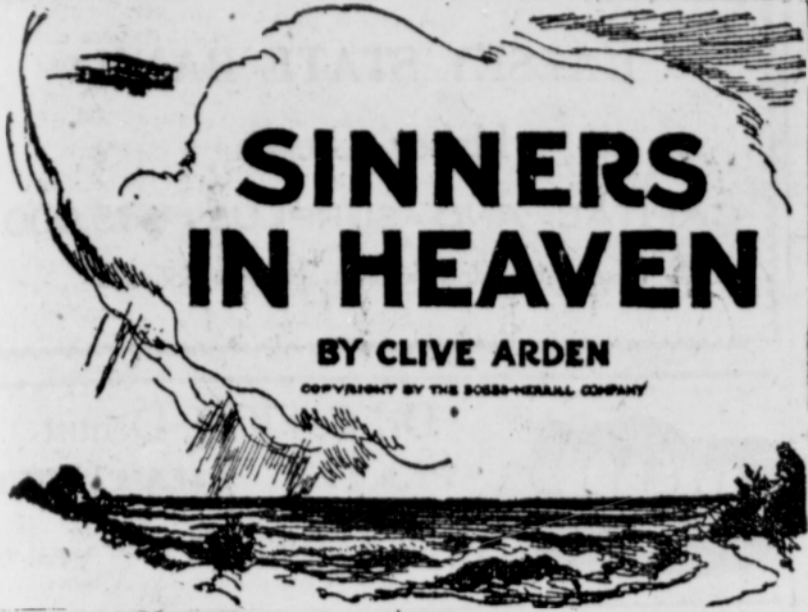


SINNERS IN HEAVEN

BY CLIVE ARDEN
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(Continued)

VIII

It was only a small sitting room, with an oil lamp and a crackling fire. But all the worlds and all the heavens were enclosed within its walls to the two who clung together in their rapture.

Wonderingly, almost reverently, the girl passed her hands over the arms that clasped her—touching the dark hair and bronzed cheek half-fearfully, scarcely believing in their reality, looking upon him with bewildered, darkened eyes almost afraid to trust their own sight. The tall broad-shouldered figure had lost not an inch of its uprightness, nor had the head lost its old dominant poise. The few extra lines round the smiling lips and glowing eyes were swept up into the radiance which seemed to envelop him. Yet, in the dark clothes of civilization, he appeared subtly strange to the half-clad, barefooted overlord of savages of other days.

"Yes," he said at last, catching her hand lightly wandering over his arm. "It's all real. Solid flesh—no ghost!" He raised her chin in the old possessive way, and looked long into the thin face and dark-ringed eyes, which told their own tale of suffering endured; then he pressed her head to his breast and held her close again in silence, as if defying any fate to separate them now.

"But," she stammered faintly at last, "how is it—why—I don't understand—"

"Why I'm not sleeping with my fathers, as you all surmised? Well—that is your fault."

"Mine?"

He nodded. "When Babooma was about to send me to my gods, you conveniently sent him, instead, to the shades of Valhalla—that last bullet, you know!"

Her eyes opened wide, and she caught her breath.

"I—killed him? I—killed Babooma—a man—?"

Swiftly he closed her lips with his own, with quick perception of the effects which renewed civilization might have had upon the primitive instincts aroused on the island.

"I owe my very life to you, wife of my heart," he whispered.

But his reflections were misplaced. "Thank God!" she cried unexpectedly. "I would still kill anybody—any day—who attempted to hurt you."

"Nom de Dieu!" he echoed the Frenchman. "Our life will be a checkered career."

Then Barbara fully recognized once more the old Alan of flesh and blood, deep moods and light banter, poetic idealism and prompt action—deliciously human, warm with love and life. She suddenly laughed, the bewildered sense of shock falling from her—the first real spontaneous laugh of many weeks.

"Alan! Alan! Nothing matters but the fact that you are here—alive! But I can't understand it all. How was such a mistake made?"

"Very easily. Because De Borceau didn't, of course, know friend from foe! Things were going all right with us. But when one of the devils set fire to the hut and the friendly spear knocked me out, De Borceau naturally thought all was up. Some of Babooma's lot tried to reach you, but Roowa frustrated them. Then De Borceau was gaunched to his oath. He fought anybody who came near you, like a medieval knight, and carried you off to safety. Poor Roowa thought he had stolen you from me, and nearly went mad!" He laughed reminiscently.

