



CHAPTER VII—Continued

Somewhere beyond the bare, dry, sage-tufted basin of the Divide, they came on road construction, the surface leaving no doubt that it was necessary. For five miles they bumped slowly on into harder going—so slowly at last that the magpies at a dead coyote, limply huddled against some white thistle poppies beside the road, didn't start up until the car bounced out of a hole abreast of them. "D—n, this is awful," said Hal. Kerrigan said, "Stop at that car up there, and I'll ask the fella what they've got that's better."

The fella said there were eight more miles of this, and after that a good deal more, but there was a side road half a mile west there, and if you turned south on that and kept bearing west you couldn't lose the way and you'd come into the route again after the worst was over. So they turned off in half a mile, lumbered across a rocky ditch that scraped Rasputin's undersides: but there were the dust tracks of other cars ahead and the going was much better. Then Hal drove smartly around a twist onto an outcrop of jagged rock in the middle of the road: there was a bump, a crack, and a ripping sound underneath, and with a lifeless sigh Rasputin rolled to a sedate, silent stop.

"Waterloo! Waterloo! Waterloo! More plaine!" said Kerrigan. "Here's a stichation."

"What's the matter?" Pulsipher asked, leaning forward.

"I think there may be something wrong with the car," said Kerrigan. "Oh," said John.

As Hal got out, he said to Kerrigan, "How far'd you make it we've come from the highway?"

"Bout five miles," said Kerrigan. "But it didn't look like the Pennsylvania station there either, as I recall."

"No," said Hal glumly. He squatted down in the road to look under the car and saw a jagged plate of tin hanging ominously, under the front seat. "Lord!" he murmured and straightened to look back along the road. There lay the battery, in two pieces, near the torn remains of the tin box that had held it up. He walked back to it: it was efficiently wrecked, the bitter water already drunk down by the ground and the plates stuck over with grit. Hal nudged a piece of tin with his toe when Kerrigan and Crack came up, saying: "Look at the flimsy thing. Should've noticed that in Detroit, I s'pose. D—n it all, anyway."

"It's a wonder that we're alive," said Kerrigan, dropping the dead cigarette end from his lips as he raised a fresh one. "So what?"

"You hold the fort here; I'll go back to the highway and get a lift into a town and come out with another battery as soon as I can get it."

Crack made a sudden little sound, his eyes stirred by uncertain hope, and he said, "I'll go. Let me go."

Hal looked at him quickly, for a hint of his motive. That it was not merely to be of service he felt certain; yet Crack couldn't be afraid to stay out here. Hal was about to give his offer curt dismissal when Kerrigan said, "Sure, let him go."

An authority in Kerrigan's voice subdued Hal's feeling he should do it himself, left him open to the thought of an hour or two with Barry, Crack and his covert knowledge, his indolent curiosity, removed. They had the fella's bag and his fare; and . . .

"All right," said Hal, "if you won't start telegraphing and waiting for answers again. Now, look." He made notes of what he wanted on the back of an envelope of Kerrigan's, explaining each item carefully to Crack. "Got money?"

Crack smiled as if Hal's care amused him, and he said, "Yeah—more'n fifty dollars."

"Right," said Hal. "Keep track of what you spend; and make it fast as you can."

"Sure," said Crack amiably. He seemed for a moment to speculate on what Hal might be thinking of him. Then, moderately embarrassed, he said, "Well—so long"; and he started back along the dusty road, his narrow, graceless figure, incongruous and small against the enormous panorama beyond him.

After a silent moment of watching him, Hal said in rueful quiet, "I don't know why we let him do it."

"He'll be all right," said Kerrigan. "Can't say I love him like a brother, but he'll be all right."

"Why, d—n him," said Hal suddenly, "it was this morning—in Cheyenne—he asked if everything was all right so that we wouldn't get stuck."

"He's a right queer little man,"

said Kerrigan, still curiously watching him go. "Ever notice the tops of his ears?"

"What is it that's odd about his ears?" said Hal, half turning back to the car, then glancing round again.

