6-Cent Offer For Cherries

Crop Prospect Is Slightly Better Than Last Year Locally

Offers of a 6-cent minimum on Royal Anne cherries and purchase of the Woodburn red raspberry pool at 8½ cents by Max Gehlhar of the Oregon Fruit Products cannery of West Salem may be considered to have put some definite complexion in the cherry and raspberry deals for this year. The cherry figure is a cent higher than paid last year. So far as has been revealed, Royal Anne offers this season have been a 5-cent contract with market guarantee.

Some canners hold that it is still slightly early to tell just what the cherry prospects will be this year, but the best available information now is for a slight increase over last year in the Salem growing area. However, orchards are showing spotted conditions in cherries, just as with prunes this year. Around Dallas, the cherry crop is said to hold generally excellent prospects; in the lowlands nearer Salem the prospect is up in some orchards, down in others. In general, later blooming trees hold better prospects than those which came in to bloom early. Backyard cherry growers in Salem apparently will have a short crop.

The Dalles Crop Poor

The Dalles Royal Anne crop is reported, at this stage, to hold prospect of not more than a 40 per cent normal crop, according to word here.

Gehlhar, in verifying purchase of brining cherries at 6 cents, declared there is a strong wish on part of both growers and barrelers that the cherry market do not sky rocket as have berries this season, for the essential reason that the brine industry is just becoming firmly established here and unreasonable market may play havoc with the whole brining industry in this section.

The Gehlhar plant, capacity of which has been materially enlarged this year by addition of a 60 by 100 foot two-story building for receiving, barrelling and warehouse purposes, will also handle the black cherry association cherries again this year. Bulk of this deal will be from the huge Lamberta orchards each of town. Lamberta orchards, according to reports to Gehlhar, promise a good yield this season.

The red raspberries in the Woodburn pool will be the harvest from about 50 acres, and will run about 50 per cent a normal crop, it is expected.

Free Movies Slated

AURORA, May 21.—Starting Saturday night, June 5, the free movie-talkie pictures will again be seen in Aurora. The business men of Aurora are sponsoring these shows.

Quotations at Portland

PORTLAND, Ore., May 21—(AP)—Produce Exchange: Butter—Extras 30½; standards 29½; prime firsts 29½; firsts 28; butterfat 32-32½.

Eggs—Large extras 20; large standards 18; medium extras 19; medium standards 17.

Cheese—Triplets 17c; loaf 18c.

Portland Grain

PORTLAND, Ore., May 21—(AP)—Grains:

Wheat:	Open	High	Low	Close
May	1.17½	1.17½	1.15½	1.15½
July	1.08½	1.08½	1.08	1.08
Sept.	1.06½	1.06½	1.06½	1.06½

Cash wheat: Big Bend bluestem, hw, 12 pct 1.19; dark hard winter 13 pct 1.26; 12 pct 1.20; 11 pct 1.22; soft white, western white, hard winter and western red, 1.18.

Oats, No. 2 white 33.50, gray 32.50. Barley, No. 2-45 lb. B.W. 40.00. Corn, Argentine 42.00. Millrun standard 31.00. Today's car receipts: Wheat 15; flour 8.

Portland Produce

PORTLAND, Ore., May 21—(AP)—Butter—Prints, A grade, 33c lb. in parchment wrappers, 34c lb. in cartons; B grade, parchment wrappers, 32½c lb.; cartons 33½c lb.

Butter—(Portland delivery, buying price)—A grade 32-32½c lb.; country stations: A grade, 30-30½c; B grade, 1 cent less; C grade, 6 cents less.

B grade cream for market—Price paid producer: Butterfat basis, 55.2c lb.; milk, 66.7c lb.; surplus, 45.9c. Price paid milk board, 67c lb.

Eggs—Buying prices by wholesalers: Extras, 20c; standard 17c; medium 16c; medium firsts 15c; undergrade 15c dozen.

Cheese—Oregon triplets, 17c; Oregon loaf, 18c. Brokers will pay ½c below quotations.

