

The Strumpet Sea

By BEN AMES WILLIAMS

SYNOPSIS

George McAusland was 38 years old when he sailed from America to undertake his post as a missionary in the Fiji Islands. A crime he had committed in a fit of excitement had shattered all his confidence in himself. He felt forced to avoid pretty Mary Doncaster, who boarded the ship at Honolulu. She was en route to visit her parents, who were missionaries on Gilead Island. Mary was attracted by George's attempts to avoid her.

CHAPTER I—Continued

"So you're sorry for that poor young man?" John Gale asked.

"Yes," said Mary. He'd be nice if he didn't think he had to be so severe! And when I speak to him, he jumps as though I'd stuck a pin in him. Mrs. Gale says he wants to talk to me and doesn't know how. He'd feel so much better if he just did."

"You think he does want to talk to you?"

"Of course! Why shouldn't he? I'm young, and pretty, and friendly, and nice; and he's not nearly as old as he thinks he is. You watch him, sometime, when I'm talking with Joseph Neargood."

They heard a cry forward, and Mary leaped past the old man to look outside. George McAusland somehow had fallen off the stage, had toppled into the sea.

"He can't swim!" Mary Doncaster exclaimed. The old minister heard the hiss of torn garments; and, an instant later, she stepped out of her skirts and petticoats, and—slim and white in less encumbering apparel—vaulted easily over the rail into the sea.

The deck was a scurry of activity. John Gale kept his eye fixed on these two dark spots that were heads, in the vast waste of ocean, hidden as they dipped into the trough between great swells, lifting on the crests again into his view.

CHAPTER II

At the moment when Mary Doncaster leaped overboard, George was almost directly below her. She jumped wide of the vessel's side in order to clear him; and when she came to the surface again, the ship, towering high, was gliding smoothly away across the silent sea. From her decks shouts came back to the girl, and she saw the splash of a grating thrown overboard, and knew help would come quickly.

But in the meantime this helpless George McAusland had sunk, sucked under in the burble at the ship's stern. Mary swam toward the spot where he had disappeared, and saw his floundering arm break the surface. He coughed and gasped and muttered something; and she heard the words:

"Into Thy hands . . ."

She felt a hot impatience with him because he did not know how to swim, and because he now surrendered so supinely. She cried: "Don't talk so silly! You're not going to drown! You're all right! I've got you. Lie still!"

At her voice behind him, George stiffened rigidly, and a little wave crest lapped across his face and into his open mouth, and he gagged and revolved in the water like a crocodile twisting to tear off the gout of flesh in which its teeth are set. He rolled over facing her and tried to clutch at her. She dove instantly, escaping his grasp, and ruthlessly caught his foot and pulled him under water. Then she slipped up past him, clear of his hands that were like talons, and from behind him caught his collar again and drew him to the surface.

She was on guard against any sudden movement by George; but he now submitted, rigid as an oar. Yet he was heavy, and his clothes were heavy, and the grating was farther away than she had thought. Before she reached it, she was tired, her heart pounding. The ship now was almost broadside to. She hoped someone aboard had had the wit to keep an eye on them; and then she saw a man in the rigging, pointing in their direction; and when the next swell lifted them, she saw a boat in the water between them and the ship, the oars glinting in the sun, racing this way like a spider.

She told George: "Hold on to the grating. Don't try to climb on it. Just hold on." His fingers clutched the edge, and she released him and moved away out of his reach. He said humbly: "I can't swim." She laughed, herself easier now. "I noticed that! You'll learn. Everyone swims in the Islands. I could swim before I could walk, I think. The boat's near." His teeth were chattering. "You're not cold," she said. "That's just nerves. Don't worry, we could float like this for days."

She talked more and more swiftly, fighting to hold him up with words; for under her eyes strength visibly flowed out of him. Yet he must hold on a minute more, a minute more . . .

kick of her feet thrust herself upward, swung one leg over the gunwale, clambered in. The mate said: "Here's my coat, Miss Doncaster."

