WAR; A STUDY, BY JACK LONDON

[From the Nation, London.]

HE was a young man, not more than twenty four or five, and he might have sat his horse with the careless grace of his youth had he not been so cat-like and tense. His black eyes roved everywhere, catching the movements of twigs and branches where small birds hopped, questing ever onward through the changing vistas of trees and brush, and returning always to the clumps of undergrowth on either side. And as he watched, so did he listen, though he rode on in silence, save for the boom of heavy guns from far to the west. This had been sounding monotonously in his ears for hours, and only its cessation would have aroused his notice. For he had business closer to hand. Across his saddle-bow was balanced a carbine.

So tensely was he strung that a bunch of quail, exploding into flight from under his horse's nose, startled him to such an extent that automatically, instantly, he had reined in and fetched the carbine half-way to his shoulder. He grinned sheepishly, recovered himself, and rode on. So tense was he, so bent upon the work he had to do, that the sweat stung his eyes unwiped, and unheeded rolled down his nose, and spattered his saddle pommel. The band of his cavalryman's hat was fresh-stained with sweat. The roan horse under him was likewise wet. It was high noon of a breathless day of heat. Even the birds and squirrels did not dare the sun, but sheltered in shady hiding-places among the trees.

Man and horse were littered with leaves and dusted with yellow pollen, for the open was ventured no more than was compulsory. They kept to the brush and trees, and invariably the man halted and peered out before crossing a dry glade, or a naked stretch of upland pasturings. He worked always to the north, though his way was devious, and it was from the north that he seemed most to apprehend that for which he was looking. He was no coward, but his courage was only that of the average civilized man, and he was looking to live, not die.

Up a small hillside he followed a cow-path through such dense scrub that he was forced to dismount and lead his horse. But when the path swung around to the west, he abandoned it, and headed to the north again along the oak-covered top of the ridge.

The ridge ended in a steep descent—so steep that he zigzagged back and forth across the face of the slope, sliding and stumbling among the dead leaves and matted vines, and keeping a watchful eye on the horse above, that threatened to fall down upon him. The sweat ran from him, and the pollen-dust, settling pungently in mouth and nostrils, increased his thirst. Try as he would, nevertheless the descent was noisy, and frequently he stopped, panting in the dry heat, and listening for any warning from beneath.

At the bottom he came out on a flat so densely forested that he could not make out its extent. Here the character of the woods changed, and he was able to remount. Instead of the twisted hillside oaks, tall, straight trees, big-trunked and prosperous, rose from the damp, fat soil. Only here and there were thickets, easily avoided, while he encountered winding, park-like glades, where the cattle had pastured in the days before war had run them off.

His progress was more rapid now, as he came down into the valley, and at the end of half an hour he halted at an ancient rail fence on the edge of a clearing. He did not like the openness of it, yet his path lay across to the fringe of trees that marked the banks of the stream. It was a mere quarter of a mile across that open, but the thought of venturing out in it was repugnant. A rifle, a score of them, a thousand, might lurk in that fringe by the stream—and he the naked mark.

Twice he essayed to start, and twice he paused. He was appalled by his own loneliness. The pulse of war that beat from the west suggested the companionship of battling thousands; here was naught but silence, and himself, and possible death-dealing bullets from a myriad ambushes. And yet his task was to find what he feared to find. He must go on, and on, till somewhere, sometime, he encountered another man, or other men, from the other side, scouting, as he was scouting, to make report, as he must make report, of having come in touch.

Changing his mind, he skirted inside the woods for a distance, and again peeped forth. This time, in the middle of the clearing, he saw a small farmhouse. There were no signs of life. No smoke curled from the chimney, not a barnyard fowl clucked or strutted. The kitchen door stood open, and he gazed so long and hard into the black aperture that it seemed almost that a farmer's wife must emerge at any moment.

He licked the pollen and dust from his dry lips, stiffened himself, mind and body, and rode out into the blazing sunshine. Nothing stirred. He went on past the house, and approached the wall of trees and bushes by the river's bank. One thought persisted maddeningly. It was of the crash in his body of a high-velocity bullet. It made him feel very fragile and defenceless, and he crouched lower in the saddle.

Tethering his horse in the edge of the wood, he continued a hundred yards on foot, till he came to the stream. Twenty feet wide it was, without perceptible current, cool and inviting, and he was very thirsty. But he waited inside his screen of leafage, his eyes fixed on the screen on the opposite side. To make the wait endurable, he sat down, his carbine resting on his knees. The minutes passed, and slowly his tenseness relaxed. At last he decided there was no danger; but, just as he prepared to part the bushes and bend down to the water, a movement among the opposite bushes caught his eye.

