

WINDS of CHANCE

by Rex Beach

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CHAPTER VII (Continued)

The wooden-faced object of her attack became inexplicably stupid; he arose for words, "I do speak good," he muttered, "I do no savvy."

"Perhaps you'll savvy this," as the Countess spoke she took from her pocket a short-barreled revolver, which she cocked and presented in a capable manner so close to the old halloo's face that he staggered backward, fending off the attack. "The woman followed him."

"Look here!" Danny Royal exploded. He made a movement with his right hand but Pierce Phillips and Lucky Broad stopped close to him. The former said, shortly: "If you make a move I'll brain you!"

"That's me," seconded Mr. Broad. "Lift a finger, Danny, and you get to the mat."

Royal regarded the two men searchingly. "You think I'll let you people stick me up?" he queried.

"You're stuck up!" the Countess declared shortly. "Make sure of this—I'm not bluffing. I'll shoot. Here—you!" she called to one of the packers at the rear of the line who had turned and was making off. "Get back where you were and stay there." She emphasized this command with a wave of her weapon and the Indian obeyed with alacrity. "Now then, Mr. Royal, not one point of Sam Kirby's freight will these people carry until mine is over the pass. I don't recognize you in this deal any way. I made a bargain with the chief and I'll settle it with him. You keep out. If you don't, my men will attend to you."

It was surprising what a potent effect a firearm had upon the aged shaman. His mask fell off and his knowledge of the English language was manifestly refreshed. He began a perfectly intelligible protest against the promiscuous display of loaded weapons, particularly in crowded localities. He was a peaceful man, the head of a peaceful people, and violence of any sort was contrary to his and their code. "This was no way in which to settle a dispute."

"You think not, eh? Well, it's my way," stormed the Countess. "I'll drop the first man who tries to pass. If you think I won't try me. Go ahead, try me!" Mr. Royal undertook to say something more but without turning her head the woman told Phillips, "Knock him down if he opens his mouth."

"Will it?" Pierce edged closer to his hat and in his face there was a hunger for combat which did not look promising to the object of his attentions.

Lucky Broad likewise discouraged the ex-jockey by saying: "If you call her hand, Dullay, I'll bust you where you're buried."

The Countess still held the muzzle of her revolver close to the chief's body. Now she said peremptorily: "You're going to end this joke right now. Order their packs off, quick!"

This colloquy had been short, but brief as the delay had been, it had afforded time for new-comers to arrive. Mixed at the apex of a raging woman holding an army of red men at bay, several "musicians" dropped their burdens and came running forward to learn

the meaning of it. The Countess explained rapidly, whereupon one exclaimed: "Go to it, sister!"

Another agreed heartily. "When you shoot, shoot low. We'll see you through."

"I don't need any assistance," she told them. "They'll keep their agreement or they'll lose their head man. Give the word, chief."

The old redskin raised his voice in exhortation, but one of the late-comers broke in upon him: "Aw, shut up, you robber! You're gettin' what you need."

"I'm going to count three," the woman said, inflexibly. Her face had grown very white; her eyes were shining dangerously. "At four I shoot. One—Two—"

The wrinkled Indian gave a sign; his tribesmen began to divest themselves of their loads.

"This is all up beside the trail. Now get under my staff and don't let me have any more nonsense. The old price goes and I sha'n't raise it a penny." Turning to Danny Royal, she told him: "You could have put this over on a man, but women haven't any sense. I haven't a bit. Every cent I own is tied up in this freight and it's going through on time. I think a lot of it, and if you try to delay it again I'm just fool enough to blow a hole in this savage—and you, too. Yes, and a miners' meeting would cheer me for doing it."

There was a silence; then Mr. Royal inquired: "Are you waiting for me to speak? Well, all I've got to say is if the Jones boys had a sister they'd of been at work yet. I don't know how to tackle a woman."

"Are you going to keep hands off?"

"Sure I'm liked. You went about it in the right way. You got me hot."

"I don't know whether you're lying or not. But just to make sure I'm going to have Lucky walk back to town with you to see that you don't get turned around."

Danny removed his hat and made a sweeping bow; then he departed in the company with his escort. The Indians took up those burdens which they had originally shouldered, and the march to the Chilkoot was resumed. Now, however, the Countess Courteau brought up the rear of the procession and immediately in advance of her walked the head man of the Dyea tribe.

CHAPTER VIII

It was a still clear morning, but autumn was in the air and a pale sun lacked the necessary heat to melt a skin of ice which, during the night, had covered stagnant pools. The damp moss which carpets northern forests was hoary with frost and it cracked underneath. Winter was near and its unmistakable approach could be plainly felt.

