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New Corporation Tax Bill

BY a vote of 267 to 93 the house of representatives passed the new corporation tax bill. The bill itself fills 249 pages of type. It was debated only perfunctorily because f congressmen knew what the bill contained. It is an example of legislation at its worst. Instead of simplifying the corporation tax system as the president recommended, the new formulas are bewildering and confusing. The simplest explanation for the draft of the bill is that it was written by a committee of tax lawyers and certified accountants to make it so complicated their employment would be necessary. Which of course is not true. The correct explanation is that the amazingly simple plan which the president proposed was found to be utterly impractical. So the committee started writing the bill to meet exceptional cases,—to take care of debt-ridden corporations, to give some safeguard for rainy day reserves. The result is an abortion.

David Lawrence, writing from Washington, says of the measure:

"The pending tax bill is probably the worst piece of tax legislation that has been written in 20 years. Big business gets certain advantages out of it. Small businesses get many penalties out of it and considerable damage. Monopoly is encouraged because weak competitors are hurt by the unequal tax provisions. Businesses of large size with a vested interest in certain fields of industry will be secure against newcomers because of the new tax bill."

To show how complicated the bill is, try to apply this 'intermediate formula" to your own corporate income to see how much tax you pay:

"If the adjusted net income is more than $10,000 and less than $40,000, the tax shall be computed by adding:

"(a) A tax computed under schedule I—For such purpose the percentage which the undistributed net income is of the adjusted net income shall be ascertained by subtracting from the adjusted net income the dividend credit and a tax determined under schedule II or IIA; and

"(b) A tax upon the amount of the adjusted net income in excess of $10,000 at the rate which would be applied if the tax upon the entire adjustment net income were being computed under schedule II. For such purpose the percentage which the undistributed net income is of the adjusted net income shall be ascertained by subtracting from the adjusted net income the dividend credit and a tax determined under schedule II or IIA."

Or try to weigh this paragraph:

"If the dividend credit is a percentage of the adjusted net income which is more than 71 and less than 86 (and such percentage is not shown in the foregoing table) the tax shall be a percentage of the adjusted net income equal to the sum of 4, plus one-third of the amount by which 86 exceeds the percentage which the dividend credit is of the adjusted net income."

The whole country knows that taxes will have to be heavily increased. Business will have to bear it whether it likes it or not, and whether it puts small and weak corporations out of business or not. But why can't the tax extracting business be done more expertly and directly? As it is a man might as well multiply his telephone number by his automobile license number, add his debts and subtract his overdraft, spit at a knothole and squint at a church steeple and set down the result as his tax. It would be much simpler if the tax collector merely stood him on his head and shook all the money out of his pockets.

Fortunately the senate committee is expected to give the tax bill a thorough overhaul, perhaps in the direction of throwing it clear out and boosting the corporate levies to 20 or 25 per cent.

"White Man's Burden"

MUSSOLINI has betrayed the whole white race, says the Vancouver, B. C. Sun. "He has placed that race in jeopardy." The Sun indicts Mussolini and Italy because his Ethiopian expedition has blasted three definite advantages of the white races in dealing with the colored:

"1. The belief among colored people that the white race possesses a moral vitality which enables it to get things done with a minimum show of force.

"2. The belief in white man's justice.

"3. The belief that the white man posseses superior virtues which lift him above the cruelties, oppressions and mean greediness of inferior races."

Undertaking no defense of Mussolini, The Statesman confesses itself amused at this show of British virtue and somewhat startled at the frank assumptions of superiority which the Sun in common with most imperialists attaches to the "white races".

For if the chronicle were rolled back it would show that the British have indulged in similar ruthlessness in subduing the colored tribes, and that cruelty, oppression and greed are by no means peculiar to Mussolini in his treatment of backward peoples. In fact these beliefs which the colored races possess have been drilled into them by the superior force of the British armies. Grant that Great Britain has been doing a reasonably good job of administration in the colonies of the empire, the memories of the pains of revolt still serve to discipline the dark-skinned Hindus and the kinky-haired Africans.

