

THEIR NAME WAS LEGION!

By Courtney Ryley Cooper

(Continued)
CHAPTER III
A Caller

Late that night Bart Rogers sat again in the office of Leon Barrows. The mind of Bart Rogers was the abiding place of only vague realizations; it seemed unable to centralize its functions. At last, however, here came the sharp sound to quick steps in the hall, and the banging of the door as Leon Barrows entered. The thin-faced attorney glanced toward Bart and went to his desk.

"Well," he asked in his snappy, sarcastic manner, "why haven't you gone to bed?"
"I was waiting for you. I didn't want to go until I was sure everything had been taken care of."
"I told you that I would do it, didn't I?"

"Yes—of course."
"Then, that should have been the end of it."
"You've taken care of everything?"

"Certainly."
"Will there be the necessity for an inquest?"

"An inquest?" The attorney looked at him sharply. "For what?"
"I—I didn't know. I always thought it was necessary to have an inquest when a person died without medical attention."

"You're crazy." The attorney said it in a jerky, unsympathetic manner.

"Everybody knows what was wrong with your father. It's all fixed up. Looked after it personally. Hoffman, the undertaker, has got everything arranged. Isn't anybody you want to send for?"

"No"—Bart Rogers shook his head—"there's no one who would be interested."
"What I thought. Any other reason for delay?"

"On—the funeral? I don't know of any."

"I figured it that way. Told Hoffman that we'd better have the funeral tomorrow afternoon. On account of this boom thing. This town's gone crazy—and it'll get worse every minute."

Bart nodded in dazed fashion. Leon Barrows shuffled a few papers of one of the orderly piles.

"Very well, then," came his conclusion. "Glad you look at it in that way. Thought you'd be sensible; that's why I told Hoffman to go ahead. I've gotten you a room over at the hotel. No. 21. Here's the key. Go over there and go to bed."

Bart Rogers rose and stared hazily about him.

"Thanks—for looking after things for me. It's rather taken me off my feet. I—"
"Go on to bed!"

The lawyer nodded curtly toward the door in dismissal, and Bart Rogers obeyed. A moment later he found himself on the crowded sidewalk.

There was noise, there was bluster, the laughter of women and girls mingled with the shouts of men. Everywhere was the enthusiasm of newfound wealth, as though every person were to share in it, and as though each one of those who crowded the streets in this outburst of joy were a part owner in that great outpouring of liquid gold that was spraying against the starlit sky out there on the blackness of the plains.

It was through this milling, jumbled throng that Bart Rogers, his eyes set and staring, his lips tight drawn, his features old and haggard, was forced to make his way to the hotel. That he should have been a part of it, he felt instinctively—yet it was all strange to him, all out of place, and, in a way, cruel. For Bart Rogers could only think of the patient person who had waited silently by the window day after day, who had undergone suffering, even privation that he might play his part—only to lose in the end. At last, however, he halted, at a touch on his arm, and looked down into the features of Anita Franniston, followed as usual, by the dog-like, gray-haired Old Jim.

"I'm so sorry," came quietly, and her hand still remained on his arm.

"You know, then?"

"Yes. I was over in the newspaper office. They're trying to get out an extra about the oil strike, and I happened to see in the proofs the story about your father."

Bart Rogers stared wordlessly at the sidewalk. There was no way in which he could answer her; he could not find the words to thank her or to recount again the agony of his discovery in the little cabin that evening. Once more he felt the slight pressure of her hand upon his arm, then, instinctively, he knew

that she had gone on, content that he would know, in that silent demonstration, of her sympathy and her sorrow. Yet withal, he wondered if she had stopped; vaguely, uncertainly, he felt that someone was looking at him, looking steadily and fixedly. He raised his head and turned—to stare with something of surprise. The girl was lost in the blur of the crowd. But Old Jim had remained, to stand halting and undetermined as though something were on his lips, something he repressed only through the force of his will-power. But at Bart's first glance, he, too, turned and hurried on in the wake of his mistress. Three hours later—

By his window in the darkness of his room, Bart Rogers sat watching, yet seeing nothing. Alone, his brain had begun to form pictures—of a man who had slouched shoulder deep through the swift water of an irrigation ditch, too excited to even feel the swift touch of the water.

