

GOOD ROADS,
GOOD HOMES,
BEST CHEESE

CLOVERDALE COURIER.

The Nestucca Valley First,
Last and all the
Time.

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PEARL of the ARMY

Guy W. McConnell

SYNOPSIS.

Capt. Ralph Payne, U. S. A., is given secret plans of defense to deliver to Panama. He attends a ball at the Granada embassy with Colonel Dares' daughter, Pearl. As a climax to a series of mysterious incidents he is arrested for treason. The ambassador of Granada is found dead and the plans missing from Payne's coat. Major Brent, Payne's rival, enters into suspicious negotiations with Bertha Bonn. Pearl Dare follows a burglar from her home; is drugged and left in a field, and later overhears plotters, who almost capture her. Payne is sentenced to life imprisonment. A train carrying Pearl, Bertha Bonn and Payne on his way to prison is wrecked and Pearl sees Payne's lifeless body at her feet. She meets a mysterious stranger who offers her his services to trace the traitors. She learns that he has the plans. Pearl finds Adams in Washington and learns of his peculiar actions. Adams warns Senator Warfield that he is in danger from a ring of spies. While they talk the senator's office is attacked by conspirators.

FIFTH EPISODE

Somewhere in Granada.

For several seconds no one stirred. All stared at Adams in sheer amazement. It was Toko who broke the suspense by entering and whispering to Miss Dare.

Pearl looked at her chauffeur blankly. "Where—here? Did she give you her name?"

Toko shook his head.

Miss Dare excused herself and stepped into the corridor. There a haughty and stylishly dressed young woman awaited her.

Pearl immediately recognized the girl whom she had seen when the corpse of Captain Payne was discovered at the railroad wreck.

"You are Miss Dare, I believe?"

Pearl bowed formally. "And you?" Her caller smiled faintly. "Is the name of Miss Bertha Bonn unfamiliar to you?"

"I regret to say that it is. Please be brief for I am engaged. I saw you at the railroad wreck yesterday, didn't I?"

"Yes," said Bertha Bonn, abruptly. "That has something to do with my visit to you here—what and this." She took from her mesh bag a slim, oblong packet and a sealed note. "Do you recall the strange man with the lantern who helped you to identify Captain Payne?"

A thrill shot through Pearl. "Adams!" she gasped before she could

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restrain herself. "Yes—is he here?" Pearl eyed her suspiciously. "He is. Do you wish to communicate to him through me?"

Bertha placed the packet and note in Miss Dare's hand. "Not ten minutes ago I received a visitor at my apartment in the Hotel Wilton," she explained. "He was dressed in the uniform of a Senate building guard and was very much upset. He told me that a grave injustice was being done to a man by the name of T. O. Adams of Monks Corner, Nebraska, and that if I came here immediately and delivered these things to you it would probably be the means of saving his life. He gave me a written order of admission. So here I am."

"Why, of all persons, were you chosen as his messenger?" was all Pearl could think of saying in that surprising moment.

Thus far Bertha had spoken the truth. But now she became evasive. The return of her locket containing Major Brent's photograph, so necessary in Bertha Bonn's scheme of conquest, had been promised her if she would perform this mission and proceed without delay to the originally appointed rendezvous at the Paso del Norte on the Granadian frontier.

"I cannot answer that question, I, too, thought it strange."

Pearl was at a loss as to what to do with her visitor. Just then her father, Colonel Dare, hastened down the corridor, an expression of relief appearing on his anxious countenance upon sight of her. She introduced Bertha, who repeated her story. Upon the Colonel's suggestion the three returned to the waiting group in Senator Warfield's office.

By a curious irony Bertha Bonn was requested to occupy a chair next to Major Brent.

Again she told her story under the sharp cross-questioning of Major Steele of the army intelligence bureau, conducting the inquiry. Senator Warfield listened with mouth agape; Toko with natural interest in anything pertaining to Miss Dare; Adams with bland and speculating attention.

Pearl gave the packet and note to Major Steele, which he in turn handed to Adams. "Open them!" he ordered.



Major Brent Receives a Bouquet and a Message.

Major Brent interposed an objection, leaping to his feet and taking the center of the room.

"This is an extremely singular and irregular affair, colonel!" he exclaimed, saluting and addressing his superior. "Who knows what those envelopes contain? This man who is under suspicion should not be permitted to open them!"

All eyes were turned upon the major and in that absorbing second or two Adams, stepping back a pace, exchanged the packet in his hand with one from his inner coat pocket. The action was unobserved.

"Open them yourself, then," growled Major Steele, turning to Adams, who passed the things in his hand to Major Brent.

As everyone save Adams drew near to him, Major Brent continued to show hesitation and doubt as to the wisdom of this procedure. But at a nod from Colonel Dare he did as he had been asked.

The note was opened first. "Keep out of our affairs hereafter," it read. It was signed under the silhouette of a masked man:

"THE SILENT MENACE."

