

The Adventurers

By H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON

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"You're wanted here," said Montgomery. "I know the way." And ere I could speak or interfere he sprang away and was on the ladder leading to the southern battlements.

"Come back! Come back!" I called under my breath.

"Ned, Ned! Don't spoil his chances," whispered Sheppard, and we watched his big body vanishing in silence.

"That boy is going to his death," he murmured. "I hope you'll trust him now."

"Oh, hang your sentiment!" I answered uneasily.

"I think we'd better go back," he said after a pause, and we returned to Williams. The man stood like a rock, his eyes riveted eagerly upon the dark figures of our antagonists. "Shall I fire?" said he in his high Welsh voice.

"No," said I. "Hold yourself together and fire if I tell you. We shall have blood on our hands soon enough."

There followed another space of silence, broken only by the interjected voices below murmuring in conference. For my own part I was taken up with Montgomery and his hazardous venture. I blamed myself for not stopping him at any cost, and in my mind's eye I followed him in his perilous ascent. It was still too dark to watch his progress, for the drum tower was as yet shrouded in vagueness, and no sound greeted us from the stillness of the breaking dawn. I think some five minutes passed in this dreadful stage of anxiety, and then I observed a movement among the men below. Evidently they had concerted some plan, and we were to resist a fresh attack. Just at this point, and when our thoughts had been necessarily called off to Montgomery and were directed to the new development, there arose a loud whooping on the battlements, and a tall black body ran in the rear of the stormers and fell upon them. I saw in the gray light something as a fall rise and fall, and I heard the astonished cries of the enemy.

"Down! Down! Follow me!" I said sharply, and scrambling by the stairway, flew out upon the battlements, with Sheppard and Williams at my heels. I had only my revolver for the attack, but I used the heavy butt freely, and cries and curses arose from the pack of Greeks. They scattered like a flight of sparrows, and Montgomery almost fell into my arms in the ardor of his onset. Then we pursued, and as they ran I fired some barrels of my revolver in the air. The alarm increased their panic, and turning the corner, they flung themselves in confusion on the ropes that connected with the sycamores. I heard Sercombe's voice cursing, but where in the melee he was I had no notion, for at that moment there arose before us, I cannot say whence, a tall figure, very lithe and active, that grappled with me, gurgling strange oaths. Two strong arms were braced about my back, and it was with the utmost difficulty that I kept my feet. Together we swayed and rocked, drawing nearer to the edge of the parapet.

With all the strength at my command I flung my body forward, and, twisting my legs about my opponent's, I bore him sideways toward the roof. As I did so he wriggled a hand free and snatched it to him, fumbling in his coat. I bent him backward, and suddenly his hand stood out before my eyes, with all the light of the gray dawn gleaming upon steel. Death certainly confronted me in that second, but I hardly knew it, for quickly an arm was thrust over mine, where it gripped the ruffian round the joints, and the next instant his hand fell and his head went back, and slipping through my grasp, the body rolled over the parapet and dropped, with a splashing plunge, into the waters of the moat.

It was some seconds ere I could look round, and when I did Sheppard was standing by my side, a long Persian dagger in his hand, gazing vacantly over the stone coping, and the ramparts were clear of the enemy.

"You saved my life, old man," I gasped.

"I believe I did," he returned slowly, but seemed to be pondering something, so remote and abstracted was his air. He stepped forward and severed with his knife the ropes which bound the sycamore.

"You must chop that down," he said.

Suddenly a great glow lit up the eastern heavens, and the trees and the lime worn ramparts rose green and gray in the morning. The dawn broke over us. No living soul was visible in that early light, and only the water rocked faintly against the masonry of the castle, carrying on its surface that inert body.

Sheppard's hand opened in a spasm, and the knife fell, cutting an arc of light. He looked up at me and smiled wearily. "I think I'll go to bed, old chap."

"You have had no rest for forty-eight hours," said I. "Don't be a fool; sleep before you think."

"Yes; I believe I'll take your advice," he replied mechanically, and turning slowly, marched with a dull and sober step toward the drum tower. I watched him go, and then I turned to the others.

"Any damage?" I asked.

Montgomery showed his teeth. "Pooh!" he said. "They didn't show fight!"

Williams shook his head. "I have a bad knuckle," he said.

I positively yelled with laughter. Somehow the hilarity would not be denied. "I owe you both thanks," I said presently. "Montgomery, you're a brick, and I won't forget it." He hung his head in a sheepish fashion, but I doubt not was very well pleased. "Now get you gone," I resumed. "There will be nothing further tonight, and if there is I will let you know."

For my own part sleep was impracticable, worn and jaded though I was. The events of the night and of that sharp struggle clamored in my brain, arresting every sense to attention. I leaned over the parapet and watched the dawn come up for the second time, but today it rose in different circumstances, flushed and lurid, menacing storm. The sky was red as with blood, and a black cloud fringed the margin of the horizon. My thoughts flew about like a whirling wheel, leaving upon me dim impressions. The light grew space and struck the castle walls with fire. I was aware of something in the most below, but my mind made no inquiries. It rested pallid and turning upon itself in idle revolutions. The sounds of the dawn crept out across the quietude, and the trees waved and shook in a gust of air. Disturbed by this flux of all, he overbalanced by its own weight, a jagged stone tumbled on the parapet and fell. It struck the water with a crash, and my eyes followed it. Then it was that for the first time I knew what had been brating at the door of my brain.

