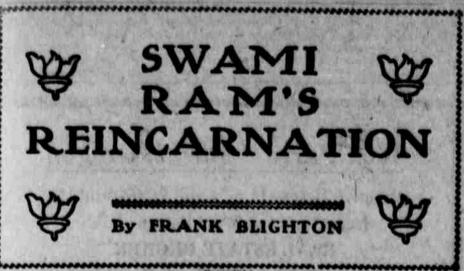
Saturday, January 31, 1929.



Swami Ram's Reincarnation By FRANK BLIGHTON

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER L-While his train is held on a siding 'Tom Davenport, engineer of the Pacific Limited, becomes interested in the furtive movements of a small brown man, evidently a foreigner, and investi-gates. What he discovers sends him back to his cab in a hurry. Buchanan Williams, mining man, boards the train and makes the acquaintance of the stranger, Jalisingrao Jitendra, who proves to be an East Indian. The limited is wrecked.

CHAPTER II.-Williams, though pain-fully burned, saves Jitendra, who had been pinned under the wreck. The Hindu vows eternal gratitude. Williams re-ceives a message telling him Mexican revolutionists have seized his mine, known as "El Tigre," and killed or driven off the Americans.

"Only a scratch," he muttered.

He forced the neck of his flask between the lips of the unconscious dolllike figure. The fire was nearly out. and the section men from Separ were already over the edge of the steep bank. A whistle was sounding faintly down the road in front.

The head brakeman came wearily back to the group around the dead and injured and handed a telegram to Conductor Martin.

"Extra twenty-seven sixty-nine's engine and a wrecking crew have been sent back from Deming; that's her whistling now," explained the trainman.

Jitendra stirred.

Never before in all his life had a fiery, potent liquid like the one now trickling down his throat passed his lips. The thud of the wrecked car as it toppled at last into the ditch seemed to aid in his awakening.

He sat suddenly erect, looked stuhim into the Pullman.

tenora, "it is not easy for me to explain the powers which rule us in spite of our complacent self-confidence. But I saw you running for this train-which was late. Tell me If you can,

did you make it late?" "Nor did L" affirmed the Oriental. "Nor did either you or I check its mad rush toward the places whither we are traveling. Therefore, how shall I make clear to you that what I may call fate bears rule over all? It is not well that men should know too much of such things, sahib, else they would lay the blame for their evil deeds on destiny or fate. So is it not wiser to deal warily with such matters, that; being in ignorance, men shall have the more fear of that which is hidden and kept secret?"

"Perhaps," Inconically admitted Williams.

"This morning," imperturbably weat on Jitendra, "I did not know that such a man as you lived, nor did you know me. Fate wills that we meet and journey on together."

"To El Paso?" interloped the other. "To whither the same fate shall decide that bade you drag me from the burning car. I did not ask it, for Vishnu had sealed not only my lips, but smothered my thoughts. Fate spoke, sahib, and you obeyed. And now the same fate whispers to me, bidding me turn aside from my journey and go on with you until it permits me to preserve you as you have this day preserved me."

"Oh. I say, Mr. Jitendra, I can't let you interrupt your trip to bother about me or my affairs," protested Williams. Really, it's very thoughtful of you, but its wholly unnecessary."

He straightened his strong, young body and leaned back in the Pullman at this typical oriental method of appreciation. One touch of nature makes the whole world akin, and Buck Williams vaguely grasped the spirit of religious gratitude that burned in the frail figure before him.

"Noblesse oblige" it enunciated as loudly as if spoken in actual words audible above the roar of the train, now racing again toward El Paso.

"Who shall say?" cryptically replied Jitendra. "Sahib, I have said that the ways of your people are not the ways of mine. But I have also said that fute of destiny bears rule over all peoples. And I may not journey far upon the Seven Paths if I try to step aside from the Karms which fate lays upon me. Only by obedience may I progress. Otherwise I am in fetters until another incarnation of sorrow and pain has set me free."

and anning to the register. He stamblod against a diminutive figure, whose head just topped the onyx-framed desk. "What-you here?" he cried. "I tok you that I didn't want you to reciprocate my small assistance this afternoon, Mr. Jitendra."

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The brown man salaamed low,

"What says the Ancient Wisdom, Sahib Buck? "The longest way round is oft the shortest way home." Williams threw back his head and

laughed long and loud. "Scotty, look at this !"

