

Then came another thought, astonishing. This was the first young man who had drawn from her something more than speculative interest. True, on board the ships she had watched young men from afar, but only with that normal curiosity which is aroused in the presence of any new species. But after Singapore she found herself enduring them with the characteristics of the heroes in the novels she had just read for the first time. This one was Henry Esmond, that one the melancholy Marius, and so forth and so on; never any villains. It wasn't worth while to invest imaginatively a man with evil projects simply because he was physically ugly.

Some day she wanted to be loved as Marius loved Cosette; but there was another character which bit far more deeply into her mind. Why? Because she knew him in life, because, so long as she could remember, he had crossed and recrossed her vision—Sidney Carton. The wastrel, the ne'er do-well, who went mostly nobly to a fine end.

Here, then, but for the time and place, might be another Sidney Carton. Given the proper incentive, who could say that he might not likewise go nobly to some fine end? She thrilled. To find the incentive! But how? Thither and yon the idea roved, seeking the way. But always this new phase in life which civilization called convention threw up barrier after barrier.

She could not go to him with a preaching against strong drink; she knew from experience that such a plan would be wasted effort. Had she not seen them go forth with tracts in their pockets and grins in their beards? To set fire to his imagination, to sting his sense of chivalry into being, to awaken his manhood, she must present some irresistible project. She recalled that day of the typhoon and the sloop crashing on the outer reefs. The heroism of two beachcombers had saved all on board and their own manhood as well.

"Are you returning to Hong-Kong to-morrow by the day boat?"

For a moment Ruth was astonished at the sound of the spinster's voice. She had, by the magic of recollection, set the picture of the typhoon between herself and her table companions; the terrible rollers thundering on the white shore, the deafening bellow of the palms, the thatches of the native huts scattering inland, the blur of sand dust, and those two outcasts defying the elements.

"I don't know," she answered vaguely.

"But there's nothing more to see in Canton."

"Perhaps I'm too tired to plan for to-morrow. Those awful chairs!"

After dinner the spinsters proceeded to inscribe their accustomed quota of postcards, and Ruth was left to herself. She walked through the office to the door, aimlessly.

Beyond the steps was a pole-chair in readiness. One of the coolies held the paper lantern. Near-by stood Ah Cum and the young unknown, the former protesting gently, the latter insistent upon his demands.

"I repeat," said Ah Cum, "that the venture is not propitious. Canton is all China at night. If we were set upon I could not defend you. But I can easily bring in a sing-song girl to play for you."

"No. I want to make my own selection."

"Very well, sir. But if you have considerable money, you had better leave it in the office safe. You can pay me when we return. The sing-song girls in Hong-Kong are far handsomer. That is a part of the show in Hong-Kong. But here it is China."

"If you will not take me, I'll find some guide who will."

"I will take you. I simply warn you."

Spurlock entered the office, passed Ruth without observing her (or if he did observe her, failed to recognize her), and deposited his funds with the manager.

"I advise you against this trip, Mr. Taber," said the man-

ager. "Affairs are not normal in Canton at present. Only a few weeks ago there was a bloody battle on the bridge there between the soldiery and the local police. Look at these walls."

The walls were covered with racks of loaded rifles. In those revolutionary times one had to be prepared. Some Chinaman might take it into his head to shout: "Death to the foreign devils!" And out of that wall yonder would boil battle and murder and sudden death. A white man, wandering about the streets of Canton at night, was a challenge to such a catastrophe.

Taber. Ruth stared thoughtfully at the waiting coolies. That did not sound like the name the young man had offered in the tower of the water-clock. She remained by the door until the walls of the city swallowed the bobbing lantern. Then she went into the office.

"What is a sing-song girl?" she asked.

The manager twisted his moustache. "The same as a Japanese geisha girl?"

"And what is a geisha girl?" Not to have heard of the geisha! It was as if she had asked "What is Paris?" What manner of tourist was this who had heard neither of the geisha of Japan nor of the sing-song girl of China? Before he could marshal the necessary phrases to explain, Ruth herself indicated her thought.

"A bad girl?" She put the question as she would have put any question—level-eyed and level-toned.

After a series of mental gymnastics—occupying the space of a few seconds—it came to him with a shock that here was a new specimen of the species. At the same time he comprehended that she was as pure and lovely as the white orchid of Borneo and that she did not carry that ridiculous shield called false modesty. He could talk to her as frankly as he could to a man.

"The geisha and the sing-song girl are professional entertainers. They are not bad girls, but the average tourist has that misconception of them. If some of them are bad in the sense you mean, it is because there are bad folks in all walks of life. They sell only their talents, not their bodies; they are girls of the street."

The phrase was new, but Ruth nodded understandingly.