"They look as if they were trying to come to a point," said Kerrigan. "I've seen only two or three pairs like 'em. And always on secret little men."

Mrs. Pulsipher sat there, neither grim nor martyred, but as if nervously on the lookout for a chance of placating some one. Hal smiled in at Sister Anastasia and told her, "We'll still be there day after tomorrow," but it seemed like a reckless statement. The nun's modest eyes showed him thanks and belief; her hand moved up from where, beside her, it had been in Barry's. And Barry's look at him was one of tender confederacy in sparing Sister Anastasia her reticent concern.

Then Hal explained the situation briefly and sat down on the running board to smoke a cigarette.

All around here was space and stillness, with the dry radiance of the lowering sun hot upon it. As far as you could see, nothing stirred; for miles and miles away nothing made a sound.

"What's it liable to do out here at night?" said Hal. "Rain? Get cold?"

"Might get a little cooler," said Kerrigan, "but 'twon't rain. Be a fine night."

"We seem to be assuming we'll be here into the night," said Hal. "How about bears and tigers?"

"Not many," said Kerrigan. Hal looked at him and found his heavy face grave and respectful.

"What's up?"

"I'm sorry you've got things on your mind," Kerrigan said quietly. Hal took a long breath and smiled at him. "I s'pose that's one thing a mind's for," he said. Then: "I sort of thought I wasn't keeping it from you. And that helps, too. Colonel, I want to ask you about something later—later, when—if you'll let me."

Kerrigan's heavy, somehow graceful hand patted Hal's leg; he glanced off at the layered rampart of rock beyond the tiny railroad line, then down between his knees. "You keep after her," he said. "She's worth plenty. And if you want to talk, here I am."

The door on the other side of the car slammed and Barry, with Doc eagerly beside her, came round to them, watching them as if they were a pair of amusing children when they rose before her.

"Come on," she said. "Let's stretch our legs. Let's see Wyoming."

"Lady, have you ever had a good look at my legs?" Kerrigan asked, as a question of grave scholarship. "No, of course not; I beg pardon. The point is they're past stretching. Take my young friend Ireland with you, but let me have him back in good condition. And mind your pup; coyotes'll lead a dog till he's tired and then turn on him."

"I wish you'd come," said Barry. "I wish I would," said Kerrigan, "but I won't. I'll sit here thinking of old, old brandy, and I'll be younger when you come back. Be off. If you run into Hostyles, send me a line by one of 'em and I'll be at your side in a twinkling—say, an hour and a half."

At the top of a little ridge to the westward, from which they could look down the road where Rasputin waited, and see across to the mountain range behind which the sun would set, they slowed their pace and stopped.

"That's not a long walk," said Barry.

"Long enough," said Hal. "Rattlesnakes."

"Oh, gosh! not really?" said Barry, moving to him.

He watched her without stirring his arms, smiling a little at her and to himself. "No," he said, "I just wanted you to come where I could touch you and then show you I

wouldn't. I'm proud of keeping my promise; you must ask me why I'm so strong."

There was a memory of solemn alarm under her smile. "Why are you?" she said dutifully. She sat down facing the west, her legs doubled and one firm shoulder hunched where she leaned against her arm.

"Because," he said, stretching himself before her, "because you've drawn your loveliness up into a kind of royalty that makes you more beautiful than I thought even you could be. Because you have a pride and purity in your eyes that goes as far above the world as that peace that makes Sister Anastasia beautiful. And yet your bravery is warm and living; you don't turn your back on the most implacable thing I've known in life—my fantastic desires for you, for the beauty behind your eyes, for the beauty—"

She turned from her lonely looking into the west, glanced from his mouth to his eyes with that awed, still consternation, and said, "Hal, that's not—darling, we'll have to go back."

"And because," Hal went on, "tomorrow nothing you can put against me can stop me—nothing. There, I've finished. And you can watch the strength and implacability coming into me with every minute of my promise."