Italy is doing belatedly, with the newer equipment, what England did in centuries past. The Sun might be a little less self-righteous in its condemnation of Mussolini.

Legislative Problems

WE wonder if many of those eagerly running for the legislature realize the problems the next session will have to face, particularly financial. The financing of relief, of old age pensions, restoration of salary cuts, some increases for higher education, need for a state library and state office building, all these are problems which the next legislature must face. While relief costs may decline old age pensions costs will increase if the age minimum is lowered five years and the state assumes the share now borne by the counties.

How many of the legislative candidates are making their positions clear on these great financial questions which the state must face? It is not enough to be for certain measures; the legislator must explain just where he proposes to provide the money for their support out of a people already pretty well burdened with taxation.

Fortunately there are many competent men and women as candidates for the legislature in the various districts of the state. If the voters knowing the problems the state faces, will only sort out the candidates and choose the very best material which is offered, the next legislature should be able to tackle its job with fair hopes of success.

They buried King Fuad in the royal mosque. Centuries hence will archaeologists prod around in his tomb to study the civilization of Fuad's time, as they have done in the tombs of the Pharaohs of old? Another Egyptian king pays his fee to Charon and crosses the Styx. What a trivial incident in the long history of the valley of the Nile is the span of one king's life. But the succession must go on, and Farouk, 16 years old, leaves school in England, as did King Peter of Jugo Slavia, to assume the throne in modern Egypt.

Forced to cut the higher education budget by $50,000 on account of decrease in the assessed valuation the board of higher education also finds it necessary to raise some salaries in order to retain high-grade men and women. It is losing some good talent as it is. There are limits beyond which the board cannot go in downward revision of costs if it is to operate as many institutions as the state demands.

Bigger and better deficits face the country, the expectation for this year being practically six billion dollars, with nearly three billion now in sight for the 1937 fiscal year. No one in Washington seems worried. The virus of easy money and liberal spending works like a narcotic to dull the senses; but sometime somebody will pay and pay and pay.

The Great Game of Politics

By FRANK R. KENT

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All Out of Whack

Washington, April 30.

WHILE THE NEW tax bill makes its slow, tortuous progress through congress, several facts protrude of interest to those who try to keep in their heads some coherent picture of the national finances. The most important of these is that it can't be done—and that nearly everybody in Washington has given up trying.

Frank R. Kent

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SO FAR AS the tax bill is concerned, its passage through the house has been marked, like that of so much vital legislation of the last three years, by an utter absence of interest and understanding. During the sixteen hours of debate allotted to this 249-page measure, estimated to raise $800,000,000, scarcely 60 members listened to the discussion of this most complicated piece of legislation which even the men who wrote it find it hard to explain—if, indeed, they comprehend it.

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THERE ARE a considerable number of fairly competent people who are at least doubtful on that score, among them Representative James W. Wadsworth, of New York, who regards the measure as part of the obscure Tugwellian doctrine for a "disciplined democracy" to be effected through various redistribution of wealth schemes, one of which this is. The further point has been made since the tax bill appeared, that the ideas of the higher treasury officials are more cloudy about the opertaions and consequences of this new taxation plan than any other which has been proposed, that no survey has been made as to its effect and no statistics exist upon which to base a judgment. In other words, it is a leap in the dark with literally no one knowing where we will land, though in the opinion of one formerly very close Roosevelt adviser —Dr. Moley — the effect upon business generally will be very bad.

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HOWEVER, AS THE bill advances, naturally thoughts are revived as to the national budget, which was to have been "approximately balanced" for next year, but about which not a word has been heard for a long time. This tax bill, it was asserted, became necessary because the enactment of the two-billion-dollar soldier bonus and the supreme court decision against the AAA had thrown the president's "budgetary calculations" out of whack and more revenue was needed. Aside from the fact that Mr. Roosevelt made no real fight to stop the bonus, the truth is that his "budgetary calculations" would have been very much out of whack if neither of those things had happened.