"But you? What happened to you? The expedition searched the island. And what became of the De Borceaus when they returned—?"

He sank into the big armchair, still clasping her in his arms. "It's quite a fairy story. You remember the wood in the east—where, that first Christmas day—?"

"Every leaf!" she breathed.

He smiled into her eyes. "But not every moss-covered rock. In that wood was a very cleverly concealed entrance to a subterranean passage leading to a kind of vault. This narrowed down into another outlet—quite impassable—on the shore, which allowed a little fresh air and glimmers of light. This cave was tabu. In happier days, when the tribe was sufficiently self-supporting—to provide its own meat, the condemned dinner was—well, we need not go into details! But that cave was supposed to be haunted with the spirits of past feasts. No body liked to speak of it, or go near it. When I was considered dead, our

friends, very naturally, carried off my bleeding corpse—"

"Oh, don't!" cried the girl who had suffered so much from this well-meaning act. She buried her face on his shoulder.

After a lucid interval he resumed his narrative.

"When they realized you had been 'stolen' and I was still alive, the fear arose that the 'bird of ill omen' would return and make off with me, too! So, to insure my safety—that was the irony of it all—they raised the tabu and hid me in the cave. Only Roowa was courageous enough to enter with food. I was knocked out for some time. When I recovered—Barbara! Can you possibly imagine my feelings upon discovering that the rescue party had come and gone? I was raving



"Oh, Don't!" Cried the Girl.

mad! The poor beggars had done it for the best and were bewildered. Nothing would convince them that the white men were my friends. I spent what seemed years of agony, doubtful if any further help would come. My only hope lay in you."

"In me?"

"I thought you would persuade De Borceau or somebody to try again, not rest content—"

"I wanted to come myself," she cried. "I implored and threatened and— Oh! everybody was so pig-headed. But what happened to De Borceau?"

"As soon as the plane's arrival was known the whole tribe raced pell-mell to the shore and burned it to cinders. I found the brothers hiding for their life in the forest." He gave an irrepressible bubble of laughter. "They—literally—fell from the trees upon my neck! We have been kissing each other's hands or faces ever since. So, again, nothing remained but to wait and hope. I thought at least a missionary party would turn up. That second expedition was infernally slow!"

He laid his cheek impulsively down upon hers. "But De Borceau could give me news of you. He told me everything—about Singapore—"

Her lips turned, trembling a little, to his.

"And," she whispered, "it!"

"And 'it.'" His arms tightened.

"And—other things. I insisted. He acted loyally—for us both, Barbara. But—by heaven!—it made my gorge rise to know what you were facing—the inferences, the— And there I was, powerless as a stranded infant to help you."

"It was—h—!" she murmured briefly. "Have you heard—?"

"Midge told me everything. She got the news of our rescue almost directly after you left London! I came home like the very devil—by sea, air, and land—to find you had disappeared—gone to break your little heart alone, where I couldn't find you—"

"I had to come away, Alan. I was in a turmoil—"

"My Barbara, don't I understand!"

Suddenly his eyes blazed in their old way; and he dashed an arm upon the table, causing the flame of the lamp to jump.

"Those blighted Pharisees! Those d-d, gossiping—"

"Oh, my dear!" She laughed again at this familiar vehemence.

"I went to Darbury," he explained briefly.

Her laughter fled. "You went to Darbury, Alan?" She glanced apprehensively into his grim face. "What—what happened?"

He remained silent for a moment, then met her eyes with a smile.

"Well . . . No deaths occurred." "Did—did mother—say—?"

"There was a very free, candid interchange of opinion! I honestly tried to reconcile your mother, but—"

"—he gave one of his old careless shrugs—"

"—she considers herself disgraced, and talks darkly of being obliged to leave Darbury. . . . I saw Rochdale, too—"

Barbara raised her head again. "Ah! Dear old Hugh! He has been—splendid, Alan. His friendship—his struggle to—believe—"

Her voice quavered. "I know. And he, of everybody concerned, might with justice have condemned—"

"They fell silent awhile, each knowing, by their own joy, what it all meant to the friend who had lost. . . . A realization of what this return would mean to Mrs. Field combined

ing," Alan remarked.

Cornish people take life calmly. They do not lose their heads or forget their duties in any crisis.

"Yes, sir!" Mrs. Treguthern agreed brightly. "I'm sure I do hope you will both be happy. And—will you have eggs to breakfast, sir—or bacon?"

