Cloud Abroad Strains Street

AP Index at Close Before Holiday Lowest in Nine Months

NEW YORK, April 7.—(AP)—Stock exchange traders faced the Easter eve session with uncertainty today, as European developments continued disturbing.

Normally at this time, psychological effects of a market lag are more than countered by the usual optimistic predictions of seasonal upturn.

Today, however, there was little to engender enthusiasm except the very severity of the market's fall in recent sessions. The stock market was closed for Good Friday, but will reopen tomorrow, although European exchanges will remain closed in observance of Eastertide.

Lowest Since June

The Associated Press index of 60 stocks closed yesterday at $43.40, lowest since June 22, 1938. On March 1 it stood at $51.70.

Wall street opinion was widely mixed, many pointing out that seemingly London and Paris were less concerned, as indicated by market behavior, than Wall street.

Mission Society Enjoys Program

DALLAS—The regular monthly meeting of the Women's Missionary society of the First Christian church was held Wednesday afternoon in the church parlors, with about 25 present.

Group II, with Mrs. Eugene Hayter as leader, had charge of th program. Those taking part were Mrs. W. H. Effenberger, Mrs. Eugene Hayter, Mrs. A. N. Newbill, Mrs. Dornhecker and Mrs. O. D. Harris.

Salem Market Quotations

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

Apples—All varieties, fcy and ex fcy, per bu.	1.40 to 2.00
Bananas, lb. on stalk	.06
Hands	.06½
Calavos	1.40
Grapefruit, Texas pinks	3.50
Regular	3.00
Dates, fresh, lb.	.14
Lemons, crate	4.50
Oranges, crate	2.25 to 3.50

VEGETABLES —
(Buying Prices)

Asparagus, Calif.	.12
Beets, doz.	.40
Cabbage, lb.	.02
Carrots, Calif. crt., 6 doz.	2.50 to 3.50
Cauliflower, Calif.	1.25
Celery, Utah, crate	2.25
Celery Hearts, doz.	1.20
Lettuce, Calif.	2.50 to 3.50
Onions, boiling, 10 lbs., No. 1	.18
50 lbs	.80
Green onions, doz.	.40
Radishes doz.	.45
Peppers, green, Calif.	.22
Parsley	.40
Potatoes, local, cwt., No. 1	1.10
50 lb. bags	.35
Rhubarb, outdoor	.70 to .90
Hubbard, lb.	.03
Turnips, doz.	.40

NUTS
(Price paid by Independent Packing plant to grower)

Walnuts—Franquettes, fancy, 12c; medium, 10c; small 8c; orchard run, 8 to 10c. Walnut meats 25 to 30c lb.

Filberts—Barcelonas, large, 12¼c; fancy 11½c; babies, 11c; orchard run 11 to 18c.

Filberts—All moved out.

(Co-op Prices to Grower)

Walnuts—Price range, depending upon way nuts run in 14 different grades 11½-12c. Duchilly 1 cent higher.

HOPS
(Buying Prices)

Clusters, nominal, 1937, lb.	7 to .08
Clusters, 1938, lb	19½ to .21½
Fuggles, top	.23

WOOL AND MOHAIR
(Buying Prices)

Wool medium, lb.	.23
Coarse, lb.	.23
Lambs, lb.	.18
Mohair, lb.	.25

EGGS AND POULTRY
(Buying Prices of Andresen's)

Large extra	.18
Medium extras	.16
Large standards	.16
Pullets	.13
Colored frys	.15
Colored medium, lb.	.16
White Leghorns, heavy	.13
White Leghorns, light	.11
Heavy hens, lb.	.16
Old roosters	.05

LIVESTOCK
(Buying price for No. 1 stock, based on conditions and sales reported up to 4 p.m.