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THE FACT IS, to put it mildly, his "budgetary calculations" are unstable. For example, since January, when he sent in his budget message, there have been few weeks in which supplemental demands for money have not been sent to congress. Mr. Ashman Brown, in the Providence Journal, points out that in seven days, from April 15 to 22, these supplemental requests amounted to $464,342,975. "It is true," says Mr. Brown, "that $460,000,000 of the president's demands was for the Social Security act. But during that week he also asked $509,000 for the federal trade commission, $628,665 to pay certain claims, $1,908,000 for executive offices and independent departments, $60,000 for the state department, $164,610 for the commerce department, $75,700 for the legislative department, $24,000 for the navy, $24,000 for the interior, $71,000 for the treasury, and $78,000 for the general accounting offices.

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ALL THESE THINGS are in excess of the first budget estimate. Presumably they were overlooked when the budget was prepared, except, of course, the Social Security act demands. At that time no one knew what that expense would be. No one knows now. The president sent in the figures when he got an estimate. As Mr. Brown says, the New Deal idea is to enact the law first and then find out what it costs. There will be, of course, other demands and appropriations before the session adjourns.

The treasury statement of April 15 shows a deficit of $2,410,000,000 for the first nine months of this fiscal year. It was on January 3, 1934, that Mr. Roosevelt told congress and the country that "the government should plan to bring its 1936 expenditures, including recovery and relief, within the revenue expected in the fiscal year 1936. We should plan to have a definite balanced budget for the third year of recovery." Well, the facts are we are going to be about three billion short of that mark. We not only will have that much of a deficit for 1936 but no one knows what it will be in 1937.

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THE POINT OF all this is that the budgetary affairs of the country are clearly out of hand. No one knows to what extent. What we do know is that more, not less, money will have been appropriated this year than last. No one knows how much we are spending, just as no one knows how much, under the next tax bill, we will receive. Everybody is in the dark. It's all a guess—both as to where we are going and how we will come out.

Bits for Breakfast

By R. J. HENDRICKS

"Reminiscences of an Old Timer," reviewing life of pioneer, miner and scout of the northwest: 5-1-36

(Continuing from yesterday: "I whispered to Allen, 'shall we shoot him?' He said, 'yes, of course.'

"With fear and trembling, I leveled my gun across the log as Allen had already done. Upon his touching my foot, we fired together. The bear was probably 20 feet from us.

"At the crack of the guns he gave an angry snort. This noise resembles the snort of a horse when at play he stops running, throws his head high and forces his breath from his lungs through his nostrils, so producing a sound similar to the angry snort of a grizzly.

"As the sound of the guns and snort of the bear died out, we heard a smashing behind us and back of our brush tent.

"My first thought was 'another grizzly.'

"Grasping my revolver and whirling around I saw Joe Draper scrambling up a small fir tree that stood just behind our tent.

"When I first saw him he was fully 15 feet up the tree and making time that would not have disgraced an Ohio grey squirrel.

"As the grizzly had disappeared, we all turned our attention to Draper, in the tree.

"Imagine a man climbing a tree, in shirt and drawers, said tree a perfect thistle of small, sharp, dead limbs, hard to describe to any one not acquainted with our white firs.

"When Joe reached the ground he somewhat resembled the map of Mexico, after that country had been interviewed by Generals Taylor and Scott.

"To say we slept more that night would be preposterous, and only an old timer can fully realize the comical remarks of first one and then another, accompanied by peals of laughter that made the surrounding mountains ring with our merriment at Draper's expense.

"One would say, 'Joe, where's the rest of your drawers?' Another, 'Joe, I have an extra shirt, you can have it,' and again, 'there's plenty of balsam on your tree for your scratches. "One of the party remarked that a rag picker would make a stake if he could only get to Joe's fir tree.

"Next morning we followed the trail of the grizzly, which was easily traced by the blood; we found him dead some miles below the camp.

"This was one of the largest grizzly bears I ever saw; would have weighed fully 1500 pounds.

"After working a short time on this creek, the prospect being poor, we returned to Old Humbug and divided up, I selling out to Carwile, Draper and Allen.