Country meats—Selling price to retailers: Country killed hogs, best butcher, under 160 lbs. 13-13½c; vealers, 15-15½c; light and thin, 11-14c; heavy 11-12c lb.; canner cows, 9-10c; cutters 10-12c lb.; bulls 10-11c lb.; spring lambs 20-23c; old lambs 18c; ewes 5-11c lb.

Live poultry—Buying price by wholesalers: Colored hens, over 4½ lbs., 14-15c lb.; under 4 lbs., 15-16c lb.; Leghorn hens under 3½ lbs., 11-12c lb.; over 3½ lbs., 12-13c lb.; colored springs over 3½ lbs., 19-20c lb.; 2 to 3½ lbs., 19-20c lb.; Leghorn broilers, 15-17c; roosters, 9-7c lb.

Cantaloupes—Crate $10.

Potatoes—Deschutes, $2.85-$3; Klamath No. 1, $2.65-$3; Yakima, No. 1, (—) cental; local, $2.25 cental.

New potatoes—Calif., whites $2.25-2.40 per 50 lbs.

Onions—Oregon No. 1, $2-2.25 cental; Yakima, $1.75-$2 cental.

Onions—New crop, Texas Bermuda type $1.65 per 50-lb. crate.

Wool—1937 nominal: Willamette valley, medium 35c lb.; coarse and braids, 33c lb.; eastern Oregon, 28-30c lb.; crossbred, 32-33c lb.; medium, 31-32c lb.

Hay—Selling price to retailers: Alfalfa No. 1, $19.50 ton; oats and vetch, $15; clover, (—) ton; timothy, eastern Oregon, $20.50 ton; do valley, $16-16.50 ton, Portland.

Hops—Nominal, 1936, 35-40c.

Mohair—1937 contracts, 55c lb.

Cascara bark — Buying price, 1937 peel, 10c lb.

Sugar—Berry or fruit, 100s, $5.50; bales, $5.45; beet, $5.20 cental.

Domestic flour—Selling price, city delivery, 5 to 25 bbl. lots: Family patents, 98s, $7.65-8.05; bakers' hard wheat $6.25-6.10; bakers' bluestem, $6.05-6.35, blended hard, $6.05-7.40; graham, $6.50-6.70; whole wheat, $7.10-7.30 barrel.

Wool in Boston

BOSTON, May 21—(AP)—(USDA)—In a quiet wool market, good French combing lengths fine territory wools in original bags were quoted steady, 95-98 cents scoured basis, despite small demand.

Medium Missouri fleece wools in country packed lots containing combing and clothing lengths three-eighths and quarter bloods together brought a slightly broader demand than last week at 53-59 cents in the grease delivered east. The number of buyers was still limited.

Stocks & Bonds

(Compiled by Associated Press)

May 21

STOCK AVERAGES

(Combpiled by The Associated Press)

	30 Indust.	15 Rails	15 Util.	60 Stocks
Today	91.9	45.1	42.1	67.0
Prev. day	91.8	45.6	41.6	67.6
Month ago	93.8	45.7	45.1	69.6
Year ago	80.8	38.4	45.7	60.2
1937 high	101.6	49.5	54.0	75.8
1937 low	86.5	37.8	40.9	66.4
1936 high	99.3	43.5	53.7	72.8
1936 low	73.4	30.2	43.4	55.7

BOND AVERAGES

	20 Rails	10 Indust.	10 Util.	10 For'gn
Today	93.2	108.0	97.7	71.8
Prev. day	93.0	108.9	97.9	71.4
Month ago	98.6	102.6	99.7	71.7
Year ago	91.6	102.5	101.2	68.5
1937 high	99.0	104.4	102.8	74.7
1937 low	92.6	102.4	97.8	70.5
1936 high	98.2	104.4	103.1	73.0
1936 low	86.9	101.8	99.8	67.6

Wheat Losses Run Heavily

Nearly 4-Cent Fall Comes Chiefly in May Deal; Exports Slow

CHICAGO, May 21—(AP)—Heavy selling attributed to eastern sources, and looked upon as closing out of accounts of May holders, tumbled wheat down almost 4 cents late today.

