



"ON THE PLANTATION"

A Raw Deal

(Continued from page one)

unrest succeeded days of expectation and disappointment, for Jo would not change her mind. Her marriage appeared to be very happy, for which he was thankful; but sometimes she would turn her big brown eyes upon him frankly and entirely devoid of boldness that an impersonal and spiritual relationship became utterly impossible to him. His feelings for her were so strong that he knew he could not live in the same vicinity and continue an acquaintanceship that may become intolerable and cruel. So, quietly and hurt, he left his home and went to New Guinea to start life anew. In his memory were the twenty years of footprints, the impressions of their happy hours of padding through bush and vale.

Five years went quickly by. Jo and Ted had teamed up splendidly, with Jo developing into a beautiful and hardy woman of ranch and stockyard. With hair wind-blown, riding like a centaur, she would round up the sheep, corral the cattle, or gallop with piping hot meals to the men at the shearing sheds. She had a knack of managing her household of aborigine women servants and their clinging piccaninies with an amazing facility. Women of the bushland and the fringes of habitations will tell that the hardest thing next to a mule to master is an aborigine man servant or maid. There were times when Jo longed desperately to see Bob again, but the course dictated by sense guided her to prudence and the preservation of the high ideals that she shared in common with him.

Meantime, all had gone well with Bob Gordon. He had now a fine copra plantation, an auxiliary schooner for his pleasure, leisure to roam the seas from the Solomon Isles to Borneo, few worldly cares, and was beyond the reach of want. His letters were full of enthusiasm and the joy of useful living. Nevertheless, his heartache for Jo never diminished. He simply stated that he lacked the talent for marrying and would be a bachelor to the end of his days. These letters caused a lot of resentment in Ted. They filled him with envy. True, he was having a hard time financially. A drought was spread over the countryside and the sheep were dying in droves. A few inches of rain can make or break the richest man in these districts. A healthy sheep is worth good money, but a sick and dying one is not worth a cent; consequently, a man with a quarter million sheep can

be wealthy when water is about and ruined when the pastures dry out, and it is not a happy situation to have thousands of rotting carcasses decorating the landscape for miles around, each one an abomination financially and physically.

Unfortunately the drought dragged on. Ted wrote to Bob of his fears and probable failure, and as the conditions grew rapidly worse, Ted eventually took Bob's advice, sold out his ranch and stock and went with Jo to try their luck as a neighbor of Bob's in New Guinea. The natives of the Mambaree district are known as one of the fiercest warrior tribes in New Guinea. They are indomitable and intractable, and very few will accept work on plantations. They prefer the wilder pursuits of hunting and raiding their enemies. Plantation owners engage native labor from other parts, and in turn, have to protect these strangers from the rapacious Mambarees. Therefore the task of attempting to co-exist with such fractious creatures is arduous in the extreme, and the Mambaree coast is not exactly the nicest place in the world for a white woman. In fact, Jo was the only white woman in that territory for hundreds of miles. Had she not come from a hardy, pioneering stock, it is doubtful if she would have lasted a month, as several white women have had the misfortune to find out too late. However, Jo quickly accustomed herself to her new surroundings, and after a few months' experience she could handle a native gang of workers with a dexterity that was truly feminine and successful.

The plantation that Ted and Jo were building came on apace, but there was still the years of waiting before the coconut palms would come into bearing. It is written that a man is something like a tree: in a forest of his fellows he will grow as straight as his generic and individual nature permits; alone in the open, he yields to the deforming stresses and tortions that environ him. It was so with Ted. He became restless and irritable, malaria struck him down frequently and he would quarrel at the drop of a pin. In the midst of his distresses news came through of the gold findings along the Bulolo River, and Ted, to his shame, did a cowardly and sneaky action. Without a word to Jo, he secretly packed his lugger and stole off to the goldfields, leaving Jo to manage the plantation and the wild natives alone.

When the bad news reached Bob he was furious; his first impulse was to go after Ted and bring him back, if necessary, at the point of the gun. Jo would not hear of it. She stood in the shadow of the verandah, her white dress gleaming in the moonlight, with eyes fixed with an infinite gravity which was not reproach or even hate. "I will carry on for him," she said quietly.

Through monsoon and dry season, Jo worked like a slave. She had the indentured natives well under control, but the Mambarees gave her a lot of trouble with their raids and plunderings. The situation was at its blackest, the struggle had sapped her strength, and ill and desperate, she sent for Bob. The rainy season was on, torrential storms raged, Bob rode through the night at her call. Slipping and sliding down the native tracks, his horse plunged, then fell. Bob was thrown heavily and hurt, but by great courage he struggled to her bungalow only to die in Jo's arms within a few hours from heart failure. Poor Jo was in a deplorable situation. In the tropics a body must be buried within a few hours of death. The frightened natives would not touch the dead form of Bob Gordon. The most they would do was to bring the wood for the crude coffin, which Jo fashioned

**Authentic Air Force
DRESS SHOES**
\$8.50

Made by Ritchie

Other lines at \$4, \$5, \$6

AGNEW-SURPASS
SHOE STORES LIMITED

Canada's LARGEST Shoe Retailers
85 STORES IN CANADA

8 ELIZABETH ST. — BARRIE
Wellington Hotel Block

with her own hands. She prayed and cried as she buried her lifelong friend.

A week later Ted returned. He listened to Jo's story. Crazed with jealousy and rage, blind and bestial with what he thought was his insulted manhood, he disbelieved her.

Accused her foully, then rushed off back into his lugger and disappeared out of her life.

Today, on a certain reach of coast near Mambaree, there is a plantation run by a woman who is said to be the bitterest creature that God ever made.

Wonderful!

8 easily separated cubes
of fine french-style chocolate
each filled with liquid golden
vanilla butter creme



Buy some
today

Neilson's