

SERIAL STORY

The Chronicles of Addington Peace

By B. Fletcher Robinson

THE VANISHED MILLIONAIRE

I woke with a start that left me sitting up in bed, with my heart thumping in my ribs like a piston-rod. I am not generally a light sleeper, but that night, even while I snored, my nerves were active. Some one had tapped at my door—that was my impression.

I listened with the uncertain fear that comes to the newly waked. Then I heard it again—on the wall near my head this time. A board creaked. Some one was groping his way down the dark corridor without. Presently he stopped, and a faint line of illumination sprang out under my door. It winked, and then grew still. He had lit a candle.

Assurance came with the streak of light. What was he doing, groping in the dark, if he had a candle with him? I crept over to the door, opened it, and stared cautiously out.

About a score feet away a man was standing—a striking figure against the light he carried. His back was towards me, but I could see that his hand was shading the candle from his eyes while he stared into the shadows that clung about the further end of the corridor.

Presently he began to move forward. The picture gallery and the body of the house lay behind me. The corridor in which he stood terminated in a window, set deep into the stone of the old walls. The man walked slowly, throwing the light to right and left. His attitude was of nervous expectation—that of a man who looked for something that he feared to see.

At the window he stopped, staring about him and listening. He examined the fastenings, and then tried a door on his right. It was locked against him. As he did so I caught his profile against the light. It was Harbord, the secretary. From where I stood he was not more than forty feet away. There was no possibility of a mistake.

As he turned to come back I retreated into my room, closed the door. The fellow was in a state of great agitation, and I could hear him muttering to himself as he walked. When he had passed by I peeped out to see him and his light dwindle, reach the corner by the picture gallery, and fade into a reflection—a darkness.

I took care to turn the key before I got back into bed.

I woke again at seven, and, hurrying on my clothes, set off to tell Peace all about it. I took him to the place, and together we examined the corridor. There were only two rooms beyond mine. The one on the left was an unoccupied bedroom; that on the right was a large storeroom, the door of which was locked. The housekeeper kept the key, we learnt upon inquiry. "Whom had Harbord followed? The problem was beyond me. As for Inspector Peace, he did not indulge in verbal speculations.

It was in the central hall that we encountered the secretary on his way to the breakfast room. The man looked nervous and depressed; he nodded to us, and was passing on, when Peace stopped him.

"Good morning, Mr. Harbord," he said. "Can I have a word with you?"

"Certainly, inspector. What is it?"

"I have a favor to ask. My assistant and myself have our hands full here. If necessary could you help us by running up to London, and—"

"For the day?" he interrupted.

"No. It may be an affair of three or four days."

"Then I must refuse. I am sorry, but—"

"Don't apologize, Mr. Harbord," said the little man, cheerfully. "I shall have to find some one else—that is all."

We walked into the breakfast room, and a few minutes later Ransom appeared with a great bundle of letters and telegrams in his hand.

Ransom said not a word to any of us, but dropped into a chair, tearing open the envelopes and glancing at their contents. His face grew darker as he read, and once he thumped his hand upon the table with a crash that set the china jingling.

"Well, inspector?" he said at last.

"The little detective's head shook out a negative.

"Perhaps you require an incentive," he sneered. "Is it a matter of a reward?"

"No, Mr. Ransom; but it is becoming one of my personal reputation."

"Then, by thunder! you are in danger of losing it. Why don't you and your friend hustle. Instead of loitering around as if you were paid by the day? I tell you, man, there are thou-

sands—hundreds of thousands—melting, slipping through your fingers, every hour, every hour."

He sprang from his seat and started his walk again—up and down, up and down, as we had first seen him.

"Shall you be returning to London?"

At the question the manager halted in his stride, staring sharply down into the inspector's bland countenance.

"No," he said; "I shall stay here, Mr. Addington Peace, until such time as you have something definite to tell me."

"I have an inquiry to make which I would rather place in the hands of some one who has personal knowledge of Mr. Ford. Neither Mr. Harbord nor yourself desire to leave Meudon. Is there anyone else you can suggest?"