When they came alongside, the rail was lined above them. A sailor gave Mary a hand up, cupping her foot in his palm, and Captain Keen reached down to help her. On deck, Mrs. Gale had a long coat to put around the girl.

Mrs. Gale said: "Run and change, Mary." But the girl stayed a moment to be sure George was all right. They were rigging a whip to hoist him aboard, since he was still too weak from the shock of his immersion to help himself. The mate and the sailors watched him gravely. Mary, understanding that he would not want her to see him thus, went below, leaving him to other hands.

George even when he was safe on deck was barely able to stand. John Gale said to him: "Well, it's lucky for you Miss Doncaster was aboard."

"Yes. I'd have drowned. Where is she?"

"In her cabin, changing."

"I want to thank her."

"Later. The first thing is dry clothes for you, and a noggin of rum."

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fact. "I think that's the first question I ever heard you ask," she declared. "Yes, of course I do. After all, I've only been away eight or nine years."

"You seem glad to come back." "Of course! I'm coming back to my home, to my father and mother! This is where I live, really. I just went away to school, you know. I lived with my aunt in New Bedford. Away Patty Hanline. Uncle Tom was away all the time; only came home twice. He's mate on the Ventura, Cap'n Corr's whaler."

George echoed: "A whaler?" "Corran's told me stories about the whalers, the whaleships. They've ruined these islands."

"Whalers aren't so bad. New Bedford's full of them. The Ventura is a fine ship. I know Cap'n Corr. His sons are mates aboard her. I knew them both in New Bedford. Peter was in the same school with me; and Richard too, for a while, years ago. He went to sea as cabin boy first, and then came home and came to school for two years, and then went fourth mate with his father again." Her eyes were dancing, amused at his expression. "I thought Richard was pretty wonderful, and Peter too, of course. Richard was so shy he hardly looked at me, but I worshiped him. You know how little girls are."

"I'm afraid I don't know much about little girls."

She smiled. "Or big ones, either, do you, Mr. McAusland," she challenged; and then she told him quickly: "But maybe you'll see them. Richard and Peter, I mean. Cap'n Corr promised to put in at Gilead to see my father and mother on this voyage. Mother's Uncle Tom's sister. Maybe we'll find them at Gilead when we get there. I hope so."

He asked in curiously thick tones: "Why? Because you want to see your uncle again?"

"I want to see them all, of course," she said.

He said, after a moment, almost wistfully: "I've never known young men. My brothers were a lot older than I."

"I know," she assented softly. "You haven't known young women either, have you?"

"No."

She said, smiling in the darkness, as though he were a child: "I knew you wanted to be friendly with me, but you didn't quite know how."

"I want to be friendly with everyone."

"But specially with me, a little, don't you?" she urged. "Only you're sort of afraid?"

"I don't think so!" he protested, half-resentful.

"Oh, but you are," she insisted. "You're afraid to do the things you want to do."

He swung toward her as though startled; but someone spoke behind them.

Suddenly George sneezed.

"You'd better go below, hadn't you?" she suggested. "You've taken cold."

He blew his nose. "I'm afraid I have." They went aft together. Mrs. Gale prescribed hot lemonade, but George protested that he was all right, till he sneezed again. Then he consented to go below.

During the days that followed, John Gale was pleased to see that having taken the plunge, George no longer avoided Mary. They were much together, as often forward as on the after deck. Under Corran's instructions they practiced rope work and listened to his tall tales. Mary led him to talk of whaling; and sometimes Corran told of bloody battles with Leviathan that made George's pulse pound, and sometimes he made them laugh together in a gleeful incredulity.

They sighted the tip of Gilead's highest peak one day as the sea cut the sun's disk in half. At dawn they were close aboard, or seemed to be, although still ten or twelve miles distant.