The fall of values was chiefly in May wheat, and was more or less associated with notices given of intentions to deliver 700,000 bushels of Chicago May contracts tomorrow.

At the close, notwithstanding Chicago wheat futures were ½-3⅝ under yesterday's finish, May $1.28⅛-⅜, July $1.20⅝-¾, Sept. $1.19-1.19⅛, corn ⅛ off to 1½ up, May $1.33½, July $1.19⅝-½, Sept. $1.09⅝-½, oats ½ lower to ¼ higher, May 51⅛, and rye varying from ⅝ decline to ⅝ advance, May $1.17. Provisions closed unchanged to a setback of 37 cents.

A bearish factor was death of export business today in Canadian wheat, total purchases being estimated at only 250,000 bushels. A little No. 2 United States hard winter wheat was announced as having been bought today for August-September shipment to Europe. Cable advices were that European crop conditions are far from satisfactory, and unfavorable wet weather abroad was noted, affecting Germany and Great Britain in particular.

May wheat in Chicago closed at today's bottom price levels, $1.28⅛, as against $1.32 in yesterday's final transactions, with uncompleted contracts totaling 6,755,000 bushels.

Coast Wheat Feed Market Holds Steady Past Week

PORTLAND, May 21—(AP)— The bureau of agricultural economics said today Pacific coast wheat feed markets remained steady and unchanged during the week ending May 19.

The tone at Portland remained firm, reflecting a light output by mills and a good local demand.

Salem Market Quotations

Grade B raw 4 per cent milk. Salem basic pool price $2.08 per hundred.

Co-op butterfat at price. F.O.B. Salem, 31½c.

(Milk based on semi-monthly butterfat average.)

Distributor price, $2.34.

A grade butterfat—Delivered, 31½c; B grade, delivered, 30½c.

A grade print, 33c; B grade 32c.

Prices paid to growers by Salem buyers. (The prices below supplied by a local grocer are indicative of the daily market but are not guaranteed by The Statesman.

FRUITS
(Buying Prices)

Apples, Newtowns	1.65
Winesaps, bu., extra fancy	2.25
Bananas, lb., on stalk	05½
hands	.06
Dates, fresh, lb.	20c
Texas Grapefruit	3.75 to 4.25
Lemons, crate	6.00 to 7.25
Oranges—Navels	
Fancy	4.35 to 6.00
Choice	3.35 to 5.00
Valencias	3.50 to 5.25
Strawberries, Calif., box, retail	.15

VEGETABLES
(Buying Prices)

Asparagus, local, doz., bu.	1.10
Beets, Calif., doz.	.60
Cabbage, red, lb	.03
Cabbage, lb.	.04½
Carrots, doz	.65
Cauliflower, Calif., crate	1.50
Celery, crate	2.25 to 2.85
Utah	2.25
Hearts, doz.	1.25
Endive, doz.	.75
Lettuce, Cal., iced, 5 doz.	2.70 to 3.00
Local, crate	2.65
Mustard Greens, doz.	.40
Onions, green, doz.	.25
Onions, No. 1, cwt.	1.30
Radishes, doz.	.25
Parsnips, lb.	.01½
Peppers, green, Calif., lb.	.20
Red, lb.	.12
Peas, Calif., 50-lb. sack	2.50
New Potatoes, 50-lb. bag	1.40
Potatoes, local, No. 1, cwt.	3.00
No. 2, cwt., bag	1.75 to 1.80
Potatoes, sweet, No. 1	2.50
Rhubarb, local, per lb.	.02
Rutabagas, cwt.	2.00 to 2.25
Spinach, local, orange box	.75
Tomatoes, 20-lb. crate	3.25
Turnips, doz.	.60

NUTS

Walnuts, lb.	11 to .15½
Filberts, 1936 crop, lb.	16 to .19½

HOPS
(Buying Prices)

Clusters, 1936, lb.	38 to .40
Foggles	nominal

WOOL AND MOHAIR
(Buying Prices)

Mohair	.55
Medium wool	.35
Coarse wool	.33

CASCARA BARK

Dry, lb.	.10
Green, lb.	.04

EGGS AND POULTRY
(Buying Price of Andrews)