He saw the picture of a man lighting a lamp—and lighting it in a trembling manner which belied the casual words of his lips—a man who, a moment later, was to be sobbing at his father's side. He felt again the cold touch of the hands, and of the cheek, the pang of realization as he bent to the quiet breast, the horrible clutching anguish, as a shadow in the night, he staggered toward town with the news that—

He turned quickly, with the dazed nervousness of a person awakened from a bad dream. He waited, tense, motionless. Then it came again—a slight, almost imperceptible tapping at the door.

"Who's there?"

The answer did not come in words—only in a repetition of that clicking, nervous tap, as though some one were rapping with their fingers, trusting to the sharp, telegraphic clack of the nails to carry the sound. Rogers stumbled through the semi-darkness toward the door and opened it, to instinctively stand aside as a bent, gray-haired figure slid from the faint light of the narrow hall into the shadows of the room.

"What is it?" Vaguely Bart Rogers had identified the shadowy visitor as Old Jim.

"Could—could I trust you, if I talked to you a little while?" The voice seemed tense, almost frightened.

"Tell me what it is!" Rogers ejaculated. At last came the words:

"Mind if we sit down?"

"Not at all." Bart brought two chairs toward the window. Jim halted his at a safe distance.

"That's better," he whispered. "Nobody can see us from the street here." He seated himself, and his thin hands knitted. At last: "You own the land right next to where they've brought in this oil?"

"Yes."
"It'll be worth a lot of money—if you'd want to sell out."

"It should—that is, if the oil keeps up."

Old Jim laid a hand on his arm.

"Boy," came in a low voice, "I want to tell you something. I can't tell anybody. I'm—then there was a long silence—"I'm putting myself at your mercy, in a way, in even coming to see you tonight. If he'd ever find it out—"

"You mean 'Bull'?"

"Yes."
"You mean—"

"You met us on the road one night," came cryptically. Rogers recoiled in horror.

"He would beat her? Again?" He rose and paced the room, at last to halt beside the older man's chair.

"Good God, man! you don't stand for that? Haven't you an ounce of red blood in your veins? Haven't you—"

But the thin hands spread helplessly.

"I—I can't do anything. There are reasons why I can't. I—I've just got to stand and look on. That's why he takes such a delight in it; because he knows that I'm suffering. That's why I—"

"There's the one way out—and you'd have a right to do it!" Bart Rogers spoke slowly, coldly. "No man has a right to beat a woman—much less a girl. Understand that? And there isn't a jury in the world—"

He paused then. The faint light from the street reflected the gleam in Old Jim's eyes; the older man half-rose, his hands extended, his lips working convulsively, his features fraught with excitement, with hope—then suddenly with fear as he sank into the chair again and stared dully into vacancy.

wound him—and then it'd be worse



"I—I Can't Take the Chance."

than ever. I—I can't take the chance. My hand wouldn't be steady. I—I'd miss. Then he'd get a greater revenge than ever. He'd ruin her life—and yours!"

"Mine? Ruin my life?"

Why suffer from headaches?
Have
YOUR EYES
Examined
F. M. French & Son
Jewelers, Optometrists
Albany, Oregon

me that before I leave this room!"
Bart Rogers smiled mirthlessly.
"We're discussing a good many things that may never happen. But, if it'll help you any, Jim—I'll promise."
Then Old Jim left.
And through the night, as Bart sat by the window, alone in his grief, there were moments when, in spite of his sorrow, his mind reverted to the visit of the shadowy Old Jim, and his strange, mysterious request.
It brought questions—a myriad of them. And some answers. More than once, in the years which had followed their first meeting, Bart Rogers had wondered why Anita Franniston allowed herself to suffer the cruelties which must be her lot at the hands of her father. This was an independent age, Rogers told himself, an age

SPRING TIME IS Paint TIME
You are invited to inspect and price our new and complete line of
Lowe Bros.' Paints and Varnishes
HILL & Co Halsey Oregon

Dr. C. FICQ, Dentist
"PLATES THAT FIT"
Crowns, bridge work and fillings. It will pay you to get my prices on your dental work, Casick bank building, Albany

"You care about her, don't you? I've seen it, boy." Old Jim rose now. "I saw it in your eyes this afternoon—I saw it there tonight. That's what made me come here. I want to get your promise."