"Both—heaps!"

They smiled at each other when she left the room.

"Somebody must feed us," he observed, passing his fingers through her curly hair. "Every little note has its niche."

High sat long over a lonely breakfast, a few days later. The "old people" were away. The London paper, with its list of marriages, lay upon the table before him; but he stared away absently, through the window, without turning the page.

Presently, with gun and dogs, he stepped out into the raw February air, turning aimlessly down a lane.

An hour later, followed closely by six puzzled brown eyes, he walked slowly up the pathway in the little wood where—neons' ago—he and Barbara

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with her own overwhelming joy to draw from the very depths of her heart a voiceless prayer met thanksgiving. In the luminous, darkened eyes that met her own, she saw the same look of almost reverent awe. Never had he seemed so gloriously alive, so radiant in spirit. Again she raised her hands to feel the features she had never thought to see again; then drew the dear head, with passionate tenderness, down to her breast, and clasped it there.

To both of them, beneath the superficial lightness of talk, this hour equaled in sacredness that of their marriage morning in the dawn. But this held in it, also, the half-fearful joy of a resurrection. The past darkness, with the struggle toward the light, had left ineffaceable marks upon each soul.

"Can't we go back to the island?" she whispered at last.

"Some day." He raised his head and smiled. "We'll retire there, now and then, and live it all again! But our first jaunt is to Australia. I've been commissioned to rebuild the old bus. There's been an awful lot of interviewing and publicity since I got back ten days ago—"

"Only ten days! And you've been to Darbury—"

"That's not all."

He looked at her with eyes which held something of their old inscrutability.

"Your relations showed unflattering surprise at what they termed my 'cynicism' now we are rescued. Oh, lord!"

"They would!" she cried, with indignation.

"The fear that we meant brazenly to defy the English law possessed them. They besought me to marry you 'properly, in a church.' Your aunt particularly insisted upon a Protestant church—not a registry office, or chapel."

"Just like Aunt Mary!" She laughed rather bitterly. "I couldn't feel more married," she added, with the quick shy look he loved.

His gray eyes darkened; with a little catch of the breath his arms tightened.

"There's one thing, therefore, which bold bad barons must have in their pockets when they chase their victims to Darbury, to prove their good intent."

"What is that?"

"A special license. I know a parson near here. We haven't met for eight years; but I wired this morning to tell him we should arrive at his church to be married tomorrow—"

"My dear whirlwind!" she gasped.

He bent, with his old violent suddenness, and caught her up so close she could scarcely breathe. All the old passionate, dominating love, which had so often swept her away, poured forth and surrounded her; so that, panting and glorying, her individuality, after all its lonely travail, once more transfused, transformed into his own.

"So," he whispered, "we must have another wedding, my Beloved! But it cannot be more beautiful—more real—than the other in the dawn—"

"With a little sobbing, tremulous sigh, she clung close. . . . "If we had one every year, in every land and every tongue," she murmured whimsically, "they would all seem beautiful to me."

The landlady discreetly entered at last to lay the supper. She cast one comprehensive glance at the armchair, and her smiling face grew more radiant.

"We are to be married in the morn-

had discussed their honeymoon. The gun still rested unused within his arm, the cartridges untouched within their bag.

Underfoot, the fir needles lay soft and damp with here and there fronds of sodden dead bracken drooping upon them. The tall pines swayed a little, whispering their everlasting, murmuring song; drooping, sometimes, splashes from their wet leaves, like tears, upon the dreariness below. All the world appeared gloomy, dead, sorrowful. It seemed impossible that, soon, the sap would run in the tall trees, the young green shoot forth upon the hedges, spring—with its fresh myriad life—awake with the "singing of birds."

The unloaded gun dropped unheeded to the ground. . . . The six brown eyes questioned one another wonderingly; then looked back at the tweed-clad figure lying face downward, with head buried in his arms.

At last Shag, Hugh's favorite terrier, ever the most tender-hearted of friends, approached cautiously; sniffed; then gently licked what was visible of a much-loved cheek.

(THE END.)

Are We Gentiles?