"I then went into partnership with a young man named Len Study, and we commenced prospecting on a high bar on the north fork, by running a drift, or tunnel.

"We had been at work six weeks or two months without raising a color, and, as the bedrock raised toward the mountain, we were of the opinion that there was no 'pay' in the bar.

"As we had left our blankets at Round Town, Study said to me one morning, 'If you will go and get our blankets today I will run the drift a few feet further, and, if the bedrock keeps rising, we will move to some other place to prospect.'

"So I started down the creek for the blankets, some 10 miles distant.

"On my return about 4 o'clock in the afternoon as I came within hearing I heard Study whistling.

"This being the first whistle I had heard from him for a month, it naturally excited my curiosity to know what had put him in such fine spirits.

"On reaching the cabin I found Study busy preparing supper, and asked him what had put him in such good humor.

"He showed me seven or eight dollars in specimens, which he said he had panned out of dirt taken from the drift that evening, and that he had no doubt but we had 'struck it,' and in the near future would be rich and respectable.

"After much talk and speculation as to the probable richness of the strike, we wrapped ourselves in our blankets and were soon dreaming of rich diggings, big nuggets, home and relatives.

"In my dreams that night I had from my claim amassed an immense fortune and returned to my poor relatives."

(Continued tomorrow.)

Health

By Royal S. Copeland, M.D.

THIS BODY of ours is subject to many annoying disturbances of its skin covering. There are various disorders given a general name, "dermatitis". This is really an inflammation of the skin and it can be caused by an external cause or by some internal disorder.

When the underlying cause is an internal disturbance, it may be difficult to detect it. For example, "eczema" is a chronic inflammation of the skin. It may result from an upset in the digestive system, the glandular system, or some other disorder within the body.

As I have said, certain skin disturbances may be due to some irritant reaching it from outside the body. Ivy poisoning is an example of this type. Many distressing inflammations come from exposure to some irritating substance.

Sensitivity to Wood

"Dermatitis venenata" is the big name given a strange disease of the skin. It is caused by sensitivity to a certain Brazilian walnut wood. A recent outbreak of this ailment occurred in a large cabinet-making plant. After contact with the wood for several days, the workmen noticed that the skin of the hands became red. Pimples and blisters formed on the hands, forearms, face and neck. In a few cases the face became so swollen that the victim was unable to open the eyes. Other workmen complained of running eyes, running nose and sneezing.

Of course, this particular form of inflammation of the skin is an extremely rare condition. I mention it because many other irritations of the skin can be traced to contact with some unusual piece of wood, a particular article of clothing, or to some article of food or drink. This may prove to be a source of chronic irritation of the skin.

Consult Expert

The unsuspecting victim believes he is afflicted with a chronic disorder of the skin, such as eczema, psoriasis or another similar disease. At times the victim resorts to home treatment, using self-prescribed salves and ointments, hopeful that relief will be obtained.

Until the underlying cause is determined and removed, I would advise all my readers who are subject to chronic disorders of the skin to consult an expert. Bear in mind that self-medication is often false economy. At times it may aid in the prolongation of the disturbance. Often, indeed, the trouble is increased by the application of substances that are irritating rather than soothing.

Answers to Health Queries

D. E. Q.—What can be done for pimples? I am very self-conscious due to my poor complexion.

A.—Correct your diet. This is very important. For further particulars send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and repeat your question.

C. H. Q.—How much should a girl 13 years old, 5 feet 4 inches tall, weigh, and a girl 21 years old, five feet 6 inches tall?

A.—You should weigh 128 pounds and 133 pounds consecutively, as determined by examination of a number of people.

Dr. Copeland is glad to answer inquiries from readers who send addressed stamped envelope with their questions. Address all letters to Dr. Copeland in care of this newspaper at its main office in this city.

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Children's Clinic Scheduled May 5

ORCHARD HEIGHTS, April 30—The May meeting of the Orchard Heights Women's club will be held at the home of Mrs. Clinton Kennedy instead of at the Popcorn school as previously planned. This is the last meeting prior to the summer vacation. The date is May 14.

