THE DOOM TRAIL

By Arthur D. Howden Smith

Author of PORTO BELLO GOLD, Etc.

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CHAPTER XV—Continued

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"There!" he exclaimed. "You have it in the face. What do you expect of me? Would you have me violate God's sacrament by wedding a maid against her affections? Some priests might do so, but I will never! Marriage without affection is adultery."

"You leap to conclusions, my good sir," returned Murray. "The maid does not know her own mind. She is a conquest for the Church, and her alliance with the Chevalier de Veulle cements the great work we are undertaking together."

"I will have naught to do with it," responded the priest with decision. "Not even to admit her into the Church would I tolerate the fastening upon herself, her husband and myself of a mortal sin. As for the Chevalier de Veulle, I will say nothing at present. But I am not satisfied with everything here at La Vierge du Bois. I shall have more to say on that score later."

He went out and up the stairs, and Murray, after a moment's hesitation, followed him.

But our reprieve was brief. The next morning an augmented force of jailers appeared. The thongs on our arms were tightened; our legs were unlashed; and we were marched up into the wintry sunshine again, our eyes blinking at the unwonted light.

The village was deserted, and we perceived the reason when we reached the council place and saw the long row of stakes which stretched before the background of the green firs of the Evil Wood. Jeers and cries of derision greeted us.

The False Faces strung their ill-omened circle around us, and the feather-tufted Keepers and their women and children pressed close to view the grewsome spectacle. We were bound to the stakes, Ta-wan-ne-ars and I in the middle of the line; and almost at once the torturing began upon the unfortunates at the two extremities. Their songs and shouts of defiance soon gave way to a sinister silence, as they fought with all their will power to curb the agony which bade them cry for mercy.

The horror of it first sickened me, then flogged me into a red-hot tempest of anger. And in the midst of the orgy of bestiality Murray and De Veulle penetrated the circle of False Faces, with Marjory, white-faced, tight-lipped, between them. They walked up to the stake to which I was bound.

Murray addressed me.

"We are making a bargain with the lady, Master Ormerod. She is to renounce her objections to De Veulle, own herself mistaken in her feeling of affection for you—and you are to be permitted to escape when she has sealed her engagements."

"Do not think of it, Marjory," I called to her. "I mind this not at all. And fear not. Help will come to you."

A tinge of color showed in her cheeks, and she stepped to my side.

"I cannot let you die, Harry," she said with a sob. "Indeed I will not be able to stand the thinking of it. Better anything—better marriage to this beast—than—than—that!"

"You are wrong," I urged her. "You must not. I should go mad if you did. I should hate myself! I—"

I twisted my head toward Ta-wan-ne-ars beside me.

"Bid her not, brother," I appealed to him. "Tell her I do not fear to pay the price! And why should I escape if you—"

His granite features softened as his eyes met hers. But before he could speak the scene shifted with startling rapidity. There was a bulge in the ring of False Faces, and Ga-ha-no burst into the group.

Dressed in her uniform as Ga-go-sa Ho-nun-us-tase-ta, the kilt and moccasins, she fronted De Veulle with eyes blazing, breast heaving.

"Do you seek now to buy the white maiden with this man's life?" she stormed. "You shall not! You have had your pleasure with me. Now you would like to have a woman of your own color. You shall not! I have been bad. I have forgotten the ways of my fathers. I have betrayed a good man."

She threw a glance at Ta-wan-ne-ars, straining at his bonds.

"For that I am sorry, but it is too late!" she exclaimed. "White maiden," she cried to Marjory, "do not listen to this man. He is more wicked than I—and I am now a creature of Ha-ne-go-ate-geh!"

De Veulle waved his arm toward the attentive circle of False Faces.

"Remove the Mistress," he ordered. "She is hindering the torture."

The False Faces moved forward reluctantly, but Ga-ha-no acted without hesitation. A knife leaped from a fold of her kilt, and she sprang upon De Veulle like a wildcat. He retreated, and ripped out his own knife.

But she closed with him, and the two knives sank home at the same instant. Hers pierced De Vuelle to the heart. His drove to the hilt into her right breast, and she staggered back, coughing blood, against the rigid form of Ta-wan-ne-ars, bound fast to the stake.

"Ga-ha-no—was not—worthy of—Ta-wan-ne-ars," she gasped as her head slipped down his chest. "It—is—better—so."

No torture could have distorted his face into the image of frenzied despair which it displayed as he strove uselessly to bend down to her.

"My Lost Soul!" he muttered. "Oh, Ha-wen-ne-yu, my Lost Soul! Oh, Great Spirit, my Lost Soul!"