"There is Jackson—Ford's valet," said the manager, after a moment's thought. "He can go, if you think him bright enough. I'll send for him."

While the footman who answered the bell was gone upon his errand, we waited in an uneasy silence. There was the shadow of an ugly mystery upon us all. Jackson, as he entered, was the only one who seemed at his ease. He stood there—a tall figure of all the respectabilities.

"The inspector here wishes you to go to London, Jackson," said the manager. "He will explain the details. There is a fast train from Camdon at eleven."

"Certainly, sir. Do I return tonight?"

"No, Jackson," said Peace. "It will take a day or two."

The man took a couple of steps towards the door, hesitated, and then returned to his former place.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he began, addressing Ransom. "But I would rather remain at Meudon under present circumstances."

"What on earth do you mean?" thundered the manager.

"Well, sir, I was the last to see Mr. Ford. There is, at it were, a suspicion upon me. I should like to be present while the search continues, both for his sake—and my own."

"Very kind of you, I'm sure," growled Ransom. "But you either do what I tell you, Jackson, or you pack your boxes and clear out. So be quick and make up your mind."

"I think you are treating me most unfairly, sir. But I cannot be persuaded out of what I know to be my duty."

"You impertinent rascal!" began the furious manager. But Peace was already on his feet with a hand outstretched.

"Perhaps, after all, I can make other arrangements, Mr. Ransom," he said. "It is natural that Jackson should consider his own reputation in this affair. That is all, Jackson; you may go now."

It was half an hour afterwards, when the end of breakfast had dispersed the party, that I spoke to Peace

ing a pipe in great apparent satisfaction.

"Bed time, isn't it?" I grumbled, sniffing at his strong tobacco.

"Oh, no," he said. "The fact is, we are going to sit up all night."

I threw myself on a couch by the window without reply. Perhaps I was not in the best of tempers; certainly I did not feel so.

"You insisted on coming down with me," he suggested.

"I know all about that," I told him. "I haven't complained, have I? If you want me to shut myself up for a week I'll do it; but I should prefer to have some idea of the reason why."

"I don't wish to create mysteries, Mr. Phillips," he said kindly; "but, believe me, there is nothing to be gained in vague discussions."

I knew that settled it as far as he was concerned, so I nodded my head and filled a pipe. At eleven he walked across the room and switched off the light.

"If nothing happens, you can take your turn in four hours from now," he said. "In the meanwhile get to sleep. I will keep the first watch."

I shut my eyes; but there was no rest in me that night. I lay listening to the silence of the old house with a dull speculation. Somewhere far down in the lower floor a great gong-like clock chimed the hours and quarters. I heard them every one from twelve to one, from one to two. Peace had stopped smoking. He sat as silent as a cat at a mousehole.

It must have been some fifteen minutes after two that I heard the faint, faint creak of a board in the corridor outside. I sat up, every nerve strung to a tense alertness. And then there came a sound I knew well, the soft drawing touch of a hand groping in the darkness as some one felt his way along the paneled walls. It passed us and was gone. Yet Peace never moved. Could he have fallen asleep? I whispered his name.

"Hush!"

The answer came to me like a gentle sigh.

One minute, two minutes more and the room sprang into sight under the glow of an electric hand-lamp. The inspector rose from his seat and slid through the door, with me upon his heels. The light he carried searched the clustered shadows; but the corridor was empty, nor was there any place where a man might hide.

"You waited too long," I whispered impatiently.

"The man is no fool, Mr. Phillips. Do you imagine that he was not listening and staring like a hunted beast. A noisy board, a stumble, or a flash of light, and we should have wasted a tiring day."

"Nevertheless he has got clear away."

"I think not."

As we crept forward I saw that a



strip of the oak flooring along the walls was gray with dust. If it had been in such a neglected state in the afternoon I should surely have noticed it. In some curiosity I stooped to examine the phenomenon.

"Flour," whispered the little man, touching my shoulder.

"Flour?"

"Yes, I sprinkled it myself. Look—there is the first result."