"Hal," she said hopelessly, stripping her hat from the golden luxuriance that ran simply back from the round of her forehead. She faced the west again and watched it, trying its farthest distance with the sorrow of her eyes. Then she turned to him and said artlessly, "What about your socks?"

"Socks?" said Hal, his look laughing as he glanced at them. "What about them?"

"I've got things to wash out—tonight, or whenever we get anywhere," she said. "If you've got any things, I can do them, too."

"You're certainly not going to wash my socks," said Hal.

She seemed to straighten a little in defense as she said, "And why not?"

"Why, d—n it all, because—"

"If you were ill," Barry interrupted, "would you let anybody else take care of you if I could? I wouldn't shine your shoes, because you're plenty strong enough to do it for yourself; but for the love of Mike why shouldn't I do washing for you if you've got things that need it? Is it beneath me, or something? Would you shine my shoes if I asked you to?"

"Of course."

"Well, then. Perhaps you didn't know you wear woolen socks, and woolen socks shrink if they're not carefully done."

"I didn't know that," said Hal. "Tell me more."

"I'd tell you lots more," said Barry, "if you'd try to see my meaning, and remember it."

"Barry, d'you think I forget anything you say—anything, even the first word you said to me, years ago, when you used to make me mad?"

"Well, what did I say to you first?" said Barry, challenge cheering her eyes.

"You said—We were standing in that place, wherever it was—you know—that place, and you said—No, signals off. We were in the car and you said it wasn't my cigarette that burned your coat."

Barry chuckled at him, slowly and huskily, with her head a little back and her firm, white throat full. "Close, Mr. Ireland, close. I'm glad you being made mad by me and love it. And now—" she said, her voice touching the edge of sorrow, then ending it in a little sigh: "now I'm asking you to let me wash your socks."

Hal and Barry had risen to watch the silent glory of the colors—she with her back against him and her hands clasped over his, the slow rhythm of her breathing under his touch.

She took a faltering breath and let it go reluctantly; and Hal, his mouth near the faintly fragrant thicket of half-curls, whispered "What?"

She turned her head to look at his lips, then up at his eyes, her looking intimate, expectant; then she stood away from him and returned to the fading colors of the western sky. "Beauty—" she said; "beauty to last forever, in a few minutes."

He pressed her hand before he let it go, watching her. "I s'pose while we can find the way we'd better go back," he said. "Some day, we'll never go back."

With a limber bending of her body, she picked up her hat, and it swung between them in her hand as they started down.

It wasn't cool, but Kerrigan was

arranging brush and a few desiccated fence posts for a fire when they came to the car.

"Hi there," he said comfortably, as if they had kept house together for a long time. "Got the sun put away all right?"

"Yes," said Hal. "Very prettily, too. What's the fire for? Goin' to have a blizzard?"

"No," said Kerrigan. "Just like to attract attention."

"Haven't seen any to attract," said Hal. "But you know your publicity out here better than I do."

There was a pleasant murmur of welcome as Barry got into the car where the others still waited. Hal, with a strange, assured feeling of peace upon him, looked up at the first clear-riding stars and breathed his chest slowly full.

"Lord, it's good," he said to Kerrigan. "You should've told me I'd like Wyoming."

With the star-scattered night complete and the fire going, they made a thin supper from Mrs. Pulsipher's oranges, the popcorn which she ordered John to uncacha, and some agglomerated fruit-drops from a bag in Kerrigan's pocket. And each time John, after a silence, wondered where that Mr. Crack was. Hal felt the peace upon his blood freshly—a peace assured of strength, of Barry's nearness, and of his final coming to her—after the term of his promise.

Those in the car got out to stretch and stroll briefly and look up into the night; and past ten, when John gave a yawn that echoed in the shameless cavern of his mouth, Mrs. Pulsipher suggested sleep. She and Sister Anastasia disposed themselves in the back seat, while John cramped his gaunt lankness in the front and Barry, Hal, and Kerrigan sat along the running board, watching the fire and talking.

