

SERIAL STORY

The Isolated Continent

A Romance of the Future

By Guido von Horvath and Dean Hoard

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SYNOPSIS.

For fifty years the continent of North America had been isolated from the rest of the world by the use of Z-rays, a wonderful invention of Hannibal Prudent. The invention had saved the country from foreign invasion, and the continent had been united under one government with Prudent as president. For half a century peace and prosperity reigned in this part of the world. The story opens with Prudent critically ill. His death is hastened by the receipt of a message from Count von Werdenstein of Germany that he has at last succeeded in penetrating the rays. Dying, he warns his daughter Astra that this means a foreign invasion. He tells her to hurry to the Island of Clynith, but dies before he can tell the location of the place. Astra is nominated for the presidency by the continental party.

CHAPTER III.

The Ring.

Thursday afternoon at four o'clock the clay abode of the man whose death was mourned by the continent returned to ashes. The mournful procession started toward the crematorium from the chapel of the Crystal Palace. Gardens had been devastated to furnish flowers; the streets were carpeted with blooms. Immediately following the coffin rode his only relative, the daughter of Hannibal Prudent, in an open carriage.

Her pale face spoke of sleepless nights and many tears, but her eyes now were dry, her classic face calm and her carriage like that of a queen. And a queen she was, not by the right of birth or inheritance, but by the divine might that inhabited her superb body.

Astra's mind was dazed from the loss of sleep and the pomp of the funeral ceremony, and her nerves were well-nigh exhausted by the time she arrived at her crystal home. As she slowly mounted the steps her loss overwhelmed her; she had not fully realized it before. She went at once to her boudoir, locked the door and, throwing herself on a couch, sobbed bitterly. Her mind reverted to the past when the great man she had loved had played with the little girl of five years—with her; he was an old man even then; but oh, how dearly she had loved him.

Her meditations were terminated abruptly by the entrance of old John, who brought the card of Napoleon Edison. "I promised to receive him, did I not?"

"Indeed, madam," bowed the servant.

She thought for a moment.

"Take him to my father's library; I will see him there."

When Napoleon Edison entered the room he found Astra sitting before the broad desk. He stopped before her with a low bow.

"I have the honor to greet you, Miss Prudent."

The girl looked into the face of the tall, handsome man and saw in his large gray eyes an immeasurable courage. The strong, well-shaped nose curved over a pleasant mouth that softened the stern expression of the eyes. The high, broad forehead was shaded by dark brown hair. The broad shoulders and the sinewy, muscular form all gave evidence of strength, endurance and energy.

The girl did not answer for a few seconds; some strange power had cast its spell over her while she studied this man. She recognized him as the man who had talked so prophetically at the continentalists' meeting in the old Hippodrome.

"Good evening, Mr. Edison," she said at last in her low, pleasant voice. The man thought it the sweetest voice he had ever heard. Then she added: "Will you kindly be seated?"

The young man sat down without speaking, and Astra asked: "You wished to see me; may I ask you, sir, why?"

The expressive face of the young man showed a shade of disappointment as he replied quickly:

"I was under the impression that you expected me, madam, but it seems that I have been misled. However, I can tell my mission in a few words."

He rested his eyes on the girl's face and seemed still expectant, but the calm, beautiful face did not change. He continued:

"The main object of my call is this. He took a small jewel box from his pocket, and opening it, placed it on the desk before Astra. Resting on the purple pad in the box was a sparkling white object, a small ring in the form of a spiral; one piece of scroll woven into a shape that formed the letter 'A' to take the place of the jewel.

No jewel decorated the ring; the material it was made of was more brilliant than diamonds; it sparkled in all the colors of the rainbow, notwithstanding its smooth surface.

Astra could not repress an exclamation of surprise: "Ah, how beautiful!"

She leaned over the desk, admiring the weaving colors.

Edison smiled slightly and waited until the girl was ready to turn from the dazzling ring to him. She took the ring in her hand and saw that it was as transparent, clear and colorless as crystal; without that sparkling effect it would have been invisible.

She slowly laid it down again and looked questioning at the man sitting before her. She did not know that while she was admiring the ring his eyes had rested on her yearningly, expressing love and admiration. Or was it adoration?

He smiled strangely at her and said: "If I read your questioning gaze aright, you want to know the meaning of my gift, a gift that I have brought from afar for the daughter of Hannibal Prudent." He placed a peculiar accent on the last four words.

"I thank you, sir, very much," she replied.

"It is a present for you, and through you to the whole American continent."

Astra's face expressed surprise.

"I will have to be more explicit. I will have to tell you more about it. May I ask you to let me have the ring for a moment?"