He steadied his light as he spoke, pointing with his other hand. On the powdery surface was the half footprint of a man.

The flour did not extend more than a couple of feet from the walls, so that it was only here and there that we caught up the trail. We had passed the bedroom on the left—yet the footprints still went on; we were at the store-room door, yet they still were visible before us. There was no other egress from the corridor. The tall window at the end was, as I knew, a good twenty feet from the ground. Had this man also vanished off the earth like Elias Ford?

Suddenly the inspector stopped, grasping my arm. The light he held fell upon two footprints set close together. They were at right angles to the passage. Apparently the man had passed into the solid wall!

"Peace, what does this mean?"

(CHRONICLES TO BE CONTINUED.)

Prehistoric Monster.

Eighty feet long and thirty feet high, the Atlantosaurus was one of our prehistoric animals.

FORESEE BIG CROP INCREASE

Survey of Northwest Spells Prosperity for Everyone.

Seattle, Wash.—Reports from nearly 500 bankers in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana insure an era of great prosperity for the Pacific Northwest, according to information in the Trade and Crop Bulletin of the Seattle National Bank.

The bank has issued a review of this kind every summer for some years, and the publications have been accepted universally as standard and authoritative.

The most important reports contained in the review, as affecting conditions in Washington, are summarized as follows:

"Forward again is the ringing note in the reports just gathered from the Pacific Northwest. We have received from nearly 500 banks reports covering every county in the states of Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon, a territory running over 1000 miles east and west, and 700 miles north and south. The products of this great domain cover almost everything which is grown in the temperate zone, and, with few exceptions, the reports indicate a great increase in productiveness throughout.

"In the analysis of replies lumber leads with regard to the proportion of increase, as compared with decreases indicated. There are 75 predictions for increase to every prediction for decrease. In logs there are 20 predictions of increase to one of decrease. In hay, 15 to 1; livestock, 10 to 1; dairying, 6 to 1; oats, 5 to 1; wheat, 3 to 1; small fruit and vegetables, 3 to 1, and fruit 1 1/2 to 1. In the case of wool, the percentage of increase predicted is slightly in excess of the percentage of decreases predicted.

"From Northwestern Washington logs and lumber production are predicted to be 25 per cent higher; from Skagit county, 25 per cent; from Lewis county, 40 per cent; from King county, predictions ranging from 20 per cent to 50 per cent; from Stevens county, 75 per cent on lumber.

"Hay production is predicted to be in Okanogan county 25 per cent greater; King county, 25 per cent; Benton county, 25 per cent; Cowlitz county, 25 per cent; Lewis county, 25 per cent; Yakima county, 10 per cent; Whitman county, 10 per cent.

"As to livestock, Cowlitz county predicts 25 per cent increase; Yakima county, 15 per cent; Lincoln county, 10 per cent; one section of Benton county, 100 per cent; Stevens county, 50 per cent; Spokane county, 10 per cent.

"We have abundant evidence of the fact that the raising of livestock is on the increase, this being part of the tendency to diversify farm products.

"From Lincoln county: 'The prospects for a large crop of wheat and other small grains in the Big Bend country to this date, May 20, are the most promising they have been for the last ten years; the average of winter wheat is fully 50 per cent greater than was ever shown before in this section of the country.'

"From a report from a highly valued source, which has covered the entire Palouse country, we have the following:

"The condition of winter wheat in the Palouse country, a district comprising the greater part of Whitman county, Washington, and Latah county, Idaho, as a whole is reported as average, ranging from 5 per cent above in western part to 5 per cent below in the eastern. The acreage is slightly increased.

"Spring wheat on about 75 per cent of the usual acreage is nicely up and of healthy growth, except in the eastern part of the Palouse, where seeding and growth have been retarded by late rains. There is a material increase in the barley acreage.

"Oats occupy about half the acreage of former years. Timothy, alfalfa and clover show rank growth on an increased acreage.

"Oregon reports by counties indicate a big increase in dairying, in hog and cattle raising. In the wheat-raising counties of that state the gain in grain yield this year is estimated in some quarters as high as 50 per cent.