He jerked a derisive thumb toward the chocolate hued, undersized atom of bumanity standing humbly but firmly at his side.

"I pulled him out from under a wrecked diner this afternoon. Now he insists on trailing me until he has paid the score by doing as much for me. Do you think he'd make one bite for Manuel Pacheco and his regiment of thieves?"

CHAPTER III.

Jitendra Returns.

Four, hundred and fifty miles on horseback, through a country devold of law, bristling with ragged, semicivilized prons lusting for loot-ignorant, ungovernable, and virulently despising "gringoes"—is a journey some men would hesitate before taking even to battle for a five-million-dollar gold mine.

Buck Williams thought it all over as he puffed meditatively at an aftersupper cigar in the Sheldon, while Billy Scott fidgeted on the seat beside him or nervously paced the lobby.

But the calm-eyed Hindu, squatting tailor-fashion on the farther end of the same divan, was as motionless as an idol in the great temple at Benares. Only his adoring eyes, like those of a dog whose master refuses him a cass, betrayed the ferment beneath the folds of the soft snow-white turban, which he donned shortly after his arrival.

"Scotty," blurted Williams, tossing away a half-consumed cigar; "did Friday Thornton and the rest of the boys down in Culiacan elect to vamoose or stick around a while?"

"They stuck-at least most of them did the last I heard of them," replied the superintendent. "Hank Gregory, Tommy Wickware, and a dozen more you know are still in town. They expect intervention by the United States."

"The only intervention so far seems to be on this side of the line," grimly retorted the magnate. "What I'm figuring on is this: We can get across all right-a hundred thousand soldiers couldn't guard the boundary between here and Agua Prieta alone-to say nothing of reaching as far as the Colorado river. Once in, we ought to be able to double back east until we strike San Pedro, then skirt the west branch of the railroad as far as Sanchez, and from there across country to Culiacan. what then? If Manuel Pacheco and his friends are after El Tigre mine two of us can't stop them. But it's up to me to stop them if I expect to hold what I've sweat blood to get for the past five years. How do you feel about trying?"

ent if back to the Line, will you! You'll look like a sleve if Kosterlist ky's rurales ever see that snow-white. cinnamon-bun headpiece of yours. See here, you loyal little devil-you don't owe me a thing-do you get me?-not a thing! You'll only bother me.

BURNS, HARNEY COUNTY, OREGON

"I can't guarantee you any protection, and I won't have you dogging along to balt some one else after me. I appreciate how you feel, and I admire. ou for it. But this isn't India-it's Mexico-a synonym for hell. I don't want to be rude to you, but I simply can't and won't stand for any nonense-because I refuse to take any plame if anything happens to you."

"Will Sahib Buck grant me leave to speak?"

"It won't do any good," obdurately averred Williams, shaking his head angrily, "If you hadn't been padding along behind me all night I'd have been a mile further up in those hills siready. As it is, I suppose my coffee is spoiled. Now, see here, Jitendra—if you've got anything up your sleeve worth while just you sit down here on the ground and fade away.

"That's the way you can be of some real service to me-just vanish-down into the ground or up into the airany way that suits you. 'Come out at El Tigre mine if you want to-I won't kick if I find you there-but if I catch sight of you again in the meantime I'll shoot you myself, so help me Bob !"

Jitendra regarded him solemnly. "As Sahlb Buck wills, so be it," he quietly replied.

Without another word Williams whirled on his heel and hurried back to his coffee pot. An hour afterward he stopped his horse at the fringe of the timber-line of the Chirachaus range and swept the arid hills be-neath with his binoculars.

There was no sign of the Hindu nor of any other living human being. With a grunt of relief he spurred up the trail.

Nine days later, unutterably weary, astride a horse whose painful amble and emaclated ribs signified an exhaustion proportionate to that of his rider, Buchanan Williams drew rein in the thick group of pines overlooking El Tigre camp, where it clung to the side of a precipitous ravine in the majes-

tic mountains of the coast range. The pack burro had long since been an abandoned luxury.

A few hundred feet below was the treasure which had been hidden in nature's safe-deposit vault since the dawn of creation-undre med of, until his supreme engineering knowledge and superb energy had reached down

to drag it to the light of day. "H'm !" muttered Williams, as he carefully scanned the camp through his glass for signs of hidden enemies. "Manuel and his friends seem to have other business than running El Tigre just now, at least. Wonder if Scotty was wrong?"