It might be a bird. But he waited. Again there was an agitation of the bushes, and then, so suddenly that it almost startled a cry from him, the bushes parted and a face peered out. It was a face covered with several weeks' growth of ginger-colored beard. The eyes were blue and wide apart, with laughter-wrinkles in the corners, that showed despite the tired and anxious expression of the whole face.

All this he could see with microscopic clearness, for the distance was no more than twenty feet. And all this he saw in such brief time that he saw it as he lifted his carbine to his shoulder. He glanced along the sights, and knew that he was gazing upon a man who was as good as dead. It was impossible to miss at such point-blank range.

But he did not shoot. Slowly he lowered the carbine and watched. A hand, clutching a water bottle, became visible, and the ginger beard bent downward to fill the bottle. He could hear the gurgle of the water. Then arm and bottle and ginger beard disappeared behind the closing bushes. A long time he waited, then, with thirst unslaked, he crept back to his horse, rode slowly across the sun-washed clearing, and passed into the shelter of the woods beyond.

II.

Another day, hot and breathless. A deserted farm house, large, with many outbuildings and an orchard, standing in a clearing. From the woods, on a roan horse, carbine across pommel, rode the young man with the quick black eyes. He breathed with relief as he gained the house. That a fight had taken place here earlier in the season was evident. Clips and empty cartridges, tarnished with verdigris, lay on the ground, which, while wet, had been torn up by the hoofs of horses. Hard by the kitchen were graves, tagged and numbered. From the oak tree by the kitchen door, in tattered, weather-beaten garments, hung the bodies of two men. The faces, shrivelled and defaced bore no likeness to the faces of men. The roan horse snorted beneath them, and the rider caressed and soothed it, and tied it farther away.

Entering the house, he found the interior a wreck. He trod on empty cartridges as he walked from room to room to reconnoitre from the windows. Men had camped and slept everywhere, and, on the floor of one room, he came upon stains unmistakable where the wounded had been laid down.

Again outside, he led the horse around behind the barn, and invaded the orchard. A dozen trees were burdened with ripe apples. He filled his pockets, eating while he picked. Then a thought came to him, and he glanced at the sun, calculating the time of his return to camp. He pulled off his shirt, tying the sleeves and making a bag. This he proceeded to fill with apples.

As he was about to mount his horse, the animal suddenly pricked up its ears. The man, too, listened, and heard, faintly, the thud of hoofs on the soft earth. He crept to the corner of the barn and peered out. A dozen mounted men, strung out loosely, approaching from the opposite side of the clearing, were only a matter of a hundred yards or so away. They rode on to the house. Some dismounted, while others remained in the saddle, as an earnest that their stay would be short. They seemed to be holding a council, for he could hear them talking excitedly in the detested tongue of the hated invader. The time passed, but they seemed unable to reach a decision. He put the carbine away in its boot, mounted, and waited impatiently, balancing the shirt of apples on the pommel.

He heard footsteps approaching, and drove the spurs so fiercely into the roan as to force a surprised groan from the animal as it leaped forward. At the corner of the barn he saw the intruder, a mere boy of nineteen or twenty, for all of his uniform, jump back to escape being run down. At the same moment the roan swerved, and its rider caught a glimpse of the aroused men by the house. Some were springing from their horses, and he could see the rifles going to their shoulders. He passed the kitchen door, and the dried corpses swinging in the shade, compelling his foes to run around the front of the house. A rifle cracked, and a second, but he was going fast, leaning forward, low in the saddle, one hand clutching the shirt of apples, the other guiding the horse.

The top bar of the fence was four feet high, but he knew his roan, and leaped it at full career to the accompaniment of several scattered shots. Eight hundred yards straight away were the woods, and the roan was covering the distance with mighty strides. Every man was now firing. They were pumping their guns so rapidly that he no longer heard individual shots. A bullet went through his hat, but he was unaware, though he did not know when another tore through the apples on the pommel. And he winced and ducked even lower when a third bullet, fired low, struck a stone between his horse's legs and richochetted off through the air, buzzing and humming like some incredible insect.

The shots died down as the magazines were emptied, until, quickly, there was no more shooting. The young man was elated. Through that astonishing fusillade he had come unscathed. He glanced back. Yes, they had emptied their magazines. He could see several reloading. Others were running back behind the house for their horses. As he looked, two, already mounted, came back into view around the corner, riding hard. And, at the same moment, he saw the man with the unmistakable ginger beard kneel down on the ground, level his gun, and coolly take his time for the long shot.

The young man threw his spurs into the horse, crouched very low, and swerved in his flight in order to distract the other's aim. And still the shot did not come. With each jump of the horse the woods sprang nearer. They were only two hundred yards away, and still the shot was delayed.