"Idaho reports indicate prosperity in both wheat and fruit raising. The Snake river country seems to be especially prosperous, due to big yields of wool, grain, hay and fruits."

OREGON STATE ITEMS OF INTEREST

General News of the Industrial and Educational Development and Progress of Rural Communities, Public Institutions, Etc.

MANY NEW LAWS IN FORCE

More Power Given Governor as Result of New Measures.

Salem—All the laws passed at the recent session of the legislature, except those having emergency clauses or those to be referred to the people, became operative June 3.

Chief among the new measures are those relating to highways, irrigation, wages of women and children, pensions for mothers, fixing number of hours for workmen in factories, mills, etc., giving the governor more power to enforce laws locally, revising fish and game laws, appropriation for Pacific Panama exposition, regulation of brokers, regulation of accountants in state and counties, teachers of Portland on civil service basis, pensions for Portland police, abolishing district fairs and creating county fairs.

Summaries of the most important measures are as follows:

Highway commission bill—Creates highway commissioner and provides for a highway engineer at a salary of \$3000 a year. Under the measure about \$360,000 will be provided for road work annually. The work will be done by the counties, and the engineer will give all assistance possible to the county courts.

County bonding act—Gives counties the right to issue bonds to build roads. This and the highway commission bill are important, for they constitute virtually the first practical highway legislation enacted in the state.

Columbia Southern bill—Appropriates \$450,000 for irrigation of 23,000 acres of land in Eastern Oregon, work to be started at once. The United States department of interior has offered to give a similar sum for the desert land board. Another bill provides for an appropriation of \$50,000 to investigate feasible irrigation projects, the Federal government to co-operate by giving a similar amount. Still another measure appropriates \$15,000 for the investigation of a proposed power plant on the Columbia at The Dalles. It is declared that the project contemplates the creation of one of the greatest water power systems in the United States.

Minimum wage bill—Creates commission to be named by the governor to investigate wages of women and children and the conditions under which they work. It gives the commission power to enforce decrees, fix wages and regulate sanitary conditions.

Mothers' pension bill—Provides for assistance of mothers whose husbands are dead, in state institutions or physically or mentally unable to work. The counties are to provide the pensions.

Ten-hour law—Provides that 10 hours a day or 60 hours a week constitute the working schedules in factories, mills, etc., but that employees may work 13 hours a day, but no longer. They are to receive time and one-half pay for all time more than 10 hours a day.

Bill increasing power of governor—Gives governor power to appoint special district attorneys, sheriffs, constables, when regularly elected officials do not attend to duties. Another measure, urged by the governor, classes immoral resorts as nuisances so they may be closed more easily than at present.

Shipping of liquor act—Provides that intoxicating liquor shipped from "wet" to "dry" territory must be labeled and bear the names of the consignee and consignor. The package must describe the liquor it contains. Another measure provides that saloon keepers who sell liquor to intoxicated persons, minors or blacklisted persons shall be liable for all damages that accrue.

Game and fish laws—Completely revises game and fish laws of state. It is probably one of the most comprehensive measures ever passed by a legislature.

Election revision measures—Uncertainties existing in many laws cleared and laws which proved unsatisfactory repealed.

Bill creating board of control—Board to have jurisdiction over all state institutions excepting those for higher education. To be composed of governor, secretary of state and state treasurer.

Prune Crop to Be Bumper.

Eugene—The Lane county prune crop will be between 35 and 40 carloads this year, according to J. O. Holt, secretary of the Eugene Fruit Growers' association. Last year rains at the pollenization season cut the output greatly, but this year there is every indication of a record crop. The green fruit is well formed and the trees are loaded. Cherries will be at least an average crop. Orchards to the northeast of the city are unusually heavy, while those to the northwest are not showing up so well.

Investigate Handling of Prunes.

As a result of a recent conference at the Portland Commercial club between prune growers of the state and Prof. C. I. Lewis, H. S. Jackson and Herman Tartar of the Oregon Agricultural college, this fall probably will see the beginning of an important series of investigations on the handling of the Italian prune. These will cover all phases of the subject, from the time the prune leaves the tree until it is put into the box ready to sell.