White extras	.16
Brown extras	.16
Medium extras	.14
Large standards	.14
Medium standards	.12
Pullets	.12
Heavy hens, lb.	.14
Colored mediums, lb.	.13
Medium Leghorns, lb.	.10
Stags, lb.	.03
Old roosters, lb.	.05
Colored springs	.16
White Leghorns, frys	.15

MARION CREAMERY Buying Prices

Butterfat, A grade	.31½
B grade	.30½
Live poultry, No 1 stock—	
Colored hens, under 4½ lbs.	.13
Colored hens, over 4½ lbs.	.13
Colored fryers	.16
Leghorn hens, heavy	.11
Leghorn hens, light	.09
Leghorn broilers	.14
Roosters	.05
Rejects	market value
Stags, lb.	.06
No. 2 grades, 2 cents less.	
Eggs—Candled and graded—	
Large extras	.16
Medium extras	.14
Large standards	.14
Medium standards	.12
Undergrades	.12
Pullets	.10
Dirty extras	.14

LIVESTOCK
(Buying Prices)

1937 spring lambs, lb.	.10
Lambs, lb.	.08
Ewes	3.00 to 4.00
Hogs, top, 150-210 lbs.	10.50
130-150 lbs.	9.75 to 10.25
210-230 lbs.	10.25
Sows	8.00
Dairy type cow	4.50 to 5.50
Beef cows	6.00 to 7.50
Bulls	6.00 to 7.00
Heifers	7.50 to 8.50
Top veal	8.50
Dressed veal, lb.	.13½
Dressed hogs, lb.	.13¾

GRAIN AND HAY

Wheat, white, No. 1	.97½
Wheat, western red	.97
Barley, brewing, ton	40.00
Feed, barley, ton	39.50
Oats, milling, ton	38.00
Feed, ton	25.00
Hay, buying prices—	
Alfalfa, valley	18.00
Oat and vetch, ton	9.00
Clover, ton	10.00

Strawberry Growers of Hills Report Damage to Crops due to May Frost

SILVERTON HILLS, May 21—Strawberry growers here are reporting some damage to the early strawberries from the heavy frost early this month. They also report if the favorable weather conditions continue, picking will begin within two weeks. The Marshalls and Redhearts have almost completely replaced the Etterbergs and other varieties formerly cultivated here.

Dusting of berries this season has been extensive.

Power Stocks Gain Slightly

Market up and Down With Levels Unchanged in Day's Trading

NEW YORK, May 21—(AP)—The stock market ventured a little higher at one time today but fell back to around previous closing levels before the end.

Slight progress by industrials and utilities contrasted with downturns in rails.

Measured by The Associated Press average of 60 shares the market was unchanged at 67.6. Transactions fell to 767,360 shares from 1,229,080 Thursday.

Merchandising issues put up a show of resistance late in the session while other groups were suffering largely from neglect.

American Can Gains

Stocks up fractions to around a point were American Can at 98½, Consolidated Edison 35½, American Power & Light 9, General Electric 54⅛, Montgomery Ward 51⅝, Sears Roebuck 86½, Woolworth 49, Texas Corp. 59⅝, and Standard Oil of New Jersey 66½.

Down about as much were Anaconda at 53⅛, Santa Fe 87¼, Bethlehem Steel 84⅛, U. S. Steel 98⅝, Columbia Gas 12, Illinois Central 30, New York Central 45⅝, Westinghouse 138½ and Celanese 39¼.

Record Breaking Sales Of Canned Pears During April Bolster Markets

MEDFORD, May 21—(AP)—Oregon pear growers will have normal market conditions this year because of record breaking sales of canned pears in April, David Rosenberg, chairman of the Medford pear growers committee, said today.

He explained the nation-wide selling campaign sponsored by the Pacific Coast Pear Growers, cooperating with operators of 37,000 chain stores, reduced the 1936 carry over from 3,083,366 cases to 1,749,977.

The surplus now is only seven per cent above normal, growers expect sales next week to level off warehouse stocks and insure orderly marketing this summer.