"Listen," said Barry suddenly, interrupting her own speech. Doc



raised his head for a grunt, sniffing. "There comes somebody."

"It is somebody," Kerrigan muttered in a moment, looking at his watch. "He's been long enough. It's eleven."

Impulsively Hal said, "It's not Crack," and wondered why he was so coolly sure.

Barry looked around at him slowly, solemnly. "How'd you know?" she said.

Hal moved a little inside his clothes. "Doesn't feel like him," he said. He gave a short, uneasy laugh of deprecation.

The footfalls—made by heavy, stiff-soled shoes—brought their slovenly beat nearer and stopped. Hal got up and walked around the car.

"Evening," he called into the dark. "Evenin', evenin'," came a cracked voice after an interval. "You the folks got the fire? I see it from a way back and come to see what was goin' on."

He clumped up to the fire—a tall, ratty man, no hat on his tangled hair, shirt dirtily open at his throat, blue-jeans cut off about three inches above the tops of his veteran cowboots. His grinning lips were stained at the corners and his bright, empty eyes watched the fire, not any of the three who were near to it.

"You folks stranded, 'ey?" he said cheerily in a minute.

"Looks it," said Kerrigan. "Didn't see a fella go out to the highway and get a lift into town, did you?" Hal said. "Late this afternoon?"

"No," said the man. "Last week I seen a feller get a lift out on the road. Goin' west, he was. But I mind these other folks was stranded there—over 'other side. I come on one of 'em drinkin' water out of a little crick we got. I says to him, 'How's it taste?' an' he says 'Good,' an' I says, 'That's good, I'm glad t'know an' he says, 'Why?' an' I told him why. He laughed silently without looking at any of them."

"Why?" said Barry in calm interest.

"'Cause I found one o' my sheep lyin' drowned t'other up the crick where he was drinkin', an' I wanted t'know how it tasted."

"Did you tell him that?" said Kerrigan.

"I told him," said the man. "He didn't like it."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

"QUOTES"

COMMENTS ON CURRENT TOPICS BY NATIONAL CHARACTERS

PREVENTION OF WAR

By SIR NORMAN ANGELL, English Publicist and Author.

THE public mind can easily be persuaded to adopt policies which mean war. The pre-war method of defense is a fruitful cause of conflict. The method consists in each state attempting to be stronger than any other state challenging its interests.

The only way out is for the community of states to create common protection. The public thinks falsely that armies and navies have the same function as police, whereas the imposition of certain views upon any challenger.

Defense of the individual, whether a person or a state, must be the affair of the community. This principle gains force from the fact that the defense of wealth in the modern world does not mean the defense of goods, as goods must change hands to create wealth.

RADIO TALKS

By JOSIAH Q. WALCOTT, Chancellor, State of Delaware.

THE grimmest irony in all the radio programs that come over the air is found in that type of program where two college professors, who are not really in disagreement, debate with each other according to a prepared manuscript the merits of a certain theory of money or the wisdom and workability of some far-reaching scheme of social reform—all to the end that the people, the butchers, the bakers and the candlestick makers, may be equipped to form an intelligent judgment on the intricate subject and thereafter compel their representatives to act accordingly, when as a matter of fact two other professors of equal standing and worth could be picked up from almost any institution of learning to demonstrate with a positiveness equally pontifical that the first two are entirely wrong.

CONSTITUTION MAN-MADE

By R. WALTON MOORE, Assistant Secretary of State.

WHAT, if anything, is to transpire in the way of constitutional modification is unpredictable. It is not practicable to maintain for all time any provisions of a Constitution that may disable representative democratic government from functioning so as to take care of new and growing popular needs and demands.

Washington clearly indicated in his farewell address that he looked on the Constitution as an experiment, and added that if, in the opinion of the people, the distribution of constitutional power should be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by amendment in the way in which the Constitution designates.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

By OWEN D. YOUNG, Chairman General Electric Company.