"Still," went on the manager, "they are slaves in a sense; they

(TO BE CONTINUED)

TODAY

BY ARTHUR BRISBANE

There is nothing like believing that you can win. When Caesar told the frightened boatman that his boat couldn't sink with him, Caesar, in it, when Napoleon really believed that his "star" would take care of him, those famous gentlemen had the best possible start in any fight—self confidence.

McAdoo, hurrying east from Chicago, sticks his head out of the window and says "we can beat 'em anyway."

He looked as confident as Caesar and Napoleon combined when he said it, according to the reporters.

Of course, nothing is quite sure. Unknown Caesars have sunk with the boatman after telling him the boat couldn't sink, and many an unknown Napoleon's "star" has turned out to be only a fire-fly.

However, McAdoo is the leading candidate now. There is no doubt about that. He really expects to win, and that's 40 per cent of winning.

You've heard of England's patriotic exhibition at Wembley planned to boom the British empire and arouse British patriotism.

The best imperial exhibit shows a map of the world of gigantic size, with the oceans, seas and bigger lakes made of real water.

Britishers walking around the map see all parts of the earth's surface owned by them lighted up by red lights from below. They see thousands of British ships moving along through the water on the great world's trade routes. Signs tell them that the British flag flies over one quarter of all the land on earth.

When the visitor from Canada, Australia, South Africa, sees that he says to himself "partnership in the British empire is a pretty good thing."

And other nations including ours are bound to give the Britishers credit for governing ability. You saw the other day a statement by the British labor prime minister, MacDonald, that the whole army of the British empire is smaller than the army of Holland or Spain. That means good management.

The great Everett cotton mills of Lawrence, Mass., have closed. "No demand for colored cotton goods." And England is shipping millions of yards of colored cotton cloth into this country. The stores show that goods sell more easily when labelled "made in England."

The Adventures of Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy

by Johnny Gruelle



Banzan's Magical Hobby Horse carried Raggedy Ann, Raggedy Andy, Bertie Bear away swiftly through the deep, deep woods.

Little Rags puppy dog ran as fast as he could, but he could not keep up with his friends, so he stopped to rest.

When the Magical Hobby Horse threw Banzan the conjurer over his head and the Raggedys and Bertie Bear climbed upon the hobby horse and cried "Run! Run! Magic Hobby Horse!" the conjurer did not know what to do, so he just sat still where he had fallen and scratched his head.

"Now!" he said, "The Raggedys and Bertie Bear have not only escaped, but they have taken my Magic Hobby Horse as well. What shall I do?"

Of course there was no one to answer the conjurer, so he did not know what to do and when he did not know what to do, he helped himself to an ice cream soda from the magic soda water spring.

This made him feel ever so much better and he thought of a scheme to fool the Raggedys while he enjoyed the sodas.

"I will conjure the Hobby Horse over again and make him come back here!" the cunning Banzan said. And he got out every last one of his conjuring charms, even the left leg of a grasshopper which wasn't hardly even a teeny weeny bit magical and soon he made the conjuring magic.

Then when he had finished, he dipped up ten glasses of ice cream soda water and with these in front of him, he waited until the hobby horse should return.

"Ah! Here they come!" Banzan said with a laugh. "And the Raggedys and Bertie Bear will be surprised to find the Magic Hobby Horse has brought them right back here for me to capture them again! My won't they be surprised?"

So, when the magical funny Hobby Horse came up to where the conjurer sat, he did not even look up from his sodas.

"I guess you thought, Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy and Bertie Bear, that you had escaped from me! But I took out my conjuring charms and I made my hobby horse come back here. Now I spect you will not try to escape again! Will you?"

When the Raggedys and Bertie Bear did not reply, the conjurer became very peevish. "You had better hurry and answer me when I speak to you!" the conjurer howled in a very loud voice. "I can easily conjure you, just like I did the Hobby Horse!"

But still Raggedy Andy and Raggedy Ann and Bertie Bear did not answer. "I guess I shall have to get a stick and switch them, so that they will reply when spoken to." When the



The Hobby Horse Dashed Away Through the Woods.

conjurer had cut a long stick he whirled around and struck where he thought the Raggedys and Bertie Bear would be sitting upon the Horse's back. But when the stick struck, the Raggedys were not there and the stick came down with a loud whack upon the Magical Hobby Horse's back.

The Hobby Horse was more surprised than Banzan and kicking up his heels in the air, he dashed away through the woods. "I shall not stay and be switched by Banzan, even if he did make me out of wood and conjure magic in me! I shall run back to Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy and belong to them for Banzan is too mean; while the Raggedys are very, very nice!"

Banzan the conjurer was so surprised when he struck with his stick and hit his magical Hobby Horse he could scarcely believe his eyes.