Lambs, 1939, top	8.00 to 8.25
Lambs	6.50 to 7.50
Ewes	2.00 to 3.50
Hogs, top	7.35
130-150 lbs.	6.85 to 7.35
210-300 lbs.	6.00 to 6.85
Sows	5.50 to 5.75
Beef cows	5.50 to 6.50
Bulls	5.00 to 6.00
Heifers	6.00 to 7.00
Top veal	9.00
Dairy type cows	3.50 to 5.00
Dressed veal, lb.	.13

MARION CREAMERY Buying Price

Butterfat, A grade	.22
Leghorn hens, over 3½ lbs.	.13
Leghorn hens, under 3½ lbs.	.11
Roasters, 4 lbs and over	.13
Fryers	.12
Colored hens, over 5 lbs.	.16
Old roosters, lb.	.05

No. 2 hens 3c less; No 2 springs, 5c less

EGG PRICES

Large special	.19
Large extras	.18
Large standards	.16
Medium extras	.16
Medium standards	.14
Undergrades	.14
Pullets	.14

GRAIN, HAY and SEEDS

Wheat, bu. Nok 1, recleaned	.70
Oats, grey, ton	28.00
White	25.00
Feed barley, ton	22.00 to 24.00
Clover hay, ton	12.00 to 13.00
Oat and Vetch hay, ton	12.00 to 13.00
Alfalfa, ton	15.00 to 16.00
Alsike Clover, lb.	.09 to .11
Red Clover, lb.	.12½
Egg mash, No. 1 grade, 80 lb. bag	1.60
Dairy feed, 80 lb. bag	1.30
Hen scratch feed	1.65
Cracked corn	1.65
Wheat	1.35 to 1.40

Grade B raw 4 per cent milk, Salem Co-op basic pool price $2.04.

Co-op Grade A butterfat price 22c.

(Milk based on semi monthly butterfat average)

Distributor price, $2.32.

A grade butterfat—Delivered 22c; B grade 20½c.

A grade print, 26c; B grade 25c; quarters, 27c.

Two Baby Girls Arrive April 3

SILVERTON —, Born to Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Levulett a daughter at the Silverton hospital April 3; to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Townes, a daughter, April 3, at the Silverton hospital.

Mrs. Eugene Hoffer underwent a major operation at the local hospital Thursday morning.

Spittle Bug Dust Program Started

Strawberry Pest Expected to Give Much Trouble This Spring

HAZEL GREEN—Dusting for the control of the spittlebug began this week. The bugs have appeared unusually early. Because of the mild winter much trouble is expected from the spittle bug and iris worms by the growers of strawberries. To the 284 acres grown here last year were added 30 acres: Lawrence and Clarence Zielinski, 10; T. A. Van Cleave and son, 5; Charles Zielinski, 5; Max Woods, 3.5; Lowery, 2.5; W. H. Williamson, 2.5; N. P. Williamson, 1.5 Marshalls.

The berries look well but need rain. Joseph Zielinski raised an acre of certified plants, part of which he planted on his 80-acre farm near Corvallis.

It is so dry that it has been necessary to irrigate the market gardens on Lake Labish. Usually the problem is to have the lake land dry enough to plant in March and April.

Polk 4H Leaders Meeting Is Today

DALLAS—The regular monthly meeting of the Polk county 4H club leaders' association is planned for Saturday, April 8, in connection with the meeting of the grange at Monmouth. Miss Helen Cowgill, assistant club leader will discuss various phases of this work. Miss Cowgill will discuss demonstrations and judging team work as well as style revue matters. Members of the leaders' association will join with the members of the grange at a covered dish noon dinner.

The afternoon will begin about 1 p. m. and will be an open meeting.

Onion Mart Slumps

LABISH CENTER—Erratic changes which have characterized the onion market recently were felt again this week, and buyers were making no purchases at all. Slumps in the market elsewhere are blamed for the present local reaction.

Quotations at Portland

PORTLAND, Ore., April 7.—(AP)—Produce exchange:

Butter — Extras 23; standards 22; prime firsts, 21½; firsts, 21.

Butterfat—22½-23c.

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

Cheese—Triplets, 12½; loaf, 13.