Next came the packet. To the astonishment of all it contained Senator Warfield's summarized military preparedness file with the theft of which they had charged Adams. A hasty examination showed it to be damp, as from a copying press.

"I warned you, senator," drawled Adams; "I w-warned you."

"Ey Jove, you did!" acknowledged the senator warmly. He stepped up to Adams and grasped his hand. "I owe you an apology. Will you accept it?"

"S-sure," beamed Adams; and to his evident embarrassment and surprise, the others followed the senator's example, even Major Steele.

"I guess you're not the man we're after, after all," declared the latter, appraising him.

"I g-guess you're right there," stammered Adams. "What's more, you'd b-better git me in on this thing—that's what I told this little g-girl here," indicating Miss Dare, who, with her father and Senator Warfield, closely followed the conversation, Brent, Bertha and Toko having left the room.

"What do you mean by that?" interposed Colonel Dare, smiling at the familiarity Adams assumed in his reference to his daughter.

In the awe of the simple for brass buttons, Adams replied: "I got a n-notion, colonel, that I kin help your daughter to s-solve the riddle about her dead bean. T-that's what I told her. She w-wouldn't hear to it. She g-got an idea that I was some chap she called 'The Silent Menace' that 'p-pens t-to be behind all these here doin's, like this frinstance. The hull t-truth is I pick up a lot of dope, waitin' around in hotel cafes, barbering and t-telegraph operating and sech like. People think I'm a doggone fool because I stutter and pay no attention to me. Now, w-what I'd like to do—" he reflected a moment—"I'd like to jine the army, and b-be attached to you sort of like—"

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"Your orderly, father," whispered Pearl, to whom the suggestion appeared.

The colonel nodded. So did Major Steele. So did Senator Warfield.

"That's it," concluded Adams. "Then I could watch a-after this girl here."

Pearl giggled.

"I like her," declared Adams in a postscript.

And so it happened that within the next few days T. O. Adams of Monks Corner, Neb., became orderly to Colonel Richard Dare of the Seventy-first Engineers, U. S. A.

The government now began to take some heed to Pearl Dare's assertions of a foreign alliance scheming to involve and at the same time cripple the country in war. The canal-defense plans had been stolen, the national preparedness budget had been stolen, copied and returned—what government secret next would be revealed to hostile eyes? Every branch of the secret service department was called into play to ferret the intriguers out of their apparently impenetrable disguises and positions of security.

Evencs thickened. Fretted by our alien laws, the Orient, whose glittering eyes were fastened upon our Asiatic possessions, kept us in a constant expectancy. With Canada, our northern neighbor, we had no difficulty except that by her we were not regarded with the old-time friendliness; rather were we in disfavor because of our neutral position with all powers then at war in Europe, of which her mother country was one. On our southern exposure we were always in hot water; and now added fire had been heaped under the troublesome diplomatic kettle and Granada was boiling.

As a precautionary measure Colonel Dare and his staff were detailed south to quietly establish base patrols on the

conduct was concerned, the confidence of the Dares seemed to have been warranted. Unknown to anyone, however, except the foreign alliance, Adams was really not what he represented himself to be, or at least was open to serious doubts as to the patriotic side of his character. For Adams was the possessor of the secret canal-defense plans. This much-suspected-about military document was in the slim, oblong packet brought to him by Bertha Bonn in the committee room of Senator Warfield. It came from the foreign alliance, who, by their own error, thought they had sent him a copy, when too late realizing their mistake, for the ink in the plans had faded entirely, rendering them illegible until another chemical application could be made. This, for the time being, it was impossible to do because no one possessed the chemical formula. Adams, for reasons of his own, hid the document in his military belt. He thought that he alone knew where it had been secreted.

To Major Brent the southern detail was a most welcome one, for he looked upon it as an opportunity to be relieved of the constant persecution of Bertha Bonn who seldom let a day pass without making an effort to beguile him and finally threatened to expose their affair to Pearl Dare.

As well may be imagined, therefore, when on leaving Washington on the long overland journey, Brent ran across the girl on his train and discovered that she also was bound for the Granadian frontier, his rage knew no bounds. He became possessed of one idea—how to evade her forever.

The circumstances were more than startling when that way opened. His party had arrived and were domiciled at Fort Gordon, a military post of strategic value, adjacent to the com-



Adams Becomes the Colonel's Orderly.

Granadian frontier and meet and confer with the American consul, whose passports had been handed to him by the Granadian government. Miss Pearl Dare, with Toko and the big touring car, accompanied them.

To Orderly Adams, it must be admitted, the orders to go south came as though they had been long expected, and he prepared. As a soldier he had developed with remarkable aptitude and was eager to see real service. As a private individual, so far as his open-

munity of Paso del Norte. He had gone to the hotel to prevent a meeting between Pearl and Bertha, which the latter had succeeded in conniving for that night.

Seated at a corner table in the rude basement bar, Brent bolstered his courage with a julep.

Brent was in the act of lighting a cigarette when a faint shadow crept upon the wall in front of him and a

Continued on last page.

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