WRONG CROPS ARE GROWN

Sheep, Hogs and Corn Are Nature's Oregon Products.

Eugene—Declaring that farmers in the Willamette valley can produce butter 50 per cent cheaper than can be made in New England, and that a pound of pork can be raised for the market for less than it can be raised for in the corn regions of the Middle West, Professor Thomas Shaw, agricultural expert of the Hill rational system, told the University students that Willamette valley farmers are growing the wrong kinds of crops.

The Willamette valley, he said, is the one place in the United States where sheep can be grown to equal those of England. But instead of raising sheep, pork and dairy cattle, the farms of this district, he said, are raising hay, which can not be cut, or corn, because of rain.

He advocated the cause of dry farming; declaring that the great haying areas of Eastern Oregon can be made to be farmable, and that, with dry farming as it is now being practiced in Montana, 30,000,000 acres in 14 states that are now barren may be made to raise enormous quantities of wheat. By dry farming, he declared, Montana has increased its wheat crop from 250 carloads to 20,000 carloads.

Unless this land is pressed into use, the United States has been limited in wheat production, he said.

The growing of sweet clover and rape he advocated as profitable crops for Oregon, in the production of sheep, hogs and cattle.

Fish Obstructions May Go

Astoria—Deputy Fish Warden Larson returned last evening from a trip to the Upper Lewis and Clark river, where he went to inspect some dams that are obstructions to fish in working their way to the natural spawning grounds in the upper reaches of the stream.

He found two such dams, one located about eight miles above Stave Lake and the other four miles farther up. Each is an old splash dam put in by the loggers long ago, and they have not been in use for several years. Mr. Larson found that the obstructions entirely block the progress of the fish, as they are 21 feet high and there is not a sufficient flow of water over them to permit the fish to jump them. In the numerous pools below the dams he saw large numbers of steelheads playing about, and it is said in the fall hundreds of silver salmon ascend the stream.

Mr. Larson has forwarded a report to the fisheries department, which is expected to take steps to have the obstructions removed.

Bad Hill Being Planked.

Cherryville—Nearly all the planking on the Cherryville hill has been completed and with a few days more of good weather the work will be finished. This hill has been considered one of the most difficult points on the automobile road to Mount Hood.

The hotels have prepared to take care of the summer travel. The new hotel at Government Gap was finished up last week. It has 38 rooms and dining-room for 125 persons. E. Goldman will be the Mount Hood guide in former years.

Brookings to Have Bank.

Gold Beach—Articles of incorporation of the Brookings State bank have been forwarded to the secretary of state by George D. Wood, cashier of the Curry County bank here. The \$30,000 capital stock was all subscribed. When Mr. Wood came to Gold Beach three years ago to organize a bank, he received little encouragement and could hardly get enough assistance to form a board of directors.

Oregon's Attraction Fel.

Salem—A visit to Oregon five years ago by Mrs. Zella Nichols, then of Knox, Ind., has resulted in her becoming a permanent resident of this city. Mrs. Nichols declares that after returning home from her first visit to Oregon she was no longer satisfied elsewhere and began making plans to move to Salem, but it took her longest to dispose of her property interests in Indiana than she had expected.

Port Harrow In Use Soon.

Astoria—The castings for the big disc harrow being built for the Port of Astoria commission to be used in improving the channel across the shoal at the mouth of the river are nearly completed and the harrow will be ready for use in a week or ten days. It is to be V-shaped with a spread of 20 feet and will have eight three-foot revolving discs.

Temperature Near 100.

Hood River—Saturday and Sunday were the hottest days of the season here. In parts of the valley the temperature hovered around the 100 mark. The warm weather will tend to hasten the ripening of strawberries, and all of the pickers and packers that growers can collect will be in demand during the next few weeks.

Cherry Fair Is Launched.

Salem—Plans will be made for obtaining subscriptions for the greatest cherry fair ever held in Salem at the next meeting of the finance committee. If the warm weather continues the display of cherries will be the best ever made.