He gave a little chortle of satisfacto the underground buillon house and supply chamber. It was marred and red, but evidently it had resisted the efforts of the pillagers to enter it. "Not so easy to bore through steelreinforced concrete," laughed the weary man. "Lucky I followed my bunch and stuck those worn-out mine rails into the cement mixture when hung that door. Well, I've got to take a chance. I suppose, and I'd better take it in daylight than after dark. There's some canned stuff inside my cellar, and I guess it won't taste so awful bad after a diet of frijoles and berries. If Pacheco and his gang do swoop down on me, I might make a stand in the bullion-vault until they starve me out, anyway !"

"But it's incredible," returned the mine owner. "I rode my horse almost to death-and there were times when I had all I could do to get through."

He gazed, more and more mystified, at the gount figure who seemed to have forgotten fatigue or hunger at the mere sight of him. Jitendra was naked to his loins, which were girded with a cloth almost the same hue as his body. His legs and feet were bare, and save for a thick something swathed about his neck and his snow-white turban, he was otherwise nude. It was inexplicable-and the incongruity of the poetry which the Hindu had quoted, together with his devotion, added to the American's perplexity. Then his eyes fell upon the feet of

the little brown man.

He was conscious of a swift, remorseful throb. The feet were barebruised, cut, swollen, bleeding-the feet of a man who has plodded across the flinty surface of the open country. who has unhesitatingly kept on through chaparral, woods, streams-the feet of a man unused to unremitting pursuit. Buck Williams gulped-there was a lump in his throat.

"You have followed me all of these nine days-afoot?" he sternly domanded.

"Yes, Sahib Buck," replied the Oriental. "I pray the sahib not to turn away his face from that of his servunt.

"But I did not see you once." "I remembered the sahib's threat of punishment," meekly returned Jitendra.

"But why-of course it's absurd even to think of it-but why in the devil didn't you work the occult stuff. Jitendra-that is, if you could? I'm sorry to have caused you all this trou-ble and worry. If you could send your astral body on shead and then follow it-well, I wouldn't have cared. Why didn't you do that?"

"Sahib, it is not permitted to invoke the powers of the gods when our own efforts will avail. Only when no other means are at hand for deliverance may I call upon Vishnu and Siva."

There was nothing to be gained by discussion, Williams decided. Yet he could not imagine in what manner the Oriental had anticipated his own arrival.

"You were ahead of me?" he asked. Jitendra bowed.

"How did you know this was El Tigre? There are many other mines around these hills."

The Hindu silently stretched his hand, pointing to the huge sign on the company store above them. The mine owner laughed.

"It was a foolish question, wasn't it? guess I'm almost too tired to think straight. Well, we'd better be getting up to camp," continued Williams,

He dismounted stiffly from the horse, and the other dropped lightly to the tion as the glass focused on the door road, meekly following in the rear. "I'm a man of my word, Jitendra; and while I can't promise that you'll ever live long enough to resume your jour-ney at El Paso, I'll be glad of your company until Scotty and the other boys arrive from Cullacan. If you get in bad, remember, I gave you the straight dope on this proposition, and don't blame me."

throwing his shoulders so far out of

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place that the pain was frightful. Another twist of the same lariat had pinioned his wrists, his knees and ankles being left free.

Naturally a man of strong impulses, Williams ceased to wrench at the inexorable thongs, but cursed his fo mer mine foreman with expletives o: a high dynamic quality.

Pacheco merely adjusted his heavy. gold-fringed epaulets and complacently patted away an imaginary wrinkle, in the neat blue coat he wore as he signaled to the other mozos, standing respectfully but curiously beyond the door.

"Assist Senor Williams and his servant to horses," he curtly directed. It was already suprise. Outside the house the two were securely bound to the animais, and the party started down the trail toward the coast. At the fork of the highway leading on the left to Cullacan, they debouched to the right.

"Where are you taking us?" inperiously demanded El Tigre's owner. "The commandante at Zapatillo desires your presence, senor," leered Pacheco.

"I'll get you for this, you grease: dog !" exclaimed the American.

For answer Pacheco drove his horse between the animal Williams was riding and Jitendra's mount, leaned over and struck the American a heavy blow across his unprotected face.