Portland Livestock

PORTLAND, Ore., April 7.—(AP)—(USDA) —Hogs: Receipts salable 50, total 400. Price range:

Barrows and gilts, gd-ch, 160-180 lbs.	$ 7.00@ 7.35
do 160-180 lbs.	7.25@ 7.65
do 180-200 lbs.	7.40@ 7.65
do 200-220 lbs.	7.25@ 7.65
do 220-250 lbs.	7.00@ 7.50
do 250-290 lbs.	6.75@ 7.25
do 290-350 lbs.	6.50@ 7.00
do med. 140-160 lbs.	6.75@ 7.25
Packing sows, good, 275-350 lbs.	6.00@ 6.50
do good, 350-425 lbs.	5.75@ 6.25
do good, 425-550 lbs.	5.75@ 6.00
do medium, 275-550 lbs.	5.50@ 6.00
Pigs (fdr. and stkr.), good and choice, 70-140 lbs.	7.00@ 7.50

Cattle: Receipts salable 25, total 25. Calves salable none, total 25. Price range:

Steers, good 900-1100	$9.00@ 9.25
do medium, 1100-1300	8.00@ 9.00
do com. (plain) 750-1100	7.00@ 8.00
Heifers, good, 750-900	8.25@ 8.50
do medium, 550-900	7.75@ 8.25
do com (plain) 550-900	6.25@ 7.75
Cows, all wts	7.00@ 7.25
do medium, all wts	6.00@ 7.00
do com (plain) all wts	5.00@ 6.00
do low-cut-cut, all wts	3.75@ 4.50
Bulls (ylgs exc) good (bf)	5.50@ 6.50
do medium, all wts	5.50@ 6.25
do cut-com (pln) all wts	4.50@ 5.50
Vealers, choice	9.50@10.00
do good, all wts.	8.50@ 9.50
do medium, all wts.	6.50@ 8.50
do cull com (plain)	4.50@ 6.50
Calves, medium, 250-400	6.00@ 7.50
do com (pln) 250-400	4.50@ 6.00

Sheep: Receipts salable 200, total 300. Price range:

Lambs, good and choice	8.00@ 8.25
do medium good	7.25@ 7.75
do common (plain)	6.50@ 7.25
Ewes, good-choice	3.50@ 4.00
do common (pln) med.	2.00@ 3.50

Portland Produce

PORTLAND, Ore., April 7.—(AP)—Country Meats—Selling price to retailers: Country-killed hogs, best butchers, under 160 lbs., 10-10½c lb.; vealers, 14-14½c lb.; light and thin, 10-12c lb.; heavy, 10-11c; yearlings 14-15c; spring lambs 16-18c lb.; ewes, 5-8c lb.; cutter cows, 8-9c lb.; canner cows, 8-9c lb.; bulls 10-11c lb.

Live Poultry—Buying prices: Leghorn broilers 13c lb.; colored broilers, 2 lbs. and over, 18-19c lb.; over 3½ lbs., 17-18c lb.; Leghorn hens, over 3½ lbs., 16c lb.; under 3½ lbs., 15c lb.; colored hens to 5 lbs., 18c lb.; over 5 lbs., 18c lb.; No. 2 grade, 5c lb. less.

Turkeys—Selling prices: Dressed, new crop hens, 26c lb.; toms, 26c lb. Buying prices: New hens 24c lb.; toms, 24c lb.

Potatoes—Yakima Gems, (—) cental; locals, 1.00; Deschutes Gems, 1.20-1.25 cental; Klamath Falls No. 1 Gems, 1.20-1.55; California sweets, 1.40-1.80; California yams, 1.75; southern yams, 2.10. New Florida, 2.80, 50-lb. box. Texas, 2.50-2.75.

Onions—Oregon No. 1 2.00 cental; sets, 3¾c lb.

Wool—Willamette valley, 1939 clip, nominal medium, 23c lb.; coarse and braids, 23c lb.; lambs and fall, 20c lb.; eastern Oregon, 20-22c lb.

Hay—Selling price to retailers: Alfalfa, No. 1, 16.00 ton; oat vetch, 12.00 ton; clover, 11.00 ton; timothy, eastern Oregon, 19.00; do valley, 14.00, Portland.