You see, when he worked his conjuring Magic on the Hobby Horse after the Raggedys and Bertie Bear and little Rags puppy dog had run away with the Hobby Horse, Banzan expected the Raggedys to come back riding upon the Hobby Horse's back. Indeed, this is just what would have happened had it not been for little Rags puppy dog.

When the Raggedys and Bertie Bear jumped upon the Hobby Horse's back and dashed away through the woods, to escape from Banzan, they had not taken little Rags upon the Hobby Horse.

And, as the Hobby Horse was magical and could run very, very fast, little Rags could not keep up with them, so he ran as hard as he could until he became tired, then he sat down and rested.

The Raggedys did not know how to work the magical Hobby Horse so that he would go just wherever they wished, so they had to go wherever the Hobby Horse wished. So when Banzan worked his conjuring magic upon the Hobby Horse to make him return to the magical Soda Water spring, the Hobby Horse turned around as soon as he felt the conjuring magic and ran with the Raggedys and Bertie Bear back the same way he had

come before.

Little Rags had rested by this time and had started to follow the trail of the Hobby Horse and the Raggedys and Bertie Bear.

He had not gone far before he heard the "COMPLY COMPLY" of the wooden feet of the Hobby Horse returning.

"Now I wonder what they are coming back for? Maybe it is because I have been left behind and they are returning to get me!" Still, this did not seem to little Rags to be the case, so he crept behind a stone



He Could Peep Out With One Shoe Button Eye.

at the side of the path where he could peep out with one shoe button eye and watch the Hobby Horse as he came along.

As soon as the Hobby Horse came in sight, little Rags puppy dog knew that the Raggedys had nothing to do with the direction the Hobby Horse ran, for they were crying as loudly as they could, "Stop, Magic Hobby Horse!" but the Hobby Horse did not even slow up a tiny smidgen!

"Ha!" little Rags thought. "I will jump out at the Hobby Horse just as he gets here, so the Raggedys and Bertie Bear can get off!" And just as the Hobby Horse reached the stone, little Rags, with a loud clatter, hopped out from behind the stone right at the Hobby Horse's nose.

This surprised the Hobby Horse so much he stopped and stood upon his hind legs and the Raggedys and Bertie Bear tumbled off behind.

Then little Rags barked at the Hobby Horse's hind legs and away the horse went, without the Raggedys and Bertie Bear.

"My!" the Raggedys and Bertie Bear said as they sat up and brushed the dust from their clothes. "It was a good thing you waited for us, little Rags!" And little Rags was very glad, too, for if it had not been for him, Banzan's magic would have carried them right back to the conjurer and he would have captured them again.

ANCESTORS

"If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."—John 8:39.

It is a curious fact that the people who boast about their ancestry usually do very little of which their own children may be proud.

Plutarch says, "It is indeed a desirable thing to be well descended, but the glory belongs to our ancestors."

A goodly heritage cannot reasonably be counted among our personal virtues.

The only evidence of our being the sons of a worthy father is that we should ourselves do works similar to his.

How futile it is to talk of our honorable ancestors but do nothing to show we have inherited their spirit.

What does it profit you to show a family tree dating from the "Mayflower" if you neglect the Church and leave the government in the hands of the bosses while you amuse yourself with the socially select?

What is the use of tracing your origin to the first families of New Amsterdam unless you stand today in the forefront of the contest for religious liberty and popular education?

First Aid.

From Life. Sportsman—Something ought to be done to conserve our wild life.

Rounder—Repeat the eighteenth amendment.

Just Like White Lies.

From the Sidney Bulletin. "Yes, mister, run's a curse, all right. That's why I drink beer." "Goodness me, my man, beer is also a curse!" "That's right mister. But beer is only a mild sort of curse—like 'goodness me!'"

Another Way to Look at It. From Passing Show. Maude—"What a beautiful gown Helen is wearing. She says it's imported, doesn't she?"

Marie—"Not exactly. It's her last season's dress. He dressmaker has turned it inside out, and now she says it's from the other side."

Unintentionally Right.

From London Tit-Bits. "Mamma," exclaimed Mary, bursting into the room, "they're teaching domestic science at school now."

"You mean domestic science, dear," corrected her mother. "Perhaps," interposed father mildly, "the little darling means what she says."

He Was Just Celebrating.

From the Illinois Central Magazine. An old negro janitor's employer asked him why he was sporting around in his Sunday clothes when it wasn't a holiday.

"Well, you see, boss," he replied, "I'm celebratin' my golden wedding."

"But isn't your wife celebrating it with you?"

"Oh, Mandy? She ain't got nothin' to do with it. She's jes sayin' third wife."