Gardeners' and Ranchers' Mart

PORTLAND, May 21—(AP)—Supplies on the Gardeners' and Ranchers' market today were liberal, trading being dull with prices steady and unchanged.

Radishes hit a top of 45c per dozen bunches.

Small shipments of locally-grown turnips and cauliflower were received.

Strawberries were slightly stronger but the movement slow.

Citrus fruits are moving slowly but prices have remained steady.

California peas and lettuce decreased in price.

Apples—Winesaps extra fancy $2.25-2.50; Newtowns, extra fancy $2-2.10.

Asparagus—Oregon, T-8c, 30-lb. crate, $2-2.25; Wash., crates, $2-2.25.

Beans—Calif., 13-15c lb.

Beets—Per sack, Oregon, $1.85.

Broccoli—Crate, $2.25-2.30.

Brussells Sprouts — California, one-fourth drums, $2.75.

Cabbage—Calif., $3-3.40 crate; Sacramento, $2-2.50.

Carrots—Oregon lugs, 40-50c; Calif., bunched $3.25-3.75.

Cauliflower—Calif., pony, $1.60-1.70; Oregon, $1.40-1.50.

Celery—Calif., ¾ crates, $2.25-2.75.

Cucumbers—Oregon and Washington hothouse, $2.50-3.25.

Eggplant—California, lug, $1.50-1.60.

Garlic—Per pound, 10-15c.

Grapes—Emperors, $1.60-1.75.

Lettuce—Oregon dry, 5 doz., $1.25-1.50; Calif., $2.75-$3 for 5 doz.; 6 doz., $2-2.25.

Mushrooms—One pound cartons, 45-45c.

Onions—50-pound sacks, U. S. No. 1, yellow, $1.25-1.50.

Onions—Green, doz. bunches, 30-35c.

Parsley—Per dozen bunches, 40-45c.

Parsnips—Per lug, 35-40c.

Peas—Calif., $2.25.

Peppers—Mexico, 22-25c lb.; $7-7.50 per crate.

Potatoes—U. S. No. 1, 100-lbs., Oregon russets, $2.75-$3.00; Washington russets, $2.85-$3; local, $2.25-2.40.

Radishes—Per doz. bunches, 25-30c.

Rhubarb—Oregon field grown, apple boxes, 65-75c.

Rutabagas—Washington, 100-lb. sacks, $1.50-1.75.

Spinach—Oregon, Washington, $1.00-1.15.

Turnips—Doz. bunches, 60-90c.

Tomatoes — Oregon hothouse, 20-25c per pound; Mexico, $3-3.50.

Strawberries—Florida 12s, $1.50-1.65.

Squash—Oregon, per pound, Hubbard, 2¾c. Marblehead, 2¾c.

Turnips—Doz. bunches, 60-65c.

Tomatoes — Oregon, hothouse, 20-25c per pound; Mexico, $3.50-$4.

Spinach—Local, 60-65c.

"RICH CARGOES"

by Henry C. Rowland

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Colonel stopped speaking and sat looking down at them with a sort of brooding melancholy. He gave no evidence of being under the least emotion. His disclosure had been made in the dispassionate narrative tone of an elderly adventurer describing early activities partly to be deplored and yet in which he takes a certain relish in reviewing.

Isobel was staring at him intently, lids narrowed, her expression rather of perplexity than of shock or horror. Sandy understood her problem which was in fact his own. He was unable to decide whether to accept the Colonel's confession as being true in whole, in part, or to dismiss it all as the invention of a mind once brilliant but now returned to the childish indulgence of imagination one might find in a young boy who has crammed his head with stories of wild adventure.

Perhaps the quartette come here to bleed the Colonel and to profit as much as possible by his brain softening had heard it all before, Sandy reflected. Vinckers however looked puzzled, dubious. Glancing at his face Sandy was inclined to believe that the overwhelming deposition to which they had just listened now inspired Vinckers with the same doubts that were felt by Isobel and by himself. The man looked set aback, almost disappointed. It flashed into Sandy's mind that this let down might be due to a double cause, that not only was Vinckers disgusted at seeing the props of his hope of blackmail knocked from under but that he was beginning to wonder if perhaps his own comparatively limited charges against the Colonel might be merely a part of a stupendous self delusion, that all of this grandiose outlawry described was actually no more than the dreams of a constructive imagination become fixed ideas. In such a case if the knowledge of the Colonel's past that Vinckers believed himself to possess had its origin in nothing more credible than the Colonel's own babblings to other people and reported by them, then Vinckers must actually find himself with nothing.