And then he heard it, the last thing he was ever to hear, for he was dead ere he hit the ground in the long crashing fall from the saddle. And they, watching at the house, saw him fall, saw his body bounce when it struck the earth, and saw the burst of red-cheeked apples that rolled about him. They laughed at the unexpected eruption of apples, and clapped their hands in applause of the long shot by the man with the ginger beard.

Every General Store-Keeper Needs "Fruit-a-Tives"

Inkerman, Ont., Sept. 23, 1910.

"I am in the general store business, and have been a resident of Inkerman for 37 years. Since I started this store four years ago I have found your remedy, 'Fruit-a-tives,' the most satisfactory one I have sold. Many of my customers have used 'Fruit-a-tives' with the most beneficial results, and I know of two cases that have been completely cured of Dyspepsia.

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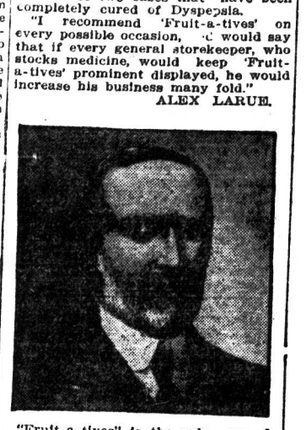
ALEX LARUE.



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DR. DU BOIS ON THE NEGRO

Noted Champion of Black Race Tells of the Struggle Upward.

Dr. W. E. Burghardt du Bois, one of the best-known authorities on the negro problem, lectured to the Sociological Society at the Royal Society of Arts, London, on the economics of negro emancipation in the United States. Dr. du Bois is in London as a delegate to the Universal Races Congress. He was formerly Professor of Economics in the University of Atlanta. Sir Sidney Olivier, the Governor of Jamaica, presided, but did not express any general views.

The main question of emancipation, Dr. du Bois pointed out in the course of an elaborate economic review, was not legal but economic—not the question as to when by enactment a certain organization of human labor became illegal, but the deeper question as to the slow development of that organization of labor from a primitive to a more advance form. The political results of the war (he said) have often been dwelt upon. We need here simply remind ourselves that a great and terrible war has deplorable results of necessity, and that it is not scientific to make the negro or his emancipators responsible for these natural developments. They were the setting, not the results, of freedom. The slave had to assume his legal rights in the midst of poverty, devastation, hatred, and anarchy. As to the worker himself, the initial difficulty, too little dwelt upon, was the fact that he was emancipated and given neither land nor capital. Four million men were started to work, the vast majority of whom did not own even the clothes on their backs, and had neither food nor tools nor land. Two things along saved these negroes from complete re-enslavement — the political situation which made their votes feared and, even more important, the high price of cotton. This great demand for the staple crop made great competition among landlords and led to a series of labor arrangements.

The Negro and His Employer.

Under these new arrangements the black worker became successively during fifty years of development the contract laborer, the cropper, the metayer, the renter, and the landowner. Today the number of contract laborers is small, and the cropper is disappearing. Twenty-five per cent. of the negro farmers own their land, and the metayers and renters are about equal. The contract labor was the freedman who entered into written agreement, usually with his former master, to continue to work for him. The master furnished, as before, land, tools, food, and clothes, and, in addition, the promise of a certain wage. As, however, the advances of food and clothes were charged against this wage by the master's own bookkeeping, and the settlement made but once a year, the result was that at the end of his service the negro found no wages due, and perhaps an accumulated debt. This led to a change which gradually based his wage on the crop raised, but even here the master so controlled the crop that debt peonage gradually became widespread, and marks the agriculture of the rural south today. Only the more intelligent renters and the owners escape into real freedom. In the case of this third element, the land, we must note the intrusion between the landlord and the negro tenant of two sinister factors — the merchant and the politician. Dr. du Bois pointed out in this connection how the jealousy of the merchant class was aroused by the rapid increase between 1890 and 1900 of a group of negro small landowners. The merchants complained of scarcity of labor, and began systematically to scheme for some method by which negro ambition could be kept from soaring too high, and by which the black man could be kept from benefiting from the new economic development of the south.

The merchant class became the new politicians and they sought to break the political power of the black laborers and to put forward a series of labor laws which should make the explanation of negro labor secure. Both these things they were unable to do under the cry of race prejudice. No method of inflaming the darkest passions of men was unused. The lynching mob was given its glut of blood and egged on by purposely exaggerated and often wholly invented tales of crime on the part of perhaps the most peaceful and sweet-tempered race the world has ever known. Under the flame of this outward noise went on the more subtle and dangerous work. Law were passed in the states where three-quarters of the negroes live so ingenuously framed that a black university graduate could be prevented from voting and the most ignorant white "hoodlum" could be admitted to the polls. Labor laws were so arranged that imprisonment for debt was possible and leaving an employer could be made a penitentiary offence. A determined effort was made with wide success to see that no negro had any voice in either the making or administration of local, state, or national law. The white labor vote of the south was secured by throwing white and black labor so far as possible into rival competing groups. The neutrality of the north has been secured through their fear for the safety of large investments in the south and through the fatalistic attitude common both in America and Europe towards the possibility of real advance on the part of the darker nations.