She handed it to Edison with a gracious movement of her slender hand. He took it from her, and, grasping it firmly with both hands, he pulled it apart; it yielded like rubber and jumped back to its former size when he released it. Then he let it drop on the polished desk; it sounded like glass.

"What do you think of that, Miss Prudent?"

"It is wonderful."

"Indeed it is, and more: It carries the solution of aerial navigation, making the aerial crafts as safe as your chair. It makes war on land or sea absolutely impossible. It strikes the word 'distance' from the dictionary. What do you think of it?"

Astra's face took on an expression full of faith and thankfulness; her eyes seemed to look far up to the power that moves worlds and creates new stars.

"You—you have come to our aid; peace and happiness will still reign over our continent. God has sent you to me in this trying moment."

Tear drops trembled on her long eyelashes like drops of dew on a flower. When the moment of enthusiasm had passed they sat again calmly opposite to each other. This time Astra spoke:

"My dear Mr. Edison! You have not proved what you claim can be done, but the way you said it convinced me that you have the power to do it. In other words, I trust you and believe in you implicitly. Women know much by instinct, and my intuition has never led me astray."

"I recognized you at once as the man who spoke at the Continentalists' meeting, trying to encourage the masses and give them heart to brave approaching events."

"As you know, the Continentalists have nominated me because I was the daughter of the man who made this continent what it is today. Now that I have found a man who promises as great things as you do I shall not accept this nomination, but will insist upon you as a candidate."

Napoleon Edison shook his head with a smile.

"Miss Prudent, I appreciate what you say, but none must know about our present conversation. I have done nothing but give you a jewel. The other things remain to be proved."

Astra looked thoughtfully at the visitor and seemed to agree.

"Besides," continued Edison, "it is absolutely necessary that no one shall know what I can do. You will be elected and inaugurated the 4th of March this coming year. This is the 15th of September. The isolator now existing will last until the coming summer and you will hear from me between now and then; indeed, you can depend on me when the crucial

moment arrives. If you will permit me I will report whenever I can; that will not be often. I will supply you with information from time to time as to what is going on on the other side, and suggestions that you can use, if you desire, for defense, should it prove necessary."

Edison stopped for a second, bit his lip thoughtfully, then rose.

"I have finished my duty for the present. You don't know, Miss Prudent, how much I appreciate the fact that you look upon my intentions with approval, intuitively knowing that they are noble and the outgrowth of your father's teachings. I am sorry I came too late to tell him the good news—that war is destined to lose its foothold throughout the world."

"I hope it will cease forever," interrupted Miss Prudent.

"The element that ring is made of will drive it from land and from sea, but carries it into the air."

"But if no one knows the secret?"

"There are no secrets, Miss Prudent; there are many things we don't know yet, but there are no secrets. Nature is an open book to those who can read and understand."

"Again you are right, Mr. Edison."

"Then, with your permission, I will go. I hope that the service I am offering to our continent will be accepted as freely as I am offering it."

"I can assure you of that, as the nominee for the presidential chair."

She offered her hand again and Napoleon Edison kissed it reverently. He bowed once more and started toward the door. Miss Prudent hesitated a moment—a question was on her lips—but as she hesitated it was too late; the visitor was gone.

"Clynith—Clynith!" she sighed, more than uttered, and looked at the chair that had a short moment ago held that splendid man.

It seemed to her as though the stranger had carried away something—something?—what? She did not know. She sat down before the desk and taking the ring in her hand looked at it, and finally she slipped it on her finger. It fitted perfectly.

Then she looked at it more closely and saw some small tracings on it. She could not distinguish the lines with her unaided eyes, so took a magnifying glass and examined it curiously. A cry of joy left her lips as she deciphered the strange word "Clynith."

By some coincidence Napoleon Edison, emerging from the portal, again encountered the man he had met three days before; the only difference was that this time he was leaving and Ambrosio Hale was coming.

The tall man with those ferret-like eyes, fox nose and brittle mustache was evidently surprised. As he passed the porter's gate he asked who the stranger was. The porter could not remember, but it was a name that made him think of Napoleon; whether it was Bonaparte or Caesar he could not recall.

Mr. Hale was received in the green room.

Astra had a peculiar dislike for that color, not in nature, but in furnishings and clothing, and generally received people she did not like in the green room. That room had a depressing effect on her mentality, and the people who visited her there soon left.

"I have come this time, my dear Astra, to congratulate you. I wanted to be the first. You are nominated by the continentalists, and there is no doubt but you will be elected; there is hardly any opposition on the sectionists' part. Whom could they put up against you, my dear Astra?"

He pressed the hand of the girl warmly. He knew that he had to win her love or he would never reach the goal he was longing for.

"I wish you would consider me your very best friend, my dear. Consult me any time you please. Your wisdom and judgment is great. The whole continent is looking at you as the deliverer; still, once in a while the word of an experienced statesman will help."