Although half-blinded with rage at the blow, Williams an instant later feit a strange thrill of some event out of the ordinary. Pacheco drew back, his brutish face wreathed in a grin of ferocious triumph; but the smile sud-denly stiffened.

He recied in his saddle; a second later his eyes almost started from their sockets with agony. His cigar-colored features grew purplish and a fleck of foam rose to his gasping lips.

His bridle-hand relaxed ; convulsively his legs drove the spurs on the hightopped boots into the sides of the horse he was riding. The animal reared. pawing the cir with a peculiar and unaccountable terror, and would have bolted had not one of the command grasped it by the reins.

Buck Williams gazed mutely at the retribution which had struck down the bandit. The outcry of the privates he scarcely heard. He did not need their chorus of alarm to know that Pucheco was dying-was dead.

Yet there had been nothing-absolutely nothing-save only the quick bending of Jitendra's lean body in the captain's direction-a swift inclination of the turbaned head at the instant following the cowardly blow.

The sergeant, Jesus Corabado, volleyed a command and the column halved, while the corpse of Manuel Pacheco was stripped of uniform and equipment. Following the unique but simple Mexican insurrecto method of promotion, Corabado donned the nest blue jacket, with its heavily fringed him. On the same principle, a corporat substituted the former sergeant's cost for his own, and a private in his shirtsleeves put on the corporal's jacket. "Volante !" cried the new captain. The soldiers closed in and the colthat was lay rigid and stark on the callche, gazing at the cerulean sky with fixed and sightless eyes. Buck Williams turned to look at Jitendra, 'The Oriental's face was inscrutable. He was gazing straight ahead, immovable, as if beholding some scene yet to emerge from the womb of time. They rode on for several miles, the American growing more and more perplexed. Something-from somewhere -had annihilated the man who had vented his brutality in a contemptible blow upon the face of one powerless to resist. Had Buck's hands been unbound. Manuel Pacheco, ex-foreman in the employ of the El Tigre mine, would never have dared to offer such an affront to its owner; no, not if he had been in the center of a regiment of disciplined troops instead of a mere company of ragged peons whose counterfeit military air only heightened their ridiculous appearance and magnified their ignorant swagger. They were banditti, not patriots; and their movements now were those of a body of half-terrified, yet revengeful men actuated by some intelligence superior to their own. The hideously sudden and unexplained death of their previous commander had daged theri. The more he thought, the more in-comprehensible the whole affair eppeared to Buck Williams, He knew ferico. His acquisition of the mineral land on which El Tigre was located had been achieved during the last years of the Dias regime. The very name of the mine itself had been derived from him. El Tigre sig-nified "The Tiger," and that name had fallen once from the lips of a thieving peon, who was overtaken and effectually chastised by Buck himself for stealing camp supplies in the early days of his operations.

"Feeling better?" Buck Williams had already forgotten his own trivial injuries in the solicitude he felt for this timorous little allen peering up at him with apologetic eyes.

"Yes, sahib," breathed the brown man. "I do not understand-"

"Oh, it's all over," cheerfully interrupted Williams. "We had a breakdown on the locomotive and came to a quick stop. The old wooden diner crumpled up-that's all. Couldn't expect anything else, hitting the hill the way we were, with a big hog like that in front and the steel Pullman behind. A couple of niggers killed-and you got the worst deal of any of the passengers, 1 guess."

The somber look in the eyes deep ened as Jitendra scanned his face with a quaint intentness which was altogether new and a little uncanny. Wililams shifted uneasily as he went on:

"Wrecking crew's got the engine on the track again; we'll only be a few hours late into El Paso. Do you think you'd better get off at Deming and let a doctor look you over?"

Jitendra shook his head. "I am not much hurt, Sahib Buck," he gravely replied. "But how came I to escape the fire? Was 1 not overwhelmed by the disaster?'

"Oh, you were penned in under that old hulk of a diner until we dragged you out," langhed the mining man. "But that's done now. You'll be in Chicago, almost the same as if nothing had happened, in two days. It was lucky for both of us that we were toward the back end of the car."

"It was fate," affirmed Jitendra, with an emphatic positiveness contrasting strangely with his wee figure. "But you, Sahib Buck-were you, too, immersed in the shatterings?"