Children of school and preschool age of the Popcorn and Mountain View districts may be vaccinated for prevention of small pox and diphtheria at West Salem, May 5, when the county health association will hold a clinic for that purpose.

Miss Marie Yates of Longview, Wash., has been a guest of relatives here the past fortnight. She will remain for some time.

Frank W. Wilson, who has been seriously ill for three weeks with blood poisoning in one ankle, is able to be about again.

Cast Is Selected For Three-Act Play to Be Presented at Stayton

STAYTON, April 30—The cast for the three-act play, "Small Town Romeo", to be given as a benefit for the Boy Scouts, includes Gweneth Mielke; Sylvia Stupka, Everette Gettmann, Thomas Palmer, Bob Ross, Ralph Kleen, D. George Cole, Florence Adams, Irene Goyette and Ellen Reynolds.

The play, which will be presented at an early date, is being directed by Thomas Palmer.

Maxwell Erects Turkey Brooder; Balloon Tires Reach Orchard Tractor

DAYTON, April 30—A turkey brooder house 30 by 72 feet in size to accommodate 3000 poults in 12 pens, is being erected at the E. M. Maxwell farm near Dayton.

A new tractor with full set of balloon tires has been purchased to be used to cultivate the Hibbert fruit and nut farms near Dayton.

Twenty Years Ago

May 1, 1916

All the rebels in Dublin have surrendered.

The house defeated the senate bill authorizing independence for the Philippines in four years.

Dennis McMurray of Independence donned a wig and woman's clothing and eloped with William Stanton's wife, who lives near East Independence. Stanton has sworn out warrants for both.

Ten Years Ago

May 1, 1926

A convicted wife beater received 5 lashes across his bare back in Baltimore, Md., administered by the sheriff.

Kimball school of Theology will remain in Salem.

Clyde Kendall lost his dog. A week later, it was discovered in a well. A small boy was lowered 40 feet into the well and then hoisted to the surface with the dog in his arms.

"If the President can do it, so can I"

"There's Murder in the Air"

by Roy Chanslor

CHAPTER XXVI

Jim led the way to the rear of the kitchen, and out onto a wide porch. Nicky followed closely. A big truck was backed up against the porch. It was loaded with legal beer, three point two, in full-sized thirty-one-gallon barrels.

Three barrels were rolled onto the porch, and were stood upright. Nicky watched this operation wonderingly. The driver waved good-by and drove away. Jim surveyed the three barrels with a grin.

"Good beer," he said complacently, "and strictly legit."

He stood by, instructing the men handling the barrels. Still upright, they were carefully moved through the door of the huge refrigerating-room which opened off the porch. Jim dismissed the men, and they stepped into the kitchen, leaving Jim and Nicky alone. Jim quickly fastened the doors which led to the porch and the kitchen.

Then he twisted a lever, and a concealed door at the rear of the refrigerating-room opened, to reveal the small dimly lighted room through which they had passed on their way. Jim peered at the barrels.

Nicky saw that one of them had apparently already been tapped. He stared as Jim seized a hammer and a chisel and began to pry off the top of this barrel. He stared harder at what he saw inside: the figure of a girl, bound and gagged.

Jim chuckled, lifted her into his arms. Her eyes were wide with fright, and she struggled feebly. Jim held her tightly, and motioned Nicky into the small room. Jim followed with the girl in his arms, twisted another lever, and the door to the refrigerating-room closed silently.

"Open up, Nicky," he said, grinning. "We got a guest."

Nicky opened the door to the stairs. Jim carried the girl up them. Nicky pressed the automatic catch inside the door and followed. Jim passed two of the doors in the long hallway, paused before the third, the one nearest the front.

At a nod, Nicky unlocked it with a key from his pocket.

* * * *

Dawn had come, gray and cheerless, as Tyler and Nat trod wearily back toward the cottage, with the memory of Gordon's face, gray as the dawn itself, still haunting them. At the fountain Tyler stopped, leaned his back against the edge and fumbled for a cigarette.

