

The World Outside

(Continued From Page Three.)

By Harold MacGrath

ing to know this for a certainty, though the wanting had no defined reason for being. Perhaps, in his first romantic contact with the female of the species, he dreaded disillusion.

His door! Lucky for her, for she would have received scant attention elsewhere, coming out of the night as she had and at that hour. Comely, even in her dragged condition, with a smile as compelling as sunshine. Was there really a dog? He would never know, of course; but that did not lessen the wanting. To begin the new day, to enter the new world, with a substantial faith in woman-kind; perhaps that is what he really wanted.

That he should, being only half awake, begin the day by questioning motives would be due to the insidious poison by which he had been inoculated by the prior visitor—the seller of adventures. The man had stirred numerous doubts, as to the honesty of his errand, as to his identity, his actual though hidden intentions; and as these doubts were still active, the girl naturally fell under the shadow of them.

Why should the girl lie or invent tales, Bancroft argued in her behalf? Why should she tell him there was a dog if there wasn't? He hadn't quizzed her; she had been under no obligation to recount any of her adventures or to offer explanations. Her declarations had been gratuitous. Therefore there was a dog, and she had gone home to him under extreme difficulties, and that was all there was to that. Just the sort of a girl to chase around the world, even in nightmares.

He rued his punctilious regard for the rules of convention, expected for no other reason than to impress the girl with the fact that he knew how to behave. As if a country bumpkin should know what was what in the world of manners! Why hadn't he boldly given his name and asked for hers? She would be in New York, whither he was bound, but he would have as much chance of finding her as he would in particularizing one grain of sand from another on a vast beach.

That man, though! Bancroft stared at the hills, his brow furrowed. He could not dismiss the notion that the whole affair cloaked entirely another game and that he had been subtly invited to search for it. Hence, the sinister suggestion that had entered his mind the night before and now recurred. No doubt Snell's letter had furnished the background.

Battle, murder and sudden death—for sale! That was the flaw; it was almost a covert threat. . . . O, pshaw! the whole thing was ridiculous rubbish without ulterior purpose. Perhaps the puzzle—the assumption that there was a "nigger in the woodpile"—arose from the puerility of the scheme and the formidable intellect of the promoter. An ordinary man, promoting such a crazy proposition, would not have been a puzzle, but a joke.

The man's laughter—the hollowness of it and the shading mockery—was in itself something to speculate upon. Had he ever known Silas Bancroft? There seemed to be only one way of solving the riddle, and that was to sign the contract, if there was such an instrument. It was no fool's curiosity. If Silas Bancroft had been shocked to death his son wanted to know why and by whom.

First, he would call on Lawyer Snell and get all the business details off the slate; then he would quiz the head clerk, Johnson, as to that gentleman's suspicions that Silas Bancroft had been scared to death. After this he would be free to go where and act how he pleased. Under an assumed name he would find lodgings in some modest rooming house—preferably one of his own—and then he would fare forth in quest of knowledge, for he wanted to learn something about the life of the great city before he essayed to match lances with the Great Adventure company.

Seven millions!—and what was he going to do with it all? There was no inclination toward clothes and jewelry, expensive automobiles, a New York house with servants. What was to be done to keep the income normal? That was the Old Man of the Sea. Certainly he lacked the miser taint, for there was no desire to add to the fortune or to husband it. What he wanted particularly was a creditable way of getting rid of some of it. Disillusion was out of the question, for he had no provocation. There was to be sure, the chorus girl. From accounts he had read in newspapers regarding these pretty little spendthrifts, he was now assured that Maloch's reputation was a blasted thing in comparative appetites. They worked so swiftly that it was possible for a man to be

ruined and virtuous at the same time. Odd, that there should be so many volumes on how to make money (always a failure) and none on how to spend it (which would naturally be a success). This conceit made him chuckle.

His father came back into his thoughts. The more he mulled it over the more decided he became that the question of his father being a miser seemed open to debate. No one in the village was able to cite definitely a case in point. Perhaps it was because his father had never bothered to refute the allegation, preferring aloofness to defense. Still, there was the miser's son, himself, his cheap clothes, his empty pockets. But this argument was weakened by the knowledge that there were many farmers' sons hereabouts no better off than he, or whose youth had matched his in poverty strickenness. Yet, that did not seem to hold. The farmers were poor beyond any doubt, while rumor contended that his father was secretly a rich man. It was probably upon this premise that the villagers had built up the father's reputation. There was a misapprehension in all these years of neglect.