"Niz," grinned Williams, "I back-pedaled right over tables and chairs

till I sanded in the vestibule." "I seemed to be looking down upon you the last'I remember," mused the Oriental, fastening his eyes searching-

ly upon the other man's. "I missed you," admitted Buck un-besitatingly, "and grabbed an ar and chopped down to where you iny. But I am sure that you would have done as much for me. Do you remember what we were talking about when the amash came?"

ditendra nodded.

"Yes, Sahib Buck. You were inquiring of me concerning certain powers of my people. But Vishnu willed that I should not reply. So my lips were scaled, as you saw. It may be that I shall never reveal to you, sahib, the things of which I was about to speak." "Why not?" demanded Williams curiously. The finality in the voice of the Hindu interested and, oddly

The quick grind of the brakes diverted Buck Williams from a reply. The belated limited came to a stop. A boy leaped up the steps of the Pullman bearing a telegram.

"Mr. Williams!" shouted Conductor Martin. The young man hurried to the end of the car, received the message, and the train picked up again as he tore it open to read:

"Culiacan, Mexico, June 15, 1913. Buchanan Williams,

"Clifton, Arizona. "Forward Train No. 6. East-bound.

"Manuel Pacheco and mine crew take to the hills after plundering company store. Meet me Sheldon hotel, El Paso, quick. More trouble brewing around El Tigre.

"WILLIAM SCOTT." Four and a half hours late the limited slipped into the Union station at El Paso. Buck Williams had forgotten the wreck, Jitendra, and everything else in the chaos of new thoughts re-

garding the peril to his mine. He climbed into a taxicab and was whirled to the hotel. Scott leaped across the lobby with extended hand. "Buck!" he cried, delightedly. "Great guns, man, but I'm glad to see you! The whole province of Sinaloa is shot to h---- again--- another revolution started. Pacheco and those lany Mexicans have robbed you of nearly everything you own on top of the ground. From the looks of things, thenire planning to cop the El Tigre

"Bo?" drawled Buck, stiffening little, the light of battle flaming in his blue eyes, suddenly grown cold. "I picked up a rumor of this at Clifton resterday. One of the mine bos overheard some Mexicans discussing El Tigre. He told the superintendent who repeated it to me. I had just time to pack my bag, and by sheer luck I caught No. 6 cast-bound at Lords-

"We can't do much without an army," gloomed Scott, kicking in a tublous fashion at the tiled floor. - 12 had a mighty bard two days getting through-came by way of Chihuahua after striking overland from the coast -and got the last train out. Americans are thick enough along this side of the border; but a mosquito with a gun that would fit him couldn't pack it across into Junrez-no, sir! The commander at Fort Piss says we ought to stay at home.".

"He nasa't a five-million- tollar mina to lose," sententiously obs rved Wil-

"I think you're plumb crasy to think about it," frankly replied Scott. "It was bad enough in Madero's insurrection. With him gone and Huerta in power, what chance has a man got, Buck? Orozco, Carranza, and a doz other self-made generals are roaming around Chihuahua, murdering, robbing, burning railroads and raising hgenerally. Now Moreno's bedeviling Sinalon. Every one down country is trying to get out. Believe me. I wouldn't try to get back the same way came out for a balf-interest in El Tigre itself."

"All right," tersely retorted Williams. "You take the train back to Benson, drop down to Nogales and see if you can get through to Cullacan by way of Guaymas along the west coast. Trains are still running through to Manatlan on that division. I'll hit it down the other way. That gives us two chances. If you reach Cullacan before I do, get the boys together and start for El Tigre with every gun and cartridge you can buy, beg or borrow If I get there first I'll leave instruc borrow. tions in case I want you to follow me to the mine. If you can't get through, shoot back to Negales and wait until you hear from me."

Deaf to entreaty, expostulation, of argument, Buck Williams slipped out of the hotel before midnight and rode to the northwest. His long detour carried him far beyond the regulars, and he easily eluded the American

Refore daybreak he was well pas the monuments in the first fringe of bills south of the Arisons boundary

In a shallow arroyo he gathered In a shallow arroys he gathered a few dry twigs and lighted a smokeless fire to boll his coffee. His horse and one burro, carrying the meager sup-plies accumary for the hazardous jour-ney, were picketed behind a knot of waterworn boulders, while he crept warily down the defile to reconnoiter the valley below. A solitary horseman, whose seat be-trowed his unfamiliarity with that

truyed his unfamiliarity with that de of travel, popped around a bend the guily. With incredible swiftm in the gully. With incredible swift-ness Williams whipped his ready rifle to his shoulder, then lowered it with an amazed exclamation.