"Then his voice trailed away.
"My promise? To what?" answered Bart.

"That—that you'll marry Anita."
"I?"

"Yes!" Old Jim had caught him by the arms now, and was holding in a grip that was almost spasmodic in its intensity. "You care about her—I know you do. I want you to marry her. You'll have money—plenty of it. You can go away—to New York, or maybe across the water—some place where he couldn't get his hands on her and torture her and tear the heart out of me! I'll help you—I give you my word that I'll help you! I'll pretend to hate you, I'll let him think that it will be a living agony to me to see her married to you! Then he'll consent to it—because he will think it will hurt me. Bart—" the man's finger nails were digging deep into the tight-clasped arms now—"I'll do anything in the world for you if you'll only promise! I'll crawl on my knees to you, I'll—"

"But why—why should you think that she would marry me? That she even thinks of me other than to be grateful for that night on the road? Why—"

"Maybe she doesn't, but I'll help. I'll talk you up to her—I know she likes you better than anyone else. And I'll try to make her love you."

Then he stopped. Bart Rogers waited long for him to continue, but no words came. The clutch at the younger man's arms released slowly. Then the old man turned despondently away.

"I—I guess I've been a fool," came at last. "Just forget I've ever been here."

"I can't do that, Jim." Bart Rogers was following him to the door. "But I'm afraid you've asked some impossibilities. In the first place, a girl doesn't marry a man unless she really loves him. Then she marries without influence from anyone. If that time ever comes, you'll find me waiting for Anita, and if she's willing to go with me, it'll be whether I have money or not, and in spite of what 'Bull' Franniston or anybody else has to say or think about it. I'll—"

"Don't!" The appeal had come in a whisper that was almost frantic. "Don't—please—please, for God's sake, don't!" He looked about him hurriedly. "That can't be, Rogers! Understand—it can't be! You can't take her that way—you mustn't—hear that? You mustn't! You're not to promise

their way to the broad, wooden stairway which led to the office of the attorney. There Old Jim tugged at his arm, and when Bart turned toward him, asked guardedly:

"What is it? What does he want you for?"

"I don't know. He told me this afternoon that he would want to see me tonight. He said he had some things to talk over with me."

"Is it about money? I don't—"

"Then be careful! Understand—be careful! Don't do or say a thing without being sure of your ground. Don't make them any promises—"

"They?"

"Yes, they've been up there talking for an hour. He called me from the window and sent me over to the hotel. Lawyer Barrows didn't send me. He—"

"Whom do you mean? I don't—"

But the question and answer were ended by a flood of light from the office of Leon Barrows. The door had opened, to disclose the attorney standing there in wait. Old Jim turned hurriedly and descended the stairs. Rogers went forward, and walked toward the desk, where sat the one man in the world he had regarded as an enemy. "Bull" Franniston!

vacation

Go somewhere this summer. Plan to make it the happiest vacation you ever had.

Low Roundtrip Fares

are in effect throughout the summer season. It's amazing what they will enable you to see and do. So go—this vacation. Know Oregon. Visit Tillamook Beaches, Newport Beaches, Coos Bay Beaches, Mountain Resorts, Crater Lake, Oregon Caves.

And rely upon our agents for full travel information. Ask for our illustrated booklet "Oregon Outdoors."

Southern Pacific

C. P. Moody, agt, Phone 226

CHAPTER IV

Argument

"You know Franniston, don't you, Rogers?" Barrows asked. "This, according to the legal phraseology," he continued in his usual, sarcastic tones, "is the last will and testament of Franklin Rogers, recently deceased. I intend to probate it at Mannington tomorrow. Therefore, I thought that I'd better read it to you two interested gentlemen tonight."