Hops—1938 Clusters, 20-25c lb.; Fuggles, 23c lb.

Mohair—Nominal, 1939 clip, 25c lb.

Cascara Bark—Buying price: 1938 peel, 5c lb.

Sugar—Berry and fruit, 100s, 5.00; bale 5.15; beet 4.90.

Domestic flour—Selling price, city delivery, 1 to 25-bbl lots: Family patent, 49s, 5.75-6.85; bakers' hard wheat, net, 3.70-5.15; bakers' bluestem 4.15-4.50; blended wheat flour 4.35-4.60; soft wheat flour, 4.55; graham 49s, 4.50; whole wheat, 49s, 4.95 bbl.

Wool in Boston

BOSTON, April 7—(AP)—(USDA)—Trading in spot wools on the Boston market was very slow today. A few users were buying some new fine territory wools to be delivered in June and July from the new clip. Prices agreed upon have been mostly around 62 cents, scoured basis, delivered east, for good French combing length fine territory wools. Some users, however, were lowering their bids on wools bought in this manner.

Sunshine Sewing Officers Elected

Mrs. Ralph Gilbert Heads 8-Year-Old Group of Hazel Green

HAZEL GREEN—Mrs. W. W. Rutherford, a special guest and 20 members of the Sunshine sewing club were entertained at the Ben Clemens' home with Mrs. Clemens, Mrs. Theodore Rostvold and Mrs. Allen Looney hostesses. Mrs. C. F. Doane and Mrs. Bert Wolf will be hostesses at Mrs. Doane's home April 12 for the last meeting of the season.

Officers were elected: President, Mrs. Ralph Gilbert; vice president, Mrs. C. A. Zielinski; secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Lawrence Zielinski. A wiener roast with husbands as guests was planned for A. T. Van Cleave campground April 21.

Mrs. Virgil Perrene, secretary, read the minutes of the first meeting, January, 1931, when the club was organized with 12 charter members.

The club has been active in school affairs as well as community social life.

Gardeners' Mart

PORTLAND, Ore., April 7.—(AP)—(US Dept. Agriculture).

Apples—Oregon Newtowns, med to lge, ex fcy, 1.50 1.60; fcy, 1.25-1.35; unclass, face and fill, 70 80c; Wash. Delicious, med to lge, ex fcy, 1.75-2.10; fcy, 1.75-1.85; Winesap, med to lge, ex fcy, 1.60-1.75, fancy, 1.40-1.60; comb. ex-fcy and fancy, loose, 3¼-3½c lb. Romes, fcy, 1.65-1.75.

Artichokes—Calif., 2.00-2.25; 45-55c.

Avocados, Calif., fuerte, 24-35¢, 1.20-1.40.

Asparagus—Calif., small to medium, 6-7c lb.; medium to large, 7-7½c.

Bananas—Per bunch, 5½c lb.; small lots, unquoted.

Broccoli—Oregon, bunches, 40 45c.

Brussels Sprouts—Unquoted.

Cabbage—Oregon Ballhead, new crates, Oswego, 2¾c; Calif., crates, 2.25-2.50; red, 3½-4c.

Carrots — Local, topped, 35 50c lug; sacks 1.00 1.50. Calif., bundled 40 45c.

Cauliflower — Local, No. 1 75 85c; No. 2, 40-50c; loose, No. 1, 90c doz.; Calif., No. 1, 95c-1.05.

Celery—Calif., Utah, 2.00-2.25; white, 2.25-2.65; hearts, 1.50-1.75.

Citrus Fruit—Grapefruit, Texas marsh seedless 2.75 3.00; pink, 3.00 3.50; Arizona fancy, 1 60 2.00; choice 1.60 1.75; Fla., 3.00 3.25; Calif., 1.80-1.90.

Lemons—Fancy, all sizes, 3.25 4.75, choice 50c less. Limes, 90c.

Limes—Doz. carton, 20 25c.

Oranges—California navels, 200 392s, 2.20-2.75; large, 2.75-4.00; choice 25-50c less.