It seemed queer that all his thoughts this morning should be inconclusive. Whichever way they ran they encountered walls. His father, the girl, the seller of adventures, his own problem, all were on the other side of mysterious walls.

The vista caught his eyes again, and he stared for some time at the hill top, and presently the vista dissolved and out of this dissolution came the face of the girl at the moment of her smile. Nothing could be more honest than that smile; he did not require experience to discern this; it was palpable. But so had the smile of the adventurer been honest—the tender smile he had addressed to one of those old chairs. More walls. Bancroft rumbled his hair in perplexity.

Love. Well, he hadn't given that much actual contemplation. He had never gone to church socials or barn dances, knowing that he would have been unwelcome; and it was at these festivities that boys and girls began to pick and choose. He had been an outsider, living under the somber aegis of the miser. On the other hand, he could not recall that he had grieved particularly. The village Phebes and Alices, with their incessant giggles and cheap perfumery, had amused him. He had his revenge by comparing them with those radiant creations, urban and bucolic, of the great minds that had been his comrades. He sometimes worried a little for fear that his imagination, setting his dream too high, might allow the real girl to pass him without his being any the wiser.

Supposing he wasn't Silas Bancroft's son? The question, coming like a bolt from the blue, had the effect of bludgeoning his faculties. For a moment he stood dazed. What agency had permitted such a question to disrupt his sentimental musings? Not Silas Bancroft's son? Surely his mind was full of unaccountable kinks this morning.

He heard voices below and lent an ear.

"And nobody ever dreamt of it!"

"No more did I."

"What's he going to do with it?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Mrs. Linden," answered the voice of Mrs. Horne.

So Williams had spread the news as quickly as this? Bancroft shrugged. It had to be known; so it didn't matter. All the girls would be making eyes at him now; and those who had prophesied his eventual hanging would refer to him as "that fine young chap Bancroft. Not a horse trough!"

"I suppose he'll go to New York where he can spend it," said Mrs. Linden, bitterly.

"He will," replied Bancroft, sotto voice; "and this very night!"

"Automobiles and moving picture actresses, and all that. He ain't so innocent. Or he'll go on gouging folks the way his father did."

"What he does with his money is his own business."

"Did you know that there was a young woman here last night and that he went with her over to the Central?"

"Yes, and I gave the poor young thing a pair of stockings and my best shoes."

"O! A pause. "What did he leave you?"

"Nothing."

"What—after all your years of faithful service? Well, I never heard."

"I was regularly paid. But how did you find out there was millions?"

"Why, he told Williams last night. Seven millions! And the good Lord knows how much blood

is on that money. Millions, and he never gave a cent to this town, where both his wife and son were born. He didn't even cancel the mortgage on the First Presbyterian church. O, I know where he is this minute."

"I wouldn't slander the dead, Mrs. Linden. You all ought to be satisfied with the way you treated him when he was alive. There—my coffee's boiling over. I can smell it. You'll have to excuse me."

Silence followed. Bancroft peered from behind his curtain. He saw Mrs. Linden—something of a grenadier—marching stonily down the path to the gate. He blew a mocking kiss after her; for this conversation had suggested a fine idea.

He went into the bathroom and filled the tub, which was of battered zinc, walled in with cherry. He shaved first, then took to the tub, speaking noisily. Busy-body Linden, eh? And she would spread her news that there had been no legacy for Mrs. Horne—Aunty, as he familiarly and lovingly called her. His father's title would now be riven with spikes; eternally he would be in this town the miser.

He was hungry when he entered the dining room. "Chow, Aunty!" he called. "Chow!"

She came in with platters in both hands, one heaped with smoking golden brown pancakes and the other sizzling with bacon and fried eggs. He fell to, healthily. Mrs. Horne hovered about him. He jeered with her between bites, but when he had drunk his second cup of coffee his face became serious.

"Aunty, am I really Silas Bancroft's son?"

"What? Land o' Goshen, Jerry boy, whatever put that into your head? What makes you think you mightn't be?" curiously.

"O, I don't know. Popped into my head. It seems to me a real father would have left some advice with all this money, considering that until recently I never saw a hundred dollars in a lump sum."

"Jerry, I was present when your father and mother were married. I was with your mother when you came—and when she died a week later."

"Maybe he hated me for having caused her death?"

