

Dark Lightning

By Helen Topping Miller

Synopsis

Gary Tallman, young petroleum engineer from Alabama, misses his bus in Texas and Mona Mason, wife of a cattle rancher, gives him a lift. Gary is injured when her car crashes in a ditch and the Masons nurse him back to health. He falls in love with Mona's daughter Adelaide but, unwilling to propose until he has a job, Gary plans to leave for Mexico. Meanwhile he suspects there is oil in the property and tells tests of Oliver Kimball, Harvey's son-in-law. Hickey is employed to drill a well. Harvey persuades Gary to remain until tests are made. Lawyer Slide Ellis gets an injunction against the drilling, claiming a violation of property rights. Old Hughey Fothergill, Gary and Adelaide go to see the plaintiffs. When the woman sees Hughey she screams and he demands to be taken away immediately.

CHAPTER XXIII

Gary walked around the car. "You can come out, now, Hughey. You're safe."

Hughey emerged, panting. "Thought sure she had me," he gulped, as he straightened his long legs gratefully. "Mister, I'm a brave man—but I wouldn't dangle up with that there woman, no more I would with a wild panter."

"So you know her, do you?"

"Know her?" squeaked Hughey. "Know her? You git me to town, young feller—where she can't git at me—and I'll tell them law fellers what I know about her!"

It was four o'clock when they got back to town. They were tired, thirsty, covered with dust. But

they lost no time in getting to Hobson's office. They parked old Hughey in a big chair and sent out for a bottle of beer for him, promising it to him when he should have told his story. Adelaide sat on the opposite side of the room, looking weary but triumphant as Hughey made his speech, and Gary perched on a window sill, forgetting to be hungry or tired or anything but exultant. Hobson listened respectfully to old Hughey.

"We could take this into court—and make them look like a cage full of monkeys," he said. "but that would delay operations. So I'll call Ellis and make an appointment to see him at his office in an hour. You call your father, Miss Mason, get him in here, and I'll get the papers that we need to confirm this rather extraordinary story and, Tallman, could you—sort of re-novate the witness, just a little?"

"In an hour," Gary grinned, "he'll be as beautiful and fragrant as a lily—and a whole lot more useful!"

It was an odd group arranged in Slide Ellis' office a little after five. Harvey Mason was there, grinning. Gary held tight to old Hughey Fothergill's arm. Gary had bought him a bright blue shirt and the most brilliant pair of red suspenders to be found in the town, but the suspenders still supported old Hughey's ancient and lanky pants. He had refused to go farther in the work of modernization, after his hair was trimmed and his beard tamed somewhat.

Hobson did the talking. "You weren't quite slick enough, Ellis," he said blandly. "You can take your case against Mason into court if you want to—but when you do, Hughey Fothergill here, will go into court and swear that Maggie Williams is still his legal wife. He married her in 1917; he was never divorced from her. Here's a photostatic copy of the marriage record. And this boy, Purdy Williams, whom you claim to represent, was born in wedlock, no matter whose son he may be—in law he's Hughey Fothergill's son, and consequently can have no legal claim whatever to any estate

C. N. R. Reports Deficit In Jan.

MONTREAL (CP)—Canadian National Railways Monday reported operating revenues for January of \$46,537,000 and operating expenses of \$50,568,000, making an operating deficit for the month of \$4,031,000. Comparative figures for January, 1953, were \$51,657,000 and \$57,573,000, for a deficit of \$5,916,000.

The report said the reduction of \$7,005,000 in operating expenses was achieved partly because of the introduction of sharp economies and partly because the January, 1953, expenses had to absorb the retroactive portion of a wage award of the previous year.

left by Elihu Plummer. We're giving you till nine o'clock tomorrow morning, Ellis, to get your clients together and get this injunction removed from Mason's drilling operations."

"They laughed all the way home. Now and then Harvey's chuckles mounted into a cowboy "Yippee!" and dogs and children stared and jumped and scampered. He was out of the car before it had come to a stop, running.

"We licked 'em, Mother! The kids and old Hughey did it! Get out the big kettle and put a rose in your hair!"

Old Hughey wanted no reward. But he wanted a new shotgun and Harvey ordered the best one to be had, for him.

Harvey went sound asleep at dinner. Adelaide came around the table and squeezed Gary's hand. "Oh, Gary—we did it! And it was such fun!"

Gary got up impulsively, and put his arm around her. He kissed her swiftly on the forehead. And then he walked away, quickly, his face very red and confused. He lay a long time that night, wondering if she were furious, wondering if she thought him a presumptuous heel. And then, with morning, he forgot it, because the dull-faced men in the car appeared again, the deputy went away—and in half an hour the well was going down.

ELLEN'S DIARY

Continued from page 2

and trust.

Away back from our school-teaching years, we can recall the faces of boys and girls of a family-circle since sadly depleted as they begged a story from their busy and most understanding mother, one evening when the lamplight had gathered them from their outdoor play, into the kitchen.