A saw-pit had been rigged upon a sloping hillside—consisted of four posts about six feet long upon which had been laid four stringers, like the sills of a house; up to this scaffold led a pair of inclined skids. Resting upon the stringers was a sizable spruce log which had been squared and marked with parallel chalk-lines and into which a whip-saw had eaten for several feet. Balanced upon this log was Tom Linton; in the sawdust directly under him stood Jerry Quirk. Mr.

perched out, that's what she you. You ain't got the grit and you've thrown up your tail. Lift her clean—don't try to saw gain' up, the teeth ain't set that way. Lift, take a bite then leggo. Lift, bite, leggo. Lift, bite—"

"Don't say that again!" shouted Linton. "She's a patient man, but—"

He swallowed hard, then with difficulty voiced a stern vibrant warning, "Don't say it again, that's all!"

Defiance instantly flamed in Jerry's watery eyes. "I'll say it if I want to!" he yelled. "I'll say anything I feel like sayin'! Some folks can't understand English; some folks have got liguamvity heads and you have to tell 'em—"

"You couldn't tell me anything!" "Sure that's just the trouble with you—nobody can tell you anything!"

"I whelp-sawed before you was born!"

Amusement momentarily robbed Mr. Quirk of speech, then he broke out more indignantly than ever. "Why, you burl' horse-thief, you never heard of a whip-saw if we bought our outfit. You was tryin' one end to a limb and the other end to a root and then rubbin' the log up and down it."

"I never meant that. I was foolin' and you know it. That's just like you, to—"

"Ray, if you'd ever had hold of a whip-saw in all your useless life, the man on the other end of it

would have belted you with the handle and buried you in the sawdust. I'd ought to, but I ain't got the heart!" The speaker spat on his hands and in a calmer, more business-like tone said: "Well, come on. Let's go. This is our last board."

Tom Linton checked an insulting remark that had just occurred to him. It had nothing whatever to do with the subject under dispute, but it would have goaded Jerry to insanity, therefore it clamored for expression and the temptation to hurl it forth was almost irresistible. Linton, however, prided himself upon the self-restraint and accordingly he swallowed his words. He clenched his teeth, he gritted them he would have enjoyed singling them into his partner's throat, as a matter of fact—then he growled, "Let her burl'!"

In unison the men resumed their interrupted labors; slowly, rhythmically, their arms moved up and down, monotonously their aching backs bent and straightened, inch by inch the saw blade ate along the parallel line. It was killing work for it called into play unusual, under-developed muscles, yet muscles which did not and never would or could exist. Each time Linton lifted the saw it grew heavier by the fraction of a pound. Whenever Quirk looked up note progress his eyes were filled with shining particles of sawdust. His was a fearful job; sawdust was in

5 Parades a Feature Of Legion Convention

OMAHA, NEB., (AP)—Five large parades, each vying with the others in interest and unusual features will mark the American Legion national convention to be held here October 5 to 9.

On Tuesday morning the visiting Legionnaires will parade, led by combat generals and admirals of the world. Two hundred and fifty bands and from 750 to 1,000 drums and bugle corps will march with the former service men.

Wednesday night the Legionnaires and citizens of Omaha will be treated to the annual Ak-Sar-Ben electrical parade.

Thursday will be the big day for parades. On this day the military parade, including captured German and Austrian war materials and

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every available body of troops in Seventh corps area, will be held. This will be followed in the evening by the parade of "forty and Eighters," the playground organization of the Legion.

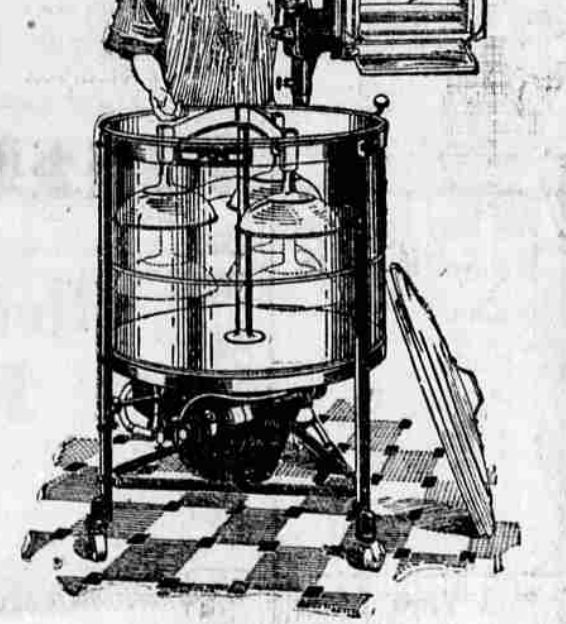
Some time Thursday the most unusual parade of all will be held that of the "mitt" dogs which have been entered in the contest staged by the Colorado members of the Forty and Eight. Hundreds of mongrel dogs of every color, size and description will march.

RAIL MIXUPS STRADDLED

KLAMATH FALLS, Ore.—The Klamath county chamber of commerce directors straddled the fence so far as the central Oregon controversy between the Southern Pacific and Oregon Trunk is concerned, but came out flat-footedly against the proposal of the Oregon public service commission for the Crane-Odell cross-state extension.

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