Rays of Hope.

As to the outlook there are, economically speaking, three rays of hope. First, unless the white labor is a bigger fool than he has been in the past he is going to realize that the degradation of a great group of competing laborers means his own degradation and the loss of much of the ground gained in the great battles of this century. Secondly, the American negro himself cannot be kept down. Of physical virility, hard work, and dogged determination to force the gates of civilization there are few such examples in modern history, and in the long run these must tell. Finally there is a large and growing feeling among the better class of Americans that the American stand on the color question is retrograde and reactionary and is putting America in a false light before the world and spoiling its ideas. Leading Americans aided by prominent negroes, have formed an association for the advancement of the colored people, to study the problem of racial contest, and to spread a broder and higher view of the duties of groups and races of men towards each other.

"The problem of completely emancipating the black labor in the south and giving to colored Americans their full rights as citizens according to individual merit," Dr. du Bois concluded, "is but a local phase of the vastest and most insistent problem of humanity against the world-old tendency to reduce human labor to the lowest depth in order to derive the greatest personal profit. The black races of America are fighting a battle on the frontier of the world, and for their success they ask the active sympathy of all right-thinking men." — (Cheers.)

Baby Nearly Died with Itching Rash

Mrs. M. C. Maitland, of Jasper, Ont., tells in the following letter of her child's remarkable cure by the Cuticura Remedies:

"When my boy was about three months old his head broke out with a rash which was very itchy and ran a watery fluid. We tried everything we could but he got worse all the time, till it spread to his arms, legs, and then to his entire body. He got so bad that he came near dying. The rash would itch so that he would scratch till the blood ran and a thin yellowish stuff would be all over his pillow in the morning. I had to put mittens on his hands to prevent him tearing his skin. He was almost a skeleton and his little hands were thin like claws.

"He was bad about eight months when we tried Cuticura Remedies. I had not laid him down in his cradle in the daytime for a long while. I washed him with Cuticura Soap and put on one application of Cuticura Ointment and he was so soothed that he could sleep. You don't know how glad I was he felt better. It took one box of Cuticura Ointment and pretty near one cake of Cuticura Soap to cure him. I think our boy would have died but for the Cuticura Remedies and I shall always remain a firm friend of them. He was cured more than twenty years ago and there has been no return of the trouble."

(Signed) MRS. M. C. MAITLAND, Jasper, Ont.

No more convincing proof of the efficacy and economy of the Cuticura Remedies could be given. As in this instance, a single cake of Cuticura Soap and box of Cuticura Ointment are often sufficient. Sold throughout the world. Potter Drug & Chem. Corp., Sole Props., Boston, U. S. A. Send for free Cuticura Booklet on skin and scalp diseases.

Canon Henson's Rebuke

"Political Incendiaries" in British House of Commons.

CANON HENSLEY HENSON, preaching at St. Margaret's, Westminster, London, Eng., said they had met to worship in circumstances of national and international unrest which might well move to anxiety thoughtful and patriotic minds.

"As a minister of Christ," Canon Henson continued, "and speaking in his name, I have nothing whatever to say on the merits of the controversy between the political parties which is now proceeding, but when we come to the manner in which political conflicts are waged, then, I apprehend, Christianity does definitely disallow whatsoever cannot justify itself at the bar of the general conscience. Bribery and corruption are universally admitted to be wrong; Christianity emphasizes their wrongness. Insult and clamor; discourtesy which will not listen, intolerance which will not consider, are irreconcilable with that fair-play and justice which good sense demands as essential to the reasonable conduct of general business. Christianity emphasizes the obligation of courtesy and consideration.

"As rector of this church I am entitled — I am required — to press the obvious reference of my remarks. The House of Commons is justly proud of its historic name as the mother of free assemblies. It sets the fashion to the numerous elected bodies which are charged with the conduct of local affairs throughout the Empire. Its tone and temper affect, for good or evil, the whole process of self-government. If reasonable discussion becomes impossible in the House of Commons, where can we hope that it will be preserved?

"And what is the substitue for reasonable discussion? Insult and clamor are not possible means of transacting business. The only alternative to reasonable discussion is violence, and they who—with whatever self-exculpation and pleas of excuse—make reasonable discussion impossible, are nothing less than political incendiaries. If Christianity be worth anything as a force in civic life, it means restraint of natural passion and the disallowing of a single calculation which inspires and organizes such outrages of public decency as those which will make last week sadly memorable in the parliamentary history of this country."

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