"No, he never spoke a harsh word to you, boy, or ever laid a heavy hand on you. You wasn't ever whipped. But that was because you was a good boy. They went to New York, but came back when she was took ill. This was her house. He went back to New York and left you with me. He got pneumonia and was in a hospital for weeks. When he finally came back he told me he was going to live here. But, O, how changed he was!"

"Then he was different once?"

"He was something like you, Jerry, energetic. But after he came back he didn't seem to take any interest in anything but money—money. He moved about, like he wasn't sure, and spoke little. But now I know it was his heart. If I was you, Jerry boy, I'd go away from this mean town and never come back. O, I know. They'll be after you, trying to kiss your boots—them as yanked their daughters inside the gates when they saw you and wouldn't let their boys play with you. Yes, sir; that's what I'd do if I was you."

The identical advice offered by the adventurer, but that was all. The two impulses were totally different.

"I am going to New York, aunty, this very night. I'll be gone several months. I want you to keep the house for me. I'll write you from time to time, but nobody must know where I am. You see, that chap last night was the beginning. The door is going to be hammered loose by men and women who'll have schemes—a thousand of them—by which they hope to transfer some of my shekels to other pockets. Tell them I've gone away and will not return under six months."

"Take care o' yourself. New York is a dreadful city—and you like Red Ridinghood!"

"That's pretty good, aunty. But I'll fight shy of wolves who-pretend to be my grandmothers. I sha'n't go to New York with any illusions about it. I'm not going in search of fortune; I have one. But I've got to leave this town for awhile. So why not to the big city, and get my education over with? I have brains; I want to find out how to use them."

Mrs. Horne retired precipitately to the kitchen to have a good cry. For this boy was as her own. She had taught his prayers. And now his innocence and all this money might combine to destroy him. When she came in to clear the table she found him still in his

chair, figuring on the back of an envelope.

"Why, what's the matter?" he wanted to know, observing the redness of her eyes.

"I'm afraid!"

He jumped up and put his arm around her. "Don't worry about me, Aunty. I'm a country bumpkin, but not the kind New Yorkers ever saw before. My middle name, as the boys used to say at camp, is Caution instead of Jerry; and nobody will know who Jeremiah Collingswood is."

"The money'll never make you happy."

"Perhaps not. I didn't ask for it; but now I have it, I'll do the best I can with it. I'll write once in awhile, and you can reply in care of the attorneys, whose address I will give you before I go."

Then he kissed her cheek.

He stole away at sundown and took the 6:30 for New York. His only piece of luggage was a cane suitcase with a battered lock. In order to keep the case from falling open he had had to bind it with a length of clothes-line. He wore a suit of village store clothes and a shocking derby hat. It was all deliberately planned. Either his education was lumber, or it was his ready servant. It was to be a test of his courage and resource; a test of the readiness of his tongue to speech. Here on this train and on the streets of the city he would not be particularly noticed; but at the desk of some famous hotel, if he passed this ordeal, if he put through his little comedy, New York would hold no terrors for him.

Once the train had reached its maximum speed, he began to examine the typewritten sheets which enumerated his worldly possessions. There were thousands upon thousands in the banks; there were all manner of gilt-edged bonds and stocks; ships, houses, apartments and tenements. There was here none of those lordly edifices rich men erect as monuments to themselves. All the real estate, with one exception, lay below Twenty-third street—pickups after old families had petered out, gold mines in brick and brownstone.

"Ah!" he said aloud. Here was the item for which he was searching.

The First Presbyterian church, mortgage for \$6,200, interest payable annually. What should he do with it? He stared out of the window into the falling night. All at once he began to laugh, a joyous, rollicking laughter. What a revenge—a completely satisfying revenge! Very good. He would cancel this mortgage upon one condition, that he should be permitted to furnish at his own expense a memorial window dedicated to his father. If that didn't stir them, Gabriel's trumpet wouldn't! He would submit the proposition in person. He wouldn't miss seeing the vestrymen's faces for half his fortune. Oh, he knew. They would writhle and twist, hem and haw—and agree. But there should be no loophole. It was to be agreed also that if the window were broken, he could have the right to present another, and so on, so long as he lived and the church stood—the church his father had been married in and buried from.