Suddenly, and at the instant sight of it, the confusion of my wits precipitated, and they settled clear and sharp. The cloud passed from me, and I started with open eyes and a dreadful appreciation at the body.

The water was tossed into undulations started by the fallen stone, and the body, supported across a fallen branch, rose and fell with the water. Drawing back, I moved to another part of the battlement. But the thought pursued me in my night. Had Shep-



The body rolled over the parapet.

pard struck too soon? Was it, indeed, inevitable? For the first time there grew into solid fact the horror of the supposition I had several times entertained. We were embarked upon a war, committed of our own act and will to a deadly strife, of which no one of us could see the end. And beneath me, stored in the vaults of the venerable fortress, lay the accursed treasure for which this blood must be spilled. Hastily I withdrew and mounted to the top of the keep. I could bear the fellowship no longer, and yet there arose now upon my mind, premeditated fight, a new perplexity. I dared not leave the body there, exposed to the sight of the world. Dashing in my thoughts and torn by shapeless fears, I stood irresolute, but at that moment my attention was caught by a movement in the bushes across the park. A head peeped out and scrutinized the scene with diligence. Then Sercombe's face emerged, red and blotted. He pushed through the covert and strode boldly toward the castle, followed closely by his companion. I struck black fellow, with a halberd both. I watched them approach and halt under the walls, facing the dead body and the moonlight. I suppose my outline appeared against the sky, for Sercombe looked up and fixed his eyes on me. But he said nothing, only addressed the Greek in an undertone. I leaned forward and peered through the covert. The man fell, and I saw the flash of the sword and the gleam of the dagger. When I looked the Greek had the body on his shoulders, and the two, veering into the under-wood. At the end of the reach of Sercombe came to a stand, and once more looked up at me. But he still made no sign, and I could imagine that the color of his face had faded. It seemed somehow to me to be ominous of the new position in which we were involved. I descended into the castle. Outside Sheppard's door I paused. It stood open, and I looked in. The light streamed through the window and fell across his face. He lay dressed upon the bed, a red stain of blood upon his cheeks, and as I gazed his hands moved convulsively—a contortion twisted his sleeping face. I left him and, returning to my own room, threw myself upon the bed.

CHAPTER XII

It was not long before we were visited by the first retaliation of the what might be accounted a crime and what was at least provoked by our own illegal acts. Indeed, the surprise fell sooner than I had anticipated, although it happened by the means I had always considered probable. That Williams, garulous and sharp-eyed Welshman as he was, could be secured in silence was well nigh impossible, for even if concealment had been for his personal benefit he would still have plied his tongue, and though he were sworn to secrecy, the private transactions of this singular feud would have slowly dribbled through his communications and become current in the gossip of the country. This knowledge was mainly instrumental in deterring us from confiding in him. Burglars were the bugaboo he had brandished before him, and burglary, sure enough, was the word that ran over the district. The news came to us late that morning. As I gathered, Williams, who was keeping company with some girl of Llanellan, woke early from his belated sleep and ran down to the village, full of the battle. His own appearance in it, as I afterward discovered, had been gorgeously conceived and magniloquent; rendered, I believe, according to his version, it was he, and he alone, who gave the signal for the final rout, and certainly he was the author of that fall from the battlements. But this was just as well, for the man knew nothing of its fatal issue, and poor Sheppard did not grudge him the credit.

But I am trespassing upon my narrative too rashly. Williams returned later in the morning and, apparently to celebrate his own cleverness, made his communications to me. He had given warning to the schoolmaster at Llanellan, who had offered to hand on the notice to the authorities at Raymond. I could have cursed the man for his folly and his babbling tongue, but I was just enough to recall that his conduct was merely natural. In truth, if he thought at all, he must have considered us a pack of egregious asses for not taking better precautions and alerting the aid of the Raymond police. I could do nothing, therefore, but acquiesce with as good a grace as I might and wish heartily that we had left him sleeping as soundly as Mrs. Main and the maid, who, it appeared, had never opened an eye throughout the night, although the former asserted that she had dreamed "there was a thunderstorm-like" adding the enclitic familiar to her conversation.

But the situation remained to be faced, and I guessed that we should be confronted with it very shortly. Consequently we must compose a plan of action, and, whatever we agreed upon, must run no risk of denial at the hands of the authorities. In this connection it seemed that I must pay a necessary visit to Sercombe, a task which for some reason was not to my taste. Sheppard, who had quite recovered himself and had not yet referred in any way to the event of the early morning, cordially approved my suggestion.

"It will be a wise course," he declared. "And, besides, I am anxious to inspect these foreigners nearer."