Mary was with Captain Keen, and George joined them and asked a question; and Mary said:

"We'll come to a big bay presently, with room for a hundred ships. It runs deep into the Island, over two miles, and there's a small island in the mouth of the bay, so there are really two ways in. The bay narrows all the way to the beach at the inner end. You'll see!" Her eyes were happy with anticipation. "Father and Mother will come out to meet us," she predicted.

"Will they be keeping a lookout?" "Oh no, but someone will see us." She pointed ahead. "That's the entrance, Cap'n Keen. You can't see it yet, but that rock that looks like a hill with no trees on it is the island in the mouth of the bay."

The Captain asked: "We go in south of it, don't we?"

"Whichever's easiest, according to the wind. There's deep water everywhere, even close in to shore. The best holding ground is about a mile this side of the beach."

Captain Keen nodded. Mary went forward, George with her; and she pointed out to him things familiar to her eyes, which his could not yet perceive.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



DICTATOR'S MENU

("Correspondents could see the dictators dining in the train, but could not see what they were eating."—News item.)

Benito—I'll bet they'd like to know what we're eating.

Adolf—Public curiosity is a queer thing.

Benito—Maybe we should announce the menu.

Adolf—Let 'em guess. What kind of soup is this?

Benito—(Indignant) beef soup.

Adolf—(Englishly) Now look here . . .

Benito—You'll like it. I had two Englishmen boiled in it especially for you.

Adolf—(Skeptically)—You and who else?

Benito—You'll like the fish course.

Adolf—(Brenner Pass pickerel.)

Adolf—I thought we were going to have man-eating shark. I love it. Some of my best friends are man-eating sharks. What about that Suez shad I asked you to get?

Benito—Ahem. It was out of season.

Adolf—Now for the meat course. What is it?

Benito—Lamb.

Adolf—(Excitedly)—Lamb! Lamb for Adolf Hitler?

Benito—I ordered lion, of course. But there was some mistake. I feel as out of place with lamb as you do.

Adolf—Take it away! It's a wonder you don't serve breast of dove.

Benito—How about a little turkey?

Adolf—I've been after that all year.

Benito—Do you care for tripe?

Adolf—It depends on who prepares it.

Benito—Well, if anybody can prepare tripe I can.

Adolf—Haven't you any frogs' legs?

Benito—If anybody has frogs' legs you should. How about a helping of spinach. It is full of iron and is great for your strength.

Adolf—Spinach may be all that it's cracked up to be, but I wish I knew what vegetables those British were eating.

Benito—(Suddenly)—Ah, I forgot! We're having lobster. I love lobster. It looks so warlike. Do you like it boiled or broiled?

Adolf—(Fiercely)—I eat it shell and all!

Benito—Do you really like it that way?

Adolf—No, but it makes me seem tough.

Benito—Now for the dessert. Do you like cake?

Adolf—Me, a cake eater!

Benito—Do you care for raspberries?

Adolf—No, but you and I stand a swell chance of having to stand for 'em!

SUMMARY BY EITHER SIDE

I

Vote for my man

And unseat, oh,

Adolf, Josef

And Benito,

Satan, rickets

And all evils

Such as dandruff

And boll weevils!

II

Moths and heartburn,

Tonsillitis,

Grippe, hay fever—

How they blight us!

Tyranny and boils

They grieve you . . .

Vote for my man—

They will leave you!

III

"The Japanese government has entered into this triple alliance for peace and the development of the world."—Premier Konoye.

Tweet! Tweet!

IV

Representative Starnes of the Dies committee says more than 600 Bund members or sympathizers, all aliens, are known to have jobs in eastern industrial plants making war munitions and supplies. And probably the Bund attitude is that it's pretty good, for a start.

V

CANDIDATE FOR FIRING SQUAD

It always seems to be incredible

A radish is considered edible.

—Shirley Mae Williams.

VI

Nothing seems to me less valid

That numbers in any salad.

VII

TOUGH GOING

It is going to be pretty hard, it seems to us, for even the Japanese

to voice a salute such as: "Heil, Yomawataaskoo."