THE public service companies have extended their lines far into rural areas, as far as it was economically justifiable to go. I welcome the activities of the government in extending rural service into uneconomic fields if the social advantages of doing so justify the government entering into such fields at all.

Now that housing is a new art, as new and different from the old as the motor car from the carriage, I hope that the young and productive brains of America may now devote themselves to the home and by its ratio of improvement bring it in step with the vast advances we have made in other fields.

RAILWAY IMPROVEMENT

By COL. WILLIAM J. WILGUS, Engineer and Author.

THERE are several things the railways must do. Deadwood must be cleared away in a ruthless manner. Unnecessary sidelines and superfluous mainlines must be cleared away.

The railways must abandon obsolete things to which they have been accustomed for 100 years. They must ruthlessly cut away outmoded railway equipment.

They must amalgamate their terminals to cut expenses. There must be groupings of railways and combinations of railways instead of fighting.

ANGLO-AMERICAN AMITY

By ANTHONY EDEN, Lord Privy Seal of Britain.

FRIENDSHIP with the United States is of the first importance. It exists today, and it will grow; and everything that we can do to promote that friendship will be readily and eagerly done.

There is nothing incompatible between friendship with the United States and membership in the League of Nations. It is not we or the League of Nations or any government that has tied us up with Europe. Geography has done that.

WNLS Service.

More Discussion as to New World's Discovery

In spite of the tribute paid Columbus and the recognition given Lief Ericsson, the Norseman, for his earlier landing on the shores of America there is still considerable uncertainty as to who was actually the first discoverer of the New World. Archeologists take us back an indeterminate number of years to what they consider the first discovery when hordes came to our continent from Asia, crossing the Bering straits from Siberia to Alaska and then making their way south. Others picture some of the tribes crossing over from Asia in boats and settling in America with still a few coming by way of Alaska. Evidence indicates that the Maya civilization in Central America had reached a high state shortly after the death of Christ. This would mean that the first boats landed on our shores at a very early date, or the great migration through Alaska started ages ago.

But dropping the consideration of the first coming of man because of its apparent remoteness there is still evidence that Columbus was at least as far down as third on the list of early comers to America. Even before Lief Ericsson and his band of rovers were blown upon the shores of the New World Irish wanderers may have landed here. The most pointed evidence is the existence on old Irish maps of an island called Brazil, located about where Newfoundland now appears on modern

maps. An even weightier fact in connection with this implied discovery of America is the fact that on these old maps the outlines of the island are strikingly similar to the land surrounding the Gulf of St. Lawrence. John Cabot had one of these ancient maps and was searching for "Brazil" when he found North America.

Then, too, there is the Irish legend of the old saint who sailed to the far-off land where he was greeted by a strange figure with his body all decorated with feathers. There are also other facts which would support the theory of an Irish discovery. When the Norsemen first arrived at Iceland in 870 they found that the island had been occupied by Irish Christians for nearly a century. The nearness of Iceland to Greenland and its nearness to the New World makes it seem entirely possible that the Irish might have visited America at an early date.

Then, too, there is the possibility that some of the Irish boats might have been blown from their courses onto American shores while going to and from Iceland as was Lief Ericsson's. The Irish of ancient times were sea rovers as were the Norsemen of a little later period.—Pathfinder.

BLIND HUSBANDS IN COLONY

A two-hour journey from Belgrade reveals one of the strangest villages in the world, where all the husbands are blind and the work of the colony is directed by the wives who see.

The town of Vetrenik is the first blind war veterans' colony in Yugoslavia, the first in a program of land settlements for the blind undertaken by the government.

The government institute for the blind has arranged many marriages for unmarried blind veterans and aids the couples in the settlement at Vetrenik. The men are employed in useful crafts and the household work and operation of the colony are managed by the wives.

Venom for Rheumatism

An old-fashioned cure for rheumatism and arthritis was to allow the patient to be stung by bees. The same principle has now been adapted scientifically. In a German factory scores of girls, protected by masks and overalls, are employed in the work of squeezing the venom from the stingers of live bees.

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