"Just a minute!" Rogers rose heatedly. "I object to this man being here. I—"

"Go ahead and object, if it will do you any good. I put up the money for you and your father. I'm here, and I'm going to stay here. I'm interested in this will, and I'm going to hear it read."

Barrows, meanwhile, had turned a cold eye upon the younger man.

"To my son, Barton Rogers," continued the biting words of the attorney, ignoring Bart's protest, "I give, devise and bequeath all my real and personal belongings with such exceptions as shall be noted below, all moneys, goods, chattels and effects, and the sole right and title to 160 acres of land comprising the northwest quarter of Section 63, Township 8, Range 74, to have and to hold, and with all rights and concessions to do with as he will, except as follows:

"To my good friend, Egbert Franniston, in recognition of his unflinching friendship—"

"That's a lie!" shouted Bart. "I won't believe it!"

"—in recognition of his unflinching friendship and his success in time of need," went on Barrows, "I give, devise and bequeath all oil and mineral rights underlying the surface of the land comprised in the northwest quarter of Section 63, Township 8, Range 74, the same being the identical section, township and range mentioned in the previous paragraph of this document. Upon acceptance of this bequest, with the right to experiment in search of such mineral and oil deposits, and the free use of such land as shall be necessary for such investigations, the rental of any needed land for pipeage, derricks, wells, mines, shafts and other equipment in case of the discovery and production of any oil or mineral, said rental to the said Barton Rogers not to exceed \$2,500 per year, payable at the end of each calendar year, and with the agreement and understanding that all oil and minerals which shall be taken from the ground, or beneath the ground upon this previously described land, shall

be the sole right and property of said Egbert Franniston. It is agreed and understood that any and all debts incurred by the testator during his lifetime and by the said Barton Rogers before the death of the testator, at this time owing to the said Egbert Franniston, including notes, deeds, chattel mortgages or any other paper of indebtedness, shall be declared by the said Egbert Franniston to be null, void and canceled, and without recourse in law."

It was the joker in the will! The thing which gave Barton Rogers everything—yet nothing!

"Let me read that again!" came huskily from Bart.

"In case you don't understand that—"

"I understand the words," came somewhat thickly.

"But not the meaning? It's simple enough. Just this: Franniston takes all oil on that land and cancels the debts you owe him. It was a bargain which seemed to be all on the side of your father. Franniston here will tell you that I said that very thing to him the day the will was signed—all three of us were up here in this office. Your father thought this would be the last place in the world where oil would be discovered, and told us so. I thought the same thing. Franniston thought differently. He said that he was willing to take the gamble and would lend you your father's money to—"

"I'm willing to pay up the rest to show that I'm on the square." Franniston was lighting his cigar. Bart Rogers turned on him.

"Are you?" he jeered. "A wonderful philanthropist, with millions in sight!"

"I didn't know it when I made the bargain."

"I've got a different opinion of that. Besides, I won't believe this until I see the signature and—"

"Look on the bottom of the page, then," came acridly from Leon Barrows. "Is that your father's writing?"

The eyes of the young man centered.

"Yes," came at last.

Bart could not understand—but he did recognize the signature as his father's.

Then Barrows spoke again.

"Now look at the second signature," he said, acridly. "Have you ever seen that before?"

"It looks like the signature of Sheriff Graham."

"That's correct," continued Barrows, "and I'm not going to argue with you much longer about this, Rogers. It's

(Continued on page 6)

Amor A. Tussing
LAWYER AND NOTARY
HALSEY, OREGON

DELBERT STARR
Funeral Director and Licensed Embalmer
Efficient Service. Motor Hearse. Lady Attendant.
Brownsville, Oregon

W. L. WRIGHT
Mortician & Funeral Director
Halsey and Harrisburg
Call D. TAYLOR, Halsey, or
W. L. WRIGHT, Harrisburg

BARBER SHOP
First-class Work
J. W. STEPHENSON.