And both Hitler and Mussolini

will look sidly wielding a Japanese fan.

VIII

Major Quisling is designing a new

flag for Norway. Some people are

so sweet and considerate.

FARM TOPICS

LEGUMES RAISE SOIL FERTILITY

Nitrogen-Rich Crops Need Special Handling.

By C. B. WILLIAMS
(Head, N. C. State College Agronomy Department)

Legumes plus proper fertilization hold the key to fertile, productive soils.

The most practical method in building up the productive power of soils calls for the proper growth and handling of suitable legume crops in rotation with properly fertilized major crops.

The mere growing of legumes does not assure added fertility unless these crops are handled properly. If the legumes are removed from the field, leaving on the land only the stubble and roots, their use in this manner alone will prove a delusion so far as being an effective means of increasing the producing power of the soil in a permanent way is concerned.

Effective methods of increasing the fertility of soils must be those that will leave the soil at the end of each year fairly well supplied with thoroughly decomposed organic matter and an increasing amount of readily available plant foods. This will be the effect which the proper growth and handling of legumes will have on the land.

Anyone at all familiar with the simple principles of soil management knows that fertility cannot be maintained when the crops removed take off the land more plant foods than are returned to it. That's why it's so important to turn under some of the legumes.

The best time to apply ground limestone is from three months to one year before seeding legumes. This gives the stone sufficient time to contact acid in the soil particles and counteract it.

The application of lime to cultivated land should be made after plowing, and the material should be mixed with the topsoil. Little benefit may be expected if lime is plowed under before being properly mixed with the topsoil. On pastures it is only necessary to scatter the lime on top of the sod; however, better results will be obtained if it can be worked in by light harrowing.

Good Laying Hens Do Not Die Young

The hen that lays the golden egg, and lays it regularly, can live as long as her less productive sister, according to a five-year study made at the Pennsylvania State college by Dr. Dean R. Marble, associate professor of poultry husbandry.

"Many poultrymen believe that the high mortality of laying hens is due to breeding for standards of egg production which are so high that the bird's physique is weakened," Dr. Marble stated. "However, during a five-year period we cut the mortality of selected poultry in half and proved that we can breed longer-lived poultry without any loss in egg production, egg size, or body weight. Selecting and breeding for all these characteristics is practical."

During the past decade mortality has been increasing, Dr. Marble claims. He believes that careful breeding could help to solve the problem.

Sheet Erosion Destroys Fertility of Farm Land

That crop yields decrease as soil erosion increases is shown by tests made on farms last summer by the Soil Conservation Service.

In tests made on five farms, it was found that fields with less than 25 per cent of the topsoil gone produced 51 bushels of oats or 47 bushels of barley per acre; fields with 25 to 50 per cent of the topsoil washed away yielded 42 bushels of oats or 28 bushels of barley per acre; fields with 50 to 75 per cent of the topsoil gone produced 35 bushels of oats or 23 bushels of barley, and land with more than 75 per cent of the topsoil washed away yielded only 23 bushels of oats and 17 bushels of barley.

"There is an evident relation shown here between topsoil losses and crop losses," says M. A. Thorntons, soil conservationist. "Sheet erosion removes the top, or most productive layer of the soil. With each inch that washes away, there is left a material that is not only less productive, but that is more subject to erosion."

New Worm Treatment

Phenothiazine, a new and powerful drug which is now being used experimentally for treating sheep and goats for worms, has been given splendid results on flocks around Columbia. Flocks that have been treated twice have been doing splendidly. It takes about five days after treatment to clean the animals of worms, and all worms are killed, except possibly some tapeworms. Even the nodule worms, which are so bad in sheep on some farms, are killed.

CLASSIFIED DEPARTMENT

HOTEL ASSEMBLY
NINTH & MADISON, SEATTLE
Comfortable Modern Rooms
Daily \$1.25 Weekly \$6 Up
Coffee Shop Dining Room