(Cor. Dearborn Independent)

I read in the papers that Rev. John Roach Straton preached on the Dearborn Independent's studies on the Jewish question and concluded that they only proved that God was fulfilling his promise to his chosen people by giving the world into their grasp. Now, the Jews are not God's chosen people, and they haven't got the world in their grasp, neither are they going to get it. Nowhere in the Bible is Judah or the Jews

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spoken of as the "chosen," Israel is the "chosen." Israel was the progressive, constructive nation (ten tribes out of thirteen) that broke away from Judah.

When Israel went out it carried the promise of world dominion with it. If the Jews are the chosen people the whole structure of the Bible prophecy and Bible racial theory falls down. Israel is the chosen and if the Bible is true is ruling, enlightening and serving the world today and is Christian. Judah doesn't fill the prophetic nor even the historic bill at all. Judah is not Israel. Dr. Straton probably thinks that because he is not a Jew he is a gentile. He could be an Israelite without being a Jew. It might be an interesting exercise for Dr. Straton to try proving to himself that he is a gentile. I'll bet he can't do it.

reduction of rates and found that an equalization was also in order, the west having been paying too much proportionately and the east too little. Samples of the new rates are: Eugene to San Francisco, \$4.10 on 100 pounds; now \$4.78. To Los Angeles, \$5.05; now \$6.30; To St. Louis, \$10.10; now \$13.03. To Chicago, \$9.85; now \$13.03.

There is a corresponding reduction for second class stuff.

CASH PAID for false teeth, dental gold, platinum and discarded jewelry. Hoke Smelting and Refining Co., Otsego, Mich.

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Heard in the Editorial Room

Reporter—Tompkins' boy broke an arm in a fall from an apple tree and has gone to a hospital.

Editor—Write it up and give the latest report you can get from the hospital. The Tompkinses are the kind of people that help support the paper.

Reporter—Sam Adams fell off a load of hay and broke a rib.

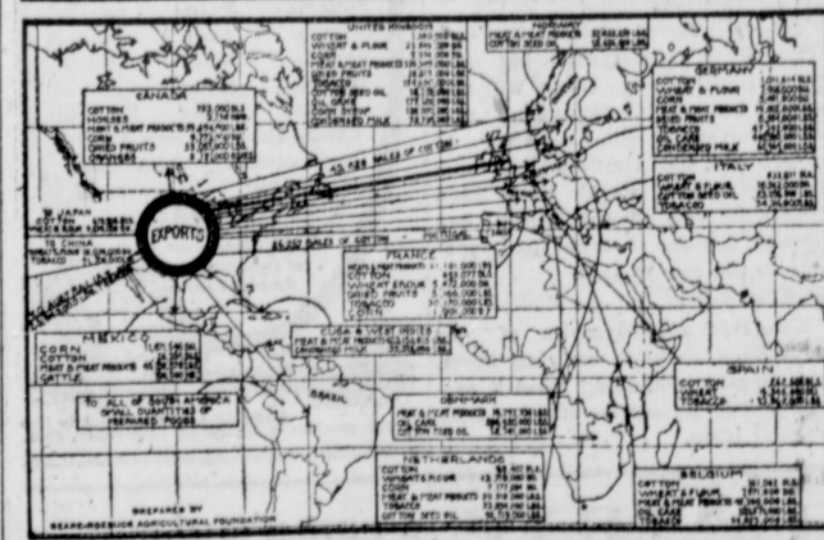
Editor—Give the old skinflint two lines. None of his money goes to help pay for setting news in type.

Express Rates Lowered

Halsey is to have lower express rates. The reduction is effective March 1, 1925, and will meet with much favor from shippers on the Pacific coast and at middle north-west points, as it amounts to from 10 to 30 per cent to them.

The Interstate Commerce commission recently ordered a general

Where U. S. Farm Products Go



Products of the American farm go to every civilized country of the world. Out of the United States each year is sent approximately one-half of the total cotton crop, one-fourth of the yield of the wheat fields, one-fifth of the porkers and huge quantities of corn and tobacco, dried fruits and other products of field and feed lot.

The accompanying chart, prepared by the Sears-Roebuck Agricultural Foundation, shows where the principal exports go.

In the United Kingdom more of America's farm exports are consumed than in any other nation. The United Kingdom uses more American cotton than any other country, her annual consumption averaging around 1,580,010 bales. Germany is in the market for almost as much cotton, using 1,011,614 pounds last year. The United Kingdom is the first market for American wheat and flour, tobacco, corn sirup and condensed milk. She also takes large quantities of dried fruits, oil cake, meat, meat products and corn.

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