"Indeed, Mr. Hale, I assure you that if I ever need your kindly offered help I will call on you."

The intimate conversation did not last long, as other visitors arrived and spoiled Ambrosio Hale's ardently longed for opportunity.

Before Astra fell asleep, she kissed the glittering ring on which the word Clynith was faintly engraved.

That evening Napoleon Edison, accompanied by his short friend, sat in a compartment of the fourteen-hour Frisco limited, flying toward the West; the train that was shot through the tube by compressed air was so perfect that not a rumble was heard, or a quiver felt.

Napoleon Edison bent over an outspread plan showing an object of peculiar construction. His companion watched him for a while, then fell asleep. Edison looked at the fat man's nodding head, and turned the light lower, so that it fell only on his blueprints.

He sat studying those lines that ran straight, curved and oblique; they formed a picture that was not intended—the outlines, the details of a serene, strong face—Astra's.

The train shot steadily toward the Golden Gate.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Bound to Have His Joke.

Jokes about the slowness of trains, especially here in the south, said an Atlanta railway man, also tire me a bit by their ancientness; but I heard a new and good one not long ago. It seems that trains are always slow and far between on a branch line in Mississippi. Nobody knows this better than the people at the junction, except the people on the line itself. One day the newsdealer came to me grinning.

"A fellow from the other end of the line just said a funny thing," he remarked. "He had missed his train and there wasn't another for two hours. He came to my stall to buy some reading matter to while away the time. He asked for a joke book, and I didn't have any. Then he poked around for a while and said: 'Well, I guess I'll take a time table instead.'—Judge.

Huge Electric Furnaces.

It is expected that the electrical furnaces of the American Iron and Steel company, at Lebanon, Pa., will be in full operation in the course of a year. The furnaces will be of from 20 to 25 tons capacity, and be the largest plant of the kind in the country. There will also be standard blooming and billet mills, with an annual capacity of 80,000 tons.

PURE WHITE FOR WARMEST DAYS



ASIDE from the comfort assured to the wearers of pure white apparel in the dog days, the knowledge that it is refreshing to look at by sweltering fellow-beings weighs something in its favor. Here are two exquisite hats, made for midsummer, that look as if they might be interpretations by the artist-milliner of soft, drifted snow or gleaming ice, translated into fabrics and thence into headwear.

A round, bonnet-like shape has the brim covered with a new material much like crepe de chine, but with less luster. It is called crepe Gorette. The small soft crown is a puff of moire satin as shimmering as ice. A moire ribbon encircles the crown and is tied in a bow on the under-brim. There is a large white marguerite daisy on the upper-brim at the back with a deep brown center. It is mounted in a few rose leaves from which trails also the palest of Marshall Nell roses extending two inches beyond the brim edge.

Folds of snowy maline rest against the hair, supported by an under-brim which is really an extension of the crown. This beautiful conception belongs in that class of millinery to which the designer turns when possessed of the airiest of fancies.

A white hemp shape trimmed with ribbon veiled with maline and finished with a pair of wings deserves a special interest. It is a peculiar shape with a poke-bonnet front and a brim that widens and rolls up at the back.

Contrary to the popular mode of the season, which shows wings and quills mounted as in flight, these wings are poised as if at rest, which is exactly right for a hot-weather hat.

The wonderful coat of Irish-crochet lace has a daring touch on the sleeves. They are dark brown puffs, not reaching to the elbow, and are finished with bands of dark brown fur. The idea is eccentric but perhaps intended to remind us of winter and cold weather in the midst of middle-summer heat.

JULIA BOTTOMLEY.

FOR WEAR ON CAR OR BOAT

Crepe de Chine Dressing Gown is the Most Practical Garment for the Traveler.

The most serviceable and durable dressing gown for the traveler is made of some dark, inconspicuous, untransparent material.

Crepe de chine is ideal for summer wear. A dressing gown of this material in a dark color can be worn comfortably for months. It does not show oil easily, and when it is soiled it can be easily washed and will look as well after a trip to the laundry as before. A dark gown, besides the fact that it will not show soil so quickly as a light one, can be comfortably worn on the way to the bath on shipboard and in the corridors of hotel or pension.

A gown of dark blue crepe de chine could be made with a little V-shaped vest of gathered cream or ecru net and with net undersleeves, or a ribbon sash in gay colors and futurist design could be used to give the somber gown a more interesting character.

NEEDLE BOOK TO FIT PURSE

With This Equipment Any Ordinary Mishap to Garment May Be Quickly Repaired.