Eggplant—Calif., 2.00-2.25 large.

Cucumbers—Hothouse, doz., 80c-1.00.

Lettuce — Arizona dry, 5s, 2.50-2.60; iced, 5s, 3.00-3.50; Calif., Delano, 4-5s, 2 00-2.25.

Garlic—Oregon, 8 10c; poor low as 5c.

Mushrooms—Cultivated, 1 lb., 30 35c.

Onions—Oregon yellows, 50-lb. sacks, US No. 1, 1.10-1.25; med. 1.00-1.10; 10-lbs. 25-27c; No. 2, 50-lb. sacks, 60-70c; boilers, 14-15c per 10-lb. sacks; sets, brown, 4-4½c; white, 5½-6c.

Pears Anjous, ex fcy, 1.75-2.00; fcy, 1.50-1.75.

Peas—Calif., 11-12c; crate, 4.50-4.75.

Peppers—Florida 20-22c lb.

Potatoes—Oregon, local Russets and Long WHites, No. 1, 1.00-1.10; 50-lb. sacks, 38-40c; Deschutes, No. 1, Russets, 1.10-1.25; 25-lb. sacks, 32-34c; US No. 2, 50 lb. sacks, 40-45c; Klamath, No. 1 Russets, 1.15-1.25; fancy, 1.40-1.50; Florida, new Bliss Triumphs, 2.60-2.75 per bu. Texas, 2.60-2.75.

Rhubarb—Ore., Wash. hothouse ex fcy, 1.00 1.15; fancy, 95c-1.00; choice 80-85c; outdoor 55-65c, 15 lb.

Squash—Calif. Zucchini, 1.90-2.00; Hubbard 3c.

Sweet Potatoes—Calif., 50-lb. crates, No. 1, 1.50-1.60; few best, 1.75-1.80.

Tomatoes—Fla., 3.00-3.50 as is.

Spinach — Ore., local, 25-40c; The Dalles, 40-60c.

Beets—Oregon, sacks, 1.25-1.50; lugs, 35-40c; bunches, dozen, 25-40c; California, bunches, dozen, 50-60c; crates, 2.00-2.15. Broccoli—Oregon, bunches, 40 45c; California, crates, 2.00-2.25. Brussels sprouts—Oregon, nominal.

Cabbage—Oregon, Ballhead, new crates, Oswego, 2-2¼c lb.; Calif., crates, 2.00-2 25; poorer, lower; red, 3½-4c. Endive—California, 5-pound crates, 2.00.

Horseradish—Oregon, pound, 15c.

Leeks—Oregon, bunches, dozen, 25 35c

Mustard Greens—Oregon, local, bnchs., dozen, 15 20c.

Onions, green—Oregon, bunches, doz., 15-20c; The Dalles, 20-25c; California, 25-30c.

Parsley—Calif., bunches, dozen, 30 35c.

Parsnips—Lugs, 35-40c.

Radishes—Local new 40 50c; Calif., 35 40c; crates, 3.75.

Turnips—20 30c per dozen bunches; sacks, 1.00-1.25; lugs, 25-35c.

Rutabagas — Sacks, 1.00-1.25; lugs, 35 40c.

Freedom Theme For Army Speech

DALLAS—A parade and patriotic program was held here Wednesday night in observance of Army day. The Dallas band, fire department and patriotic organizations took part in the parade which marched down Main street to the armory where a program was presented with Thomas Verdenius of Portland as the speaker.

Mr. Verdenius, who is a naturalized American citizen, gave an excellent address on "Freedom," comparing conditions in the United States with those in some of the countries in central Europe. He was introduced by Jack Eakin. The Dallas band played.

Theta Delta Phi

MONMOUTH—Theta Delta Phi men's honor fraternity of OCE pledged 7 new candidates who earned the required grades in the winter quarter: Leonard Emory, Mohler, Ore.; Lloyd Lewis, Portland; Eugene Ritner, Sheridan; Arthur Stump, Monmouth; Earl Tuthill, Portland; Paul Wehrley, Newberg; Hollis Wood, Mill City. Howard Withrow, Eugene, is also eligible but not in school this term.