Where the Greeks were lodged we knew not, but it was evidently not at the Woodman, for on our arrival there the place was deserted except by the woman who had charge of food's kitchen. She could give us little information. She had not seen her master since she went to bed on the previous evening. But Captain Sercombe had been called at 9 o'clock and had gone out after eating a hasty breakfast. There was no one else staying in the house. Such was the information he imparted to us, induced to her frankness I had no doubt, by my position as the big landed proprietor of the place. Which way had Captain Sercombe gone? He had gone down the roadway in the direction of Raymond.

With this we had to content ourselves; but, determined at all hazards to catch Sercombe, Sheppard and I took the narrow lane that led down the valley in the hope of hitting upon him. At the bottom of the valley the stream makes an open pool of some considerable size upon a piece of flat land. Here it receives a few exiguous branches from the lower hills and, as it were, in those spreading shallows are its narrows and thus for the Ray. The wood was sparse about the pool, but it was very private and retired from the roads, and it was quite by accident that we penetrated the wood so far. But here we perceived through the leafage the smoke of fires and heard the noises of human creatures, an uncommon feature in the silent Great. Pushing through the brushwood, we came next upon a veritable encampment in that friendly spot. And now we solved the riddle which had perplexed us earlier in the morning, for the first man my eyes fell upon was my old acquaintance of the summit. Here was not a camp of sycops, but of thorough Greeks!

The discovery was no sooner made than it was confirmed by a voice sounding from my right and calling my name in familiar tones.

"Ah, how d'ye do, Mr. Greatorex? Glad to see you. What pleasant chance has brought you into our little village?"

"The one stood before me as debonair and well-schooled as a great puffing red face smiling cheerfully into mine and his bloodshot eyes twinkling with gaiety. It seemed almost inconceivable that this fellow was but a few hours earlier upon the footing of a deadly foe had earnest to rob us even of our lives. And yet I confess that even at this juncture and after the grave events of the siege I experienced for him what always underlay my superficial feelings, a genuine liking. The impudence of the adventurer, his very

DAMAGING EVIDENCE AGAINST COLLINS.

Blood Stained Shirt and Overalls Found at St. John and New Ireland.



It was he, and he alone, who gave the signal.

St. John, Aug. 31.—For the first time since his arrival Rev. Father McAulay discussed with a reporter last evening the New Ireland finding of the body of his cousin, of his meeting Collins at Elgin on Monday evening and of subsequent developments hitherto unpublished. "My conviction is," said Father McAulay, "that Collins has been lying. I feel that when I met him at Elgin he did not give truthful answers to my questions and I believe he has been telling falsehoods ever since."

Collins in the escort of Sheriff Lynds was taken to Albert County yesterday, and Attorney General Pugsley says the preliminary examination will be held at Hopewell Cape a week from Monday next. The attorney general has instructed M. B. Dixon, clerk of the peace, to be present at the examination. The attorney general has further instructed Dr. Addy to make an analysis of the stains on the garments in the valise carried by Collins.

Two most important pieces of evidence now come to light for the first time, namely, the finding of Collins' clothes in the Garland's hotel, among which was a blood-stained shirt, and also the finding of the overalls covered with blood in the back kitchen of Father McAulay's residence at New Ireland. The latter piece of evidence would tend to show that the murderer was careful to remove, as far as possible, all signs of the tragedy from his person.

SYNOPSIS OF CANADIAN NORTH-WEST.

Homestead Regulations.

Any even numbered section of Dominion Lands in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, excepting 8 and 26, not reserved, may be homesteaded by any person who is the sole head of a family, or any male over 18 years of age, to the extent of one-quarter section of 160 acres more or less.

Entry must be made personally at the local land office for the district in which the land is situate.

The homesteader is required to perform the conditions connected therewith under one of the following plans:

- (1.) At least six months' residence upon and cultivation of the land in each year for three years.
- (2.) If the father (or mother, if the father is deceased) of the homesteader resides upon a farm in the vicinity of the land entered for the requirements as to residence may be satisfied by such person, residing with the father or mother.
- (3.) If the settler has his permanent residence upon farming land owned by him in the vicinity of his homestead, the requirements as to residence may be satisfied by residence upon the said land.

Six months' notice in writing should be given to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands at Ottawa of intention to apply for patent.

W. W. CORY, Deputy of the Minister of the Interior.

N. B.—Unauthorized publication of this advertisement will not be paid for.—47-26.

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GOING DATES. September 11th. From all Stations on Intercolonial Railway east of New Glasgow, including Cape Breton.

September 12th. From all other Stations on Intercolonial Railway in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

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For further particulars apply to nearest Ticket Agent, or write W. B. HOWARD, Asst. D. P. A., C. P. R., St. John, N. B.

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OBITUARY

The community of Bridgetown was shocked on Tuesday when it learned of the death of Janie, wife of Hugh Astles. She was sick but a short time, and her death was unexpected. She was only in her 19th year, and was highly esteemed by all who knew her. Besides her husband, she leaves a father and a mother, six sisters and three brothers, to mourn their loss. The funeral on Thursday at Nelson was largely attended. The pall-bearers were D. Deina, T. Deina, T. Russell, E. Vey, C. Cassidy and D. McDeam. Much sympathy is felt for the bereaved family.

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