And now this prop to shore up the vehicle of Vinckers' hopes seemed knocked from under. Isobel, who appeared to have reached a decision about what she had just heard said gently, almost indulgently:—

"That is all very terrible, Uncle dear, but to tell the truth I'm not so surprised as you might think. For some time I have suspected that you must have had a terrific past."

The Colonel looked down upon her thoughtfully. "I see plainly that you do not believe a word of it, my dear. Well, perhaps that's better. Sometimes I find it hard to believe myself. But there's one more fact I feel you ought to know and which you are bound to believe because I hold the proof of it here in my hand. I am not your great-uncle, my dear child."

Sandy drew a deep breath. Then he glanced at Vinckers' face and nearly laughed. For if that ambitious blackmailer had previously looked disappointed his face now showed an utter dismay. It was plain to Sandy that the cable to Vinckers' last anchor, his best bower, was on the point of snapping to leave him hopelessly adrift.

The fresh blow that ensued made Sandy feel as if Mouse swaying gently had fallen on him. For the Colonel said in the same deep placed voice with its tinge of melancholy:

"I am not your great-uncle, my dear child, nor am I any blood kin to you at all. These documents will prove that conclusively."

Isobel did not flinch. Vinckers surged forward, then checked himself.

"In the eyes of the law," the Colonel said, "I am your father. But your adopted father. I took out papers of adoption by which you were made my daughter and my heiress many years ago on the death of your own father who was my dear friend. Entirely against my orders he met his death through an incident for which I was partly responsible, an aftermath of my unlawful operations in the state next the one of which he was Commissioner."

Isobel said in the voice of one humoring the beloved victim of delirium:

"I absolve you of that, Uncle dear, and I'll keep on calling you Uncle if you don't mind. Now do please get down and come in. We've all been through a dreadful strain and ought to rest."

"One moment," said the Colonel. "While we are about it, there is still something out of order that must be corrected here and now. I have born no ill will nor have cherished any rancor against these four guests of ours because I have understood their positions and the workings of natures such as theirs. Crime, criminal method of whatever sort is less that than error, a distorted state of mind. Also I know much of their past and feel sorry for them. They have suffered adversity and one of them has suffered a frightful experience I wish to be kind, to be indulgent and it is no part of my intention that when they leave here tomorrow on return of the cruiser they shall go empty handed. But there is one thing on which I must insist."

He stared at Vinckers from under his bushy eyebrows. The benignant face became commanding, austere.

"You will return immediately the jewels given by Mr. Crewe to Isobel and which you managed to steal from the grotto in my brief absence.

Vinckers, Sandy perceived, whether guilty or not guilty of this charge was quite prepared to face it. He answered emphatically:

"There at least you're wrong, Colonel. I have not got the jewels."

The Colonel's face became more menacing. He leaned lower over the rail of the hunting bowdah. "Do you attempt to deny that you tracked me to the grotto and took the jewels from the shelf of rock?"

"I deny it, sir, most emphatically," Vinckers answered. "I tracked you part of the way, but I did not go into the grotto."

"You are a liar, sir." The Colonel's voice thundered out like an explosion. It sent a tremor through the group. For the first time Sandy felt that perhaps there had been more truth than fiction in the confession to which he had just listened. This reverberating voice, the sudden blaze of ferocity in the erstwhile benignant face was entirely en rôle with the character that the Colonel had described himself at one time to have been. Even the elephant reacted to it. A sort of quiver passed through the great bulk that stirred then slowly moved in a semi-circle so that Mouse stood facing them.