"Well?" said Nat.

Tyler shook his head in exasperation.

"Nat," he said, "it's plain to me that besides ourselves, there are only two people on this estate that we can trust completely."

Nat raised his eyebrows inquiringly.

"And they are—Ruth, and Gordon himself," said Tyler. "The devil of it is that Gordon is now no use to us. He's just—licked. I don't wonder, but the fact remains. We can't count on anybody but ourselves now. And that means we've got to depend almost entirely on—Ruth."

Nat nodded despairingly.

"It certainly seems obvious that Gaudio has an accomplice inside the house," he said. "That accomplice either made the attacks on Gordon and Hélène himself—or aided some one from outside in getting in. And that accomplice tipped off Gaudio where Hélène was."

"Exactly," said Tyler. "I notice that you say, 'That accomplice—himself.' You won't accept the possibility—"

"That it was a woman?" interrupted Nat quickly. "Of course I won't! Doris is innocent! Call that just blind faith if you will, but remember this, *no woman* knew where Hélène was!"

"And who did know?" demanded Tyler. "Gordon himself, Dr. Grace, yourself, myself, Dr. Karasc—"

He stopped himself and darted a swift look at Nat.

"Dr. Karasc!" he repeated softly.

"Don't be silly!" said Nat.

Tyler shrugged.

"You've forgotten something," said Nat. "Another person knew: Collins, the chauffeur who drove you to the sanitarium!"

Tyler gave an exclamation. Then he was off, his long legs striding, toward the garage. Nat followed. Collins was asleep in the apartment over the garage which he shared with the other chauffeurs. They roused him. Tyler asked him to dress.

Collins did so without protest, and followed them into the garden. Very quietly Tyler told the man what had happened in the night.

Collins gasped, stared at Tyler unbelievingly.

"Collins," said Tyler quietly, "some one—either you or myself, or Mr. Benson or Dr. Grace, or Mr. Gordon, told somebody, either inadvertently or deliberately, where Miss Hélène was. Neither Mr. Benson or myself did so. I don't think Dr. Grace or Mr. Gordon did. Did *you?*"

The man wet his lips, ran his hand across his face. Then he nodded, slowly.

"Yes," he said hoarsely. Then, quickly: "I didn't see that it was any harm. She said she wanted to surprise Miss Hélène—"

"She?" said Nat dully.

"Miss Doris," said Collins. "It was this afternoon when we were in the town—just before Mrs. Gordon—disappeared. Miss Doris ran back from the others. I was alone in the car. She said she was getting a surprise present for Miss Hélène—asked me where she was, so she could have it sent. I—didn't think—"

He stopped, turned a troubled face toward Tyler.

"I didn't realize," he said; "I told her."

* * * *

Hélène lay on a couch in a room with blank, windowless walls, a room illuminated by a single drop-light which hung from the ceiling. She didn't know whether it was day or night. How many hours had it been since the man with the black mustache had lifted her from that stifling barrel and carried her upstairs to this room?

Ages, it had seemed, she had lain there fighting to control her nerves, in that utterly silent room. She had heard music as she was carried up the stairs, dance-music. But it had been shut out completely as soon as that door had been closed behind the man with the black mustache, and the slim man with the hard little eyes.

Finally a man she had not seen before had brought her eggs, toast, marmalade, orange-juice and coffee. She had refused them. He had shrugged and departed, leaving the tray. And then she had forced herself to eat. She had to keep up her strength; she needed it if she were to conquer the terror in her heart.

She must keep her mind clear, her wits sharp, must not dwell on the horror which still lingered in her mind, the horror of that night, in her bedroom, that shot from the curtained door, that seemingly interminable daze which had followed. Those things were intangible, vague, not understood. She must not dwell upon them—now.

She heard a key turn in the lock, and stared at the door. The black-mustached man slipped quietly into the room, and locked the door behind him. Hélène shrank back on the couch until her back touched the wall. As he came slowly toward her, the drop-light in the center of the room illuminated his features. He was smiling. Her eyes went wildly about the room, fell despairingly on the blank and windowless walls. The man spoke, softly.