Holdover candidates from fall term are: Herbert Vent, Modesto, Calif.; Charles Meyers, Portland; Kenneth Horner, Lebanon; Richard Bassien, Monmouth; James Ellingsworth, Nehalem.

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"The Forgotten Fleet Mystery"

by VAN WYCK MASON

SYNOPSIS

On a wharf in Patuxtown, Maryland, ex-Colonel Donald Colby, late A.D.C. to General Gonzalo Gutierrez, beats up Tod Ferguson, burly oysterman, for insulting Geneva Benet, daughter of Capt. Benet of the "Amerika." Ferguson was fired by Benet and infers someone was murdered on the ship. Later, Geneva confides in Colby that she had brought two men from Leonardtown to work for her father. "They were afraid to stay but you wouldn't be," she says. A new look creeps into Colby's eyes. "Young lady," he demanded crisply, "shall we talk?"

CHAPTER III

In the dingy deserted waiting room of the bus line, the two stood for some instants frankly appraising each other.

"You," abruptly observed Donald Colby, "are not from Patuxtown nor even from Maryland."

"What makes you think so?"

"Shoes." His face darkened, as if old ghosts were coming out of hiding. Used to know people who wore shoes like that—and suits tailored like yours. Where are you from?"

"If I were to ask you the same question," countered the girl evenly, "would you answer?"

"No." He saw before him a girl who was strikingly beautiful though not the pretty-pretty type—her wide mouth precluded that. There was a muscular adequacy to her figure which was sublimated to wholly feminine curves. She wore a dark brown cloche, the brim of which was pulled down to a level of wide and sweeping brows. Who or what had drawn those tense, strained lines about her eyes and mouth? What was this gray-eyed girl in those once smart tweeds doing in such a dreary backwater of Chesapeake Bay? She had, he decided, the alert and earnest look of one who has set a difficult goal and who proposes, come what may, to reach it.

By the orange-yellow glare of the single thirty watt bulb, Geneva Benet saw before her a tall, broad-shouldered young man who might have been thirty, but who probably was five years older. Was there a certain hard gallantry in his eyes? She wondered what had become of those decorations whose catch marks were still visible above his left breast pocket. Why had he turned up in Patuxtown, now of all times? Coincidence? No. She had ceased to call that an explanation. Those other strangers she had heard about—would they recognize this lean individual with the searching eyes and silent looking mouth? She must, she cautioned herself, be careful—very, very careful.

"We may as well sit down," she observed and set the example by sinking rather gracefully on an uncomfortable plank bench, "since there are several things I must tell you."

"Who are you?"

"Geneva Benet," said she. "And you?"

"Call me Donald Colby." He smiled thinly. "I hope you're not expecting too much of me?"

"No, I'm not," she replied promptly. "I'm gambling on you—I have to have somebody—"

"A port in a storm, eh?"

"Maybe. But I'll play fair and not attempt to hide anything you," she emphasized the word, "ought to know." As she talked her tapering brown fingers began to pick nervously at the frayed handle of her handbag. "Until two weeks ago there couldn't have been a stupider more monotonous job, but now there is definite danger aboard those old liners. They're laid up by the Shipping Board, you know, waiting purchasers which I'm sure will never appear."

"I've already heard about that."

"Oh really? I live with Father on the *Monticello*, and since Ferguson quit we haven't been able to get anybody to sign on. It's the inexplicable and complete disappearance of those three men that scares off the local heroes." She grew elaborately detached. "Taking this job calls for—for well, a different kind of courage—those old dying ships are big, silent and lonely and at night they're terribly dark and depressing." She flung the challenge squarely at him and he recognized it with a tight, twisted smile.

"Um, neatly put, Miss Benet. You make it very hard to refuse. In recent years, however, I've learned — Squeers method — not to stick my neck out so I'm going to ask you a couple of questions. Why do you keep a job with such obvious risks? Surely the pay you get can't be worth it."