Vinckers showed that however much a blackleg he might be, at least he was no coward. Hester, close beside him, manifested the same cool nerve, more in fact, as she had none of Vinckers' experience with elephants' moods and whims. Mouse had sidled round in a nervous manner, made restless by the gusty anger in the Colonel's voice and its harsh pitch and volume. Besides this fidgety movement, Mouse showed also his disquiet by a more rapid fanning of his great ears, which are a sort of barometer of the elephantine disposition. His half turn brought Vinckers and Hester, at the foot of the low steps and close together, within the swing of Mouse's trunk. But neither gave ground an inch.

The Colonel's face at that moment was enough to have struck terror into a guilty person, even had the Colonel been seated in his porch chair instead of atop an elephant which also was showing signs of irritation. This was purely sympathetic on the part of Mouse, whose temperamental rapport with the Colonel had from the first astonished Mike, but it made the huge beast forbidding none the less, so much so that Jarvis and Flavia retreated up the steps. But Vinckers and Hester did not flinch.

The Colonel studied them in silence. Sandy guessed that he was exerting all his power of will to subdue old impulses, apply the discipline of recent years to the fatal temper of early ones. Vinckers eyed him steadfastly but not insolently. Hester, less respectful, was more imprudent through her disbelief that this leonine old man, who like an old and broken spirited king of beasts had crept off to a grotto, still possessed his accredited force of bygone years. She drew out a gold monogrammed case and lighted a thick Russian cigarette. She edged a little closer to Vinckers, who put his arm about her. Hester, Sandy perceived, stood in no great awe of the Colonel nor of his ponderous mount, though the elephant's eyes were twinkling at her none too reassuringly.

Vinckers broke the short tense silence by saying evenly: "I'd have to be a sillier fool that I am, sir, to steal gems from the Banda Rajah.'

"That would be safer than trying to make a fool of him, Vinckers, here and now. I am convinced that you stole those gems. You had better hand them over and at once." The Colonel had his voice at least under control, also under pressure. He appeared to let it out cautiously from his big chest. His commanding features also had obeyed the order, "As you were." A mere human might have thought that the sirocco blast of rage had passed. But Mouse was not deceived. His trunk and ears were restless.

"Others had access to the grotto, sir," Vinckers said. "I would scarcely steal gems when I knew that you were bound to discover their loss immediately, and that nothing would infuriate you more. Especially when I hoped for something better."

The Colonel leaned forward. "Vinckers, again I say that you lie. Look me in the eyes and deny that you took them."

Vinckers glanced up at the Colonel, then let his gaze fall. It occurred to Sandy that a paretic could scarcely stare a man down. Vinckers stepped back, loosing the arm half around Hester's waist. The motion seemed to startle Mouse. A sinuous wave ran down his trunk. Then it extended more stiffly, seeming to point at Vinckers, or at Hester close against him accusingly. Hester, frightened at the way in which the lip at the end of the appalling proboscis appeared to menace her face, almost touching it, flung up the hand in which was held her lighted cigarette in its long ivory holder, and then as if suddenly irritated beyond prudence at the prehensile tip opening and shutting almost in her face she jabbed at it with the lighted end of her cigarette.

The elephant gave a whistling snort. The big ears went back, then came suddenly and rigidly forward. Hester shrank back with a stifled shriek. Mouse, incensed and no doubt excited at her sudden loss of courage, thrust forward his great head. Before Mike could exert any restraint, Mouse's trunk rolled out at the terrified woman. Its clutching tip fastened on the shoulder of her light dress, gripped a bight of the thin stuff and snatched it away. The whole of it. Hester shrieked again shrinking farther back. Before she could get clear of the deceptive reach of the stretching proboscis Mouse laid hold of what was left of the woman's scanty covering, whipped it away with a ripping of silk to leave her stark. And then, as Mouse gave a sort of flirt to the fabric before flinging it aside, a bright shower of gems that flashed fine scintillating rays of fire in the lurid light of the torches, planted and still burning there, fell tinkling on to the smooth flagging.

The Colonel, from his place on the elephant's back, failed to discover this detail of the woman's denouement. But he realized what had happened her and gave a harsh exclamation. Mike struck his heel behind Mouse's ear, and the elephant swung suddenly aside.

(To be continued)

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