His laughter roused the young man in the seat behind. The stranger smiled. It was not at any thought, but at a picture; the clothes line around the suitcase, the cheap, ill-fitting clothes, the derby which recalled the headgear of Joe Weber when old Broadway was somewhere. A boob, pure and simple, heading into the big town, with seven millions in his jeans! The move had been so quick that he hadn't had time to wire the professor. O, well; he would call him up as soon as Mr. Hick tied himself up for the night. He would probably hunt up some \$2 caravansarie. All right. Wherever he went, a certain guy known as The Shadow, would toddle along after. Taxis, surface cars, subways, or on the hoof, it was all the same. The Shadow would never lose sight of The Substance.

Bancroft became inordinately elated. The possibility of avenging himself, without hurt to any one, was the most satisfying emotion he had yet known. Miser's son! Miser's son! Yah! To avenge himself for that, for the years of callous isolation and in such a manner as to make all the neighboring towns sick with laughter! The ironic humor of the memorial window would become a county classic.

But he had another blow in store. The memorial would charin the villagers, but this second blow would stun them. He had in the home town three friends, no more; Mrs. Horne, Professor Miller, principal of the village academy, and Miss Hewitt, the faded spinster who played the

organ in the First Presbyterian church. For several years he had pumped the bellows of that organ; and after rehearsals, Saturday nights, she had used to play for him, compositions not generally heard inside of country churches; filling his boy's soul with celestial happiness. Out of kindness for a forlorn parish, who was guilty of no crime save that of being the son of Silas Bancroft.

Not in his will, but now! When they were growing old and bent and helpless, when a spell of sickness would rob them of all they had saved up, if they had saved up anything. Now, while they could enjoy it. To make these three happy who had tried to lighten a sensitive boy's misery. Not to add, the enduring happiness of a generous act. Tomorrow, one of the first things he did. It would serve as an eternal buckler against all future misfortunes. Out of these millions, more or less lawfully acquired, should come happiness to three lonely human beings. He would give each a check, certified, for \$50,000.

The thought lightened his step as he wandered through the mazes of the Grand Central terminal. Outside, at the curb, he paused, his eyes and ears bewildered. It was the first time he had ever seen New York at night, during the theater hour. Thousands of vehicles twisting in and out, surface cars clanging a passage through the streams of hurrying humans, dazzling, changing lights. His brain was prepared; he had often visited New York. London, Paris but for all that, the actual fairly stunned him; there was a glory to it and a menace.

Here was this world outside he had always longed so keenly to see. Here he would be shunted and buffeted for months, because he had determined to play the part of a poor young man who had come to seek his fortune and become a part of the world Shakespeare called "the middle of humanity." In a few days his brain would absorb all these sights and sort out the confusions, and he would grow used to the city. But just now he was a little afraid. One thing was in his favor, a kind of buckler; he had always been lonely, so loneliness here would not depress him any more than it had at home, if as much.

Across the way was a giant hostelry, brilliant with lamps. Bancroft eyed this with humorous speculation. That vast rookery had many a queer nest in it; there would be the crow, the peacock, the sparrow and the hawk; and somewhere a bird by the name of George Bellman. Supposing he put up there for the night and get the lay of the land? Providing he could pass the censor at the desk. If they balked at his suitcase and his derby there was always Aladdin's lamp in his pocket—\$10,000. Comforting thought!

Behind him stood The Shadow, smiling tolerantly. The poor boob didn't know what to do, eh, or which way to turn? It was a great temptation to offer the hick some friendly advice, but the professor had banned any such Samaritanism.

Seeing an opening, Bancroft strode forward resolutely. The Shadow at his shoulder, ready to give him a friendly shove if he hesitated. The worst thing that could happen to the Great Adventure company would be the accidental bumping off of Collingswood Jeremiah Bancroft. Lord, what a monicker! Sounded like one of those ooily-gooofs that get into the Sunday supplements for nothing. And Jeremiah his middle name, too! The passage was made in safety, however. But as Bancroft started to mount the hotel steps, The Shadow slipped his hand to his forehead.

"Holy smoke! I'll have to witness this, whether he pipes me or not. They'll give him the air with a springboard. O, the poor hick!"

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(To Be Continued.)

Bank messengers in Wall street will be dressed in bright red coats, and have portable safes attached to padded belts around their waists. Under this system, it is believed the public will rush to the rescue of any red-coated messenger attacked by robbers.

A \$3,000,000 temple is to be erected in Ste. Anne de Beauspre, Quebec, to replace the one destroyed. A monastery costing \$500,000 will also be built for the Redemptorist fathers.

Ferry metal is a new alloy of lead, calcium, barium, and small amounts of other constituents. The alloy is practically unoxidizable.

The United States consumes two-thirds of the world's rubber production.