The girl's smooth, slightly sunburned face contracted and her eyes, losing their directness, became veiled and wandered aside.

"I won't quit and Father can't."

"Why?"

Her voice sank to a dull monotone that nevertheless filled the dreary waiting room. "We haven't a cent beside what the Shipping Board pays him. Father is an old man, and it's hard even for the youngsters these days."

Imperceptibly the impression came home that this girl in the brown tweed suit was not telling the truth, but he only said, "I see. What does the job call for?"

"Lord," murmured the recruit, "talk about the Sargasso Sea!"

"Cleaning gear, testing apparatus and keeping people off. The pay is forty a month and board. If you feel like signing on for the usual two month contract you can come along with me now. Will you?"

For all her carelessness he detected a tension back of her words. It was obvious she wanted him to come; wanted him badly. Why? Why did she need a guard so urgently? One long brown hand crept up to stroke his chin and a reckless sparkle played at the back of his deep set eyes. "Why not? It will be a new experience to be hired by a woman. And—well, I'd like to take a look at your fleet of forgotten ships. Sounds like a movie title," he added with a short laugh. "Well, what next?"

"We'll go down to Point Patience—it isn't far, but first I've got to stop at the Post Office. Where are your things?"

"Duffle's on the pier, Ma'am. Er, what do you call a female boss?"

"Suit yourself," said she then, as the eddying fog closed about isolating them, the girl paused, looked up hesitantly, then lowered her voice. "I don't want to seem melodramatic but—do you happen to have a pistol?"

"No," Colby said. "I er—quit my last job so fast I didn't have time to bring it along."

"Oh, I see. It didn't happen to be the police who hurried your—resignation?" She looked at him searchingly. How grim, how hard bitten he looked in that frayed gray coat. He looked capable of anything to which hard times might drive a man.

"Do you want an honest answer?" By the light of a misty street lamp his dark eyes bored into hers.

"Yes."

He looked away. "It was the police. Do you still want to hire me?"

The lithe figure at his side remained silent an instant, then sighed. "Needs must."

"Thanks," said he. "I'll remember that."

Perhaps half an hour later Colby followed the girl's slight, erect figure along a path of duckboards and down a low bluff which brought them to the edge of the Patuxent. Somewhere high above, a full moon was fighting to pierce the mist and only succeeded in creating a curious milky atmosphere; the effect was ghostly, almost unreal, Colby realized.

"Here we are," she announced. "At the end of this silly pier I'll hail for a boat."

A puff of wind momentarily thinned the silvery fog and Colby looked ahead, to be shaken by a queer sense of apprehension. There towering incredibly high above this peaceful, wooded shore loomed a clump of gigantic steamer funnels, slender masts and cargo booms. Familiar enough when seen in Manhattan, New Orleans or Jersey City, but here amid the silence of the deserted backwater the vista was overwhelmingly desolate.

Colby halted and lowered his sea bag, completely awed by this curious sight. The great moored liners seemed like grotesque and impossible cathedrals rising sheer from meadows and misty river. There was no light, not the least sign of life about them as they lay there some seventy-five yards off shore. The scene was not only unique, he appreciated, but creative of a tremendous feeling of unrest, suggestive of vaguely hinted evil things and of old ghosts creeping out of hiding.

A long instant he was able to view an impressive silhouette of bridges, life boats and ventilators—of crazy spider webs of rigging and funnel guys, then a fresh blanket of fog erased the scene as efficiently as a teacher's damp cloth clears a blackboard.

"Lord," murmured the recruit, "talk about the Sargasso Sea!"

The girl had reached the end of the pier and now cupped her hands. "*Monticello*, ahoy!" Her voice, surprisingly strong and clear, impinged on invisible steel plates and came eerily back out of the fog "*Monticello*-o-o, ahoy-y-y!"

Why, he asked himself, should three watchmen have disappeared from these ships? Was some obscure sort of gang fight taking place? Was a maniac perhaps at large on these small floating cities? Or, more likely, was there being attempted a plot to loot valuable equipment from these moribund giants of the sea?

(To Be Continued)

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