"Oh, go on with you!" she chided kindly. "I have more to do than to spend my time telling you all old yarns. Besides are there no school-lessons to learn?"

The oldest boy, a freckle-faced, sandy fellow laughed softly and with some daring said: "Lessons aren't half, no, nor a quarter as good as one of your stories! Tell us" his eyes shone with the eerie anticipation, "a good ghost story and then" he chuckled "the Teacher will have to stay with us all night!"

We glanced toward the west and the gathering dark of the spring-dusk. On the sky-line the rose-edge of the evening was dissolving in the silver. But from this nearer window, just beyond a shadowed gable, the moon was rising setting the lustre of her smile along the dim farmlands. She would be there a bright silent light to go with us homing along the dewy night-lanes.

"Do, Mom!" they urged.

"Very well then," we can still hear her say, "bring my mending basket and I'll put a patch in place while I talk. And remember, when I've told you one story," she nodded with an affectionate smile to the number of them "I'm done—as is this day, so close now to the midnight!"

Until tomorrow—Diary—Good-night....

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By J. R. Williams

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Out Our Way

BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON.

Hope To Settle Argument On Sun Temperature

OTTAWA, (CP)—Canadian scientists hope to settle next June a scientific argument about the temperature of the sun.

Dr. Jack L. Locke of the Dominion Observatory here said Monday that scientists from three Canadian observatories will work on the problem during the eclipse of the sun June 30.

Parties from the Dominion Observatory here, the observatory in Victoria and the David Dunlap Observatory at Toronto will set up their instruments between Kapuskasing and Hearst, Ont., roughly 500 miles northwest of here.

Dr. Locke said the estimates of the temperature near the heart of the sun have ranged from 4,000 to 35,000 degrees centigrade. The eclipse June 30 may give scientists a clue to the real temperature of this area, known as the chromosphere.

This area is visible only for a few seconds at the start and at the end of the eclipse. It isn't visible normally because the greater brilliancy of other areas outshines it.

The naked eye usually sees the sun as a bright disc. This disc, called the photosphere, is really only part of the sun. When the moon blots out its rays it is possible to take instrument recordings of the part not normally visible.

Second Attempt

From these recordings of light, scientists can tell the temperature and pressure of whatever is burning and also something about the kind of material.

This will be the second attempt by Canadian scientists to learn the temperature of the chromosphere. Clouds blotted out readings during

Britain Repairs Damage To Dikes And Sea Walls

(By JOHN DUDMAN)

LONDON (Reuters)—Britain has passed the half-way mark in her campaign to repair a 1,000-mile stretch of dikes and sea walls smashed at 1,200 points by last winter's raging floods.

Months of intense reconstruction work have so far cost the British government £20,000,000. The gaps have been closed. Thousands of workmen have built up and strengthened sea walls protecting densely-populated areas.

The program will not be complete until later this year, but experts are confident the defences now will withstand another onslaught from the North Sea.

High spring tides are forecast for March but chances of last year's disaster being repeated are remote. For one thing, the floods, which gushed over the east coast killing more than 300 people on the night of Jan. 31-Feb. 1 last year, were a fluke caused when a North Sea gale hurled waves nearly 600 feet long against the sea defences while the spring tides were at their maximum.

covered by the sea, 24,000 houses were damaged, 200 major industrial plants were inundated, 14 major gas and electricity installations were crippled.

In East Suffolk, Norfolk and Lincolnshire, sand dunes, which had previously provided a natural defence, were washed away and new sea walls, about 10 miles long, have had to be built in their place.

From an agricultural point of view, the damage is still far from repaired. Salt water ruined thousands of acres of fertile land. When the floods receded salt analysis showed concentrations of 50 to 80 tons of salt to the acre in some areas, and it may take up to 15 years to get all the flooded land back to normal. The oversalted soil is being dressed with thousands of tons of calcium sulphate.

GERALDTON, Ont. (CP)—The body of a man with a note in his hand accusing a neighbor of poisoning him has been found in an isolated cabin 42 miles west of this northern Ontario community.

The body of Ed Humphreys, 72, a prospector, was reported found in a sitting position by police. Police said the man's body is being examined for poison. The note is said to have accused the occupant of a cabin several miles away, where Humphreys' note claimed he had eaten a meal.

Mice Make Money For Yorkshireman

SADDELEWORTH, Yorkshire (CP)—Mice make money for 46-year-old James Hough—but only if they are white. Hough, who sells albino mice to scientific research laboratories, has 80,000 in his "mouserie"—all descendants of four pairs he purchased 20 years ago when out of work.

He sells youngsters at a shilling each, males at 2s 6d, and "expectant mother" mice for five shillings. Sales are approximately 6,000 a week.

Says Hough: "Wild mice are taboo here—they bring disease." Cats? Hough says a number drop in during the summer when the mouserie doors are open, "but they don't cause any trouble."

Note On Body Blames Neighbor

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