"You-you persistent little chocolate-drop," he gasped, as the expressionless face of Jitendra looked down into his own. "What in hades are you following me for? Didn't I tell you that you were under no obliga-

tion to me?" "You did, Sahib Buck." "Well-oh, for the love of Mile-

He rode fearlessly down the narro path with the quiet poise of a man wh is willing to risk all for the thing his brain has built and his hands secured

The cluster of desolate-looking min ers' cubins on both sides of the road up which supplies were brought from Cullacan, fifty odd miles to the west, almost unnerved him.

His horse shied violently ; something quivered in the bushes on his right Williams glimpsed at the half-naked brown body and covered it with his pistol, while he steadied the fright-ened animal with his other hand. The bushes parted.

Out upon the flat rock, within dozen feet of the aldrmed American, poked a turbaned head, beneath which thin, worn, ascetic face smiled into the muzzle of the ready weapon.

"Good morning, Sahib Buck," piped the diminutive figure as it squatte weakly upon the slab of fre-bitten granite, gasing into the amazed and pitying eyes of El Tigre's owner.

sck Williams could not at once re

was fascinated by the rapt look upon Jite med might wear when he at last bolds the shimmering minarets Mecca shining brightly across the he made, signifying the end of his pi grimage.

> CHAPTER IV. Pacheco's Death.

"How did you get here?" deman the magnate.

"The ways of my people are not the ways of yours, sahib. Did you not give me permission to come? And who am I that I should presume to disobey you-or the gods?"

"The gods?" "Vishnu and Siva," salaamed the Hindu. "They, too, are here. Has the sahib never read the lines of one of his own people?

"Far or forgot to me is near; Shadow and sunlight are the same; ... The vanished gods to me appear, And one to me are shame and fame."

A careful search of the premises dis closed no pseudo-insurrectos in ambush

Williams, much relieved, permitted Jitendra to aid in carrying a supply of canned food to his own house, a stout adobe building somewhat higher than the others, with its back against the hill. His horse was picketed alongside, where the thick grass carpeted the slope, and a brook beyond obviated the necessity of fetching water up the steep ascent from the bed of the creek far below.

The two ate ravenously, but Jitendra scrupulously abstained from anything except vegetables. He glanced at the American and fingered a car of condensed milk longingly.

"Take it-there's lots more in the storehouse," said Williams kindly. Jitendra bowed his thanks and ripped off the top with an opener. "In my country," he observed, "we drink the milk of the goat."

But Buck Williams, worn weary, only half understood him. He relaxed in his chair and slept as sleeps a man who feels at last a degree of comparative safety after many perils.

Once he fancied he heard the notes of a fife, but drowsed off again, to dream of the invincible spirit of the men of '76, who rebelled against oppression, laying down their lives that their descendants might enjoy the blessings of liberty.

He saw vividly an army of soldiers in buff and blue, with cocked hats, marching across the muddy Rio Grands, and before the stern and inmitable man who led them Manuel achece and his ragged bandits fled tately.

But the dream passed; at least the mantasmagoria of the Continental rmy, with Washington at its head, faded, while oddly enough, the fea-tures of Pacheco persisted. Something was gripping his arms cruelly. Buck was gripping his arms Williams tried to rise.

He half leaped from the comfort-able chair in which he had been diting. His heavy eyes widened.

Opposite him sat Manuel Pacheco himself, on his face an evil leer; and trussed like a chicken in the corner was the Hindu, gazing mutely at him with a curiously intent expression.

"Welcome to El Tigre, Senor Wiltiams," sneered the ex-foreman. "I have been expecting you for some days,"

Buck Williams struggled futilely. A rawhide vinta had been looped around his elbows behind his back,

For Buck was named "The Tiger because of his implacable fury when any attempt to victimize him was made by the subtle methods which Mexicana usually employ with a "gringo" unaccustomed to their ways.

Now "The Tiger" was bound fast to the back of a horse, en route to some tribunal of whose authority he was ignorant but of whose judgments he could guess,

(To be continued next week.)

It might, however; be economical to, elect Mr. Hoover presidn. could do his presidening and food controling all at the same time.