"Don't be afraid," he said. "I'm not goin' to hurt you."

The girl quieted her nerves as best she could, managed a feeble smile.

"That's better," he said.

He unbuttoned his coat, revealing half a dozen long thin cigars in his vest pocket. He took one of these, fastidiously cut off the end with a gold knife attached to his watch-chain, lighted it with a gold lighter. He took one or two approving puffs, then turned his eyes to hers.

"Nobody's goin' to hurt you," he said. "Not if you act nice and sensible. It's money we want, of course. Your old man's got plenty of that. I'm sendin' him a little love letter, sayin' everything will be hunky-dory if he hands over two hundred and fifty G's."

The girl stared at him uncomprehendingly.

"Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars," he elaborated, smiling.

"Oh," she said. "That's a lot of money.... But I'm sure Dad—"

"Of course he will," said the man softly. "If his wife and his daughter ain't worth a quarter of a million—"

"His wife!" exclaimed Hélène.

"Sure," said the man. "We got her too. Just to make it official. We won't hurt either one of you, if you'll—"

"Where is Carlotta?" demanded the girl.

"Meaning Mrs. Gordon?" the man asked. "She's in another nice little boudoir with no windows. Now here's the point: I want a note from each of you, see? Telling the old man he'd better do what we say—or else. I think that'll make him realize just what he's up against. Without those notes, he might get the crazy idea we'd already bumped you two ladies off, see? That would make him feel kind of bad. I don't want to worry him none."

"Why—why, of course I'll write the note," said Hélène.

"Good," said the man.

From his vest pocket he took a fountain pen, handed it to her. Then he opened his coat, reached into an inside pocket, took out several envelopes. The girl saw that some of them had writing on them. She stood up and held out her hand.

"Give me something to write on," she said.

He grinned, selected a blank envelope, handed it to her, and started to put the others back in his pocket. The girl swayed suddenly, gasped, closed her eyes. The man hastily threw an arm about her. He felt her go limp; her hand clutched his convulsively.

With an impatient exclamation he picked her up, laid her on the couch. Her hand still held tightly to one of his, the hand in which he held the letters. With his other hand he opened her fingers. Her eyes flickered, then opened. Her fingers relaxed.

Her eyes flashed to the man's hand, took in the name on the top envelope, closed again. He gave her a sharp look. She opened her eyes, seemed to rouse herself by an effort, sat up on the couch, shaking her head apologetically.

"Oh—I'm so sorry," she breathed. "I—it was stupid of me. But I—I'm all right now."

The man regarded her for a moment through half-lowered lids. Then he shrugged, and replaced the envelopes in his pocket.

"Water?" he asked.

"Please," she said. "Would you mind?"

He grunted and crossed the room, went through a door. It was the bathroom, and like the other, was without windows. He turned on the water. While he waited a moment for it to cool, he stole quietly back to the door and peered cautiously at the girl. She was rubbing her temples ruefully.

The man grinned, filled the glass and took it to the girl. She drank it gratefully.

"Thank you," she said. "New—about that note—"

* * * *

Nat was filled with a feeling of helpless rage as he paced restlessly back and forth across the living-room of the cottage. It was bad enough, this waiting, under any circumstances. But now, alone, out of communication with everybody, it was almost intolerable.

Why were they all avoiding him?

For everyone certainly seemed to be doing just that. He hadn't talked to a soul since luncheon. And that had been a meal filled with constraint. Immediately afterward Doris, complaining of a headache, had retired to her room. It was obviously an excuse.

Of course, he could understand why Gordon wanted to be alone; it was perfectly natural. But Doris—and even Ruth and Tyler! That was too much!

Had Doris, he wondered gloomily, seen the questions in his eyes? Was that why she was so suddenly afflicted with a headache?

Could she have seen him and Tyler talking with Collins? And guessed that Collins had revealed the fact that she had asked where Hélène was? He brushed the thought aside impatiently. Doris could have nothing to conceal!

(To Be Continued)

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