Almost any of the scraps of pretty silk ribbon that are in the family rag bag may be fashioned into a needle book small enough to go into the average sized purse without overcrowding the receptacle. At the inner side of one cover, which of course is mounted over thin cardboard, should be a tacked-down sheet of fine flannel in which may be stuck needles of several sizes, and at the inside of the opposite cover should be straps of the silk through which reels may be run. These reels, formed of silk-covered matches or toothpicks, should be wound with a few yards of black and white sewing silk, black and white linen thread, black and white or tan silk floss, and, thus equipped, the shopper is prepared to repair any ordinary mishap to her garb.

Soft Bows or Lingerie.

Fastidious women have long been tired of the lingerie garments that are slotted for baby ribbon in all possible places, but the touch of color which the ribbon gives is introduced by single soft bows. On the newest French nightgowns there are two large buttonholes to be found at the front and through these is passed a soft wide ribbon which is tied in a bow. This is much less troublesome than threading ribbons through slots or stitching on a made bow.

Fan Again in Fashion.

The fetching neck ruff remains a great favorite with the girl of the season. A chic girl at a smart afternoon gathering the other day wore the latest and sheerest development of the ruff, which consists of but a single thickness of fine tulle, with nary a pluck.

TAILOR-MADE GOWN



Tailor-made model of ecru tussor with collar of purple silk.

Slimmer Than Ever.

Smart women of this season look slimmer than they have done for a long time. To secure the effect desired undergarments that add to the size are being dispensed with. To take the place of the abandoned petticoats the new muslin, which is very thin, crepons and other transparent materials, are being used, while some women who may be described as ultra-fashionable have conceived a petticoat combination made out of woven silk which fits the hips closely.

Lace Flew Over Silk Gown.

A charming tchou of maline lace is worn over a gown of soft silk or sheer material. The lace is draped in soft folds across the back and shoulders, gradually sloping toward the front, where it ends in two sharp points.

For the LITTLE ONES

LOCKING UP LONDON TOWER

Ancient Custom Still Observed in Big English Metropolis—Makeup of Procession.

Strange to say, very few people are aware of the ancient custom which is still kept up at the Tower of London, says London Tit-Bits. Just before midnight a beefeater and the chief yeoman porter secure the keys from the governor's house to "lock up." Having received the usual challenge, they proceed to the guardroom.

"Escort for the keys," calls out the porter and a sergeant and six privates turn out.

The procession then marches off, and the sentries they pass issue the usual challenge of "Who goes there?" to which the answer is "Keys."

Arriving at the entrance of the Tower grounds, the Lions' gate, the porter locks the gates, and the party returns to the guardroom, the sentry challenging as before and receiving the same answer. However, on arrival at the guardroom again the sentry stationed there stamps his foot, at the same time giving the usual challenge.

"Keys," replies the porter. "Whose keys?" the sentry asks. "King George's keys."

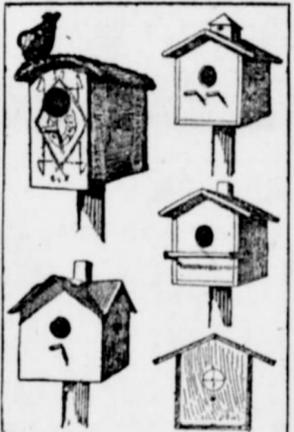
"Advance King George's keys, and all's well."

The porter then says, "God bless King George," and all present respond with "Amen." The keys are then saluted and returned to the governor's house, where they remain until the next night's ceremony.

HOUSES FOR LITTLE BIRDS

Not Necessary to Make Nesting Places Elaborate—Roughest Shelters Generally Sought.

The boy or girl who puts up boxes for the birds to nest in and supplies the birds with drinking water and bathing places, is certain of an unending source of pleasure. Much of this will come from watching the birds, at times, and studying their habits. Bird houses needn't be new or elaborate. The



Suggestion for Bird Houses.

roughest shelters, and weather-stained boxes, are more likely to find a tenant early, than those made of new lumber.

Any boy can make one of the houses shown in the illustration, says the Farmers' Mail and Breeze. When the birds move in they will pay rent by eating hundreds of insects which would otherwise do damage.

RIDDLES.

What is the right kind of timber for castles in the air?
A sunbeam.

What is that which never asks any questions and yet requires many answers?
The doorbell.

What is it which if you name it even you break it?
Silence.

What sort of men are always above board in their movements?
Chessmen.

What word of 15 letters is there from which you can subtract 12 and leave ten?
Pretentiousness.

How many weeks belong to the year?
Forty-six; the other six are only lent (Lent).

What is the difference between a goose and an author?
A goose has many quills, but an author can make a goose of himself with one quill.

When may a man be said to be as hard up as a man can be?
When he cannot get credit for good intentions.

So Will the Reader.

"Pop, is an abyss anything sleepy?"
"Of course not, child, what put that into your head?"

"Well, it's always yawning."