Marjory crept nearer to me, the horror in her face turning to pity, the tears streaming from her eyes.

"The poor lass!" she cried softly. "The poor, brave lass!"

CHAPTER XVI

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The Might of the Long House

The silence of consternation gripped the hordes of the Keepers of the Trail. The sea of painted, scowling faces exhibited one frozen expression of awe at the suddenness of the tragedy. Only Murray gave no indication of feeling as he knelt by De Veulle's side.

He stood up, wiping a spot of blood off one of his hands with a laced handkerchief.

"He is gone," he remarked impartially.

"Give a look to the Indian girl," I urged.

He shrugged his shoulders as if to say it was not worth while; but Mar-

jory stooped over Ga-ha-no, composed the disordered black tresses and closed the wildly staring eyes.

"'Tis useless, Harry," she said. "She is dead."

"Ga-ha-no—is—dead!" repeated Ta-wan-ne-ars blankly.

His heaving muscles relaxed, and he hung limp in his bonds against the stake.

"At the least, the woman gave you an avenue of escape from an intricate problem," commented Murray. "You do not seem glad, my dear."

"I am not glad," retorted Marjory scornfully. "And I am right content that you should be unable to understand why I will be mourning for her."

"Ah, well, we have never understood each other, have we?" rejoined Murray, taking snuff absent-mindedly. "Come, we will give orders for the removal of the unfortunate pair, and—"

The horror dawned once more in Marjory's face.

"And what?" she gasped.

"You forget, Marjory, that my savage henchmen have work to do," he answered nonchalantly. "I take it for granted that you do not wish to remain and view their labors?"

"You would leave these—these men—Master Ormerod—to—to—"

"And why not?" he replied. "They are enemies. As I have had occasion to tell him ere this, Master Ormerod has sought to contrive my ruin. But I am a reasonable man. I am always willing to discuss terms."

"And what might you mean by terms?" I demanded, taking a hand in the conversation.

He deliberated as unconcernedly as if we sat on opposite sides of a table in London, entirely ignoring the hud-died corpses at his feet, the line of bodies stiffening in the bitter cold against the stakes and the attendant cordon of Indians whose faces studied his as their fingers itched to resume the torture.

"An undertaking to abandon this wholly barren persecution of my enterprises," he decided. "I should require the signature of Governor Burnet to the document."

"And my companions here?" I asked curiously.

"You forget that even my powers are necessarily limited," he said. "I could not possibly snatch from my people's vengeance Iroquois warriors taken red-handed in an attempt to massacre them."

I laughed.

"You do not yet know me, Murray."

"Possibly you are subject to education," he retorted, buttoning up his greatcoat. "Come, Marjory."

She drew away from him.

"I choose to remain," she said coldly.

"I choose that you shall not."

He waved his hand in unmistakable signal of release to the watchful False Faces and their followers. A yell of satisfaction swelled from their hungry throats, and they dashed forward.

"'Twill be difficult for me to control them in a few moments," observed Murray.

He looked up in amazement, as a mantle of silence enveloped the council place for the second time.

"O my people," boomed a harsh voice in the Cahnuaga dialect, "verily Ha-ne-go-ate-geh has claimed you! You are mad! You toy with your enemies here when the warriors of the Long House are as thick along the Doom Trail as the falling leaves of autumn. The Keepers who were on watch are dead or in flight. At any moment the Iroquois will be here. They have burned Ga-o-no-geh. The snow of the Trail is trampled flat by their multitudes. Aye, the Doom Trail is bringing doom upon its Keepers."

His words were drowned in a racket of firing from the heart of the Evil Wood. A number of the False Faces emerged from the shelter of the firs, their awful masks wabbling unsteadily.

"The People of the Long House!" they wailed. "The People of the Long House are come!"

"We are attacked back and front," snarled Murray. "Well Master Ormerod, you and your friend the chief are excellent hostages."

He bellowed a series of commands which brought some degree of order out of the confusion, and dispatched one party of Keepers into the wood to resist the attack from that quarter. Another body he sent through the village to hold the approaches of the Doom Trail. Under his directions the remainder of the warriors unbound the surviving prisoners from the stakes and escorted us to the stockaded house in which he dwelt.

In the doorway they paused to await the coming of Murray. He arrived presently, with Marjory hanging unwillingly on his arm.

"The prisoners?" he rasped in answer to the question of our guards. "Take them to the cellar. Look to their security if you value your lives."

An echo of distant shouts reached our ears as we stood there, and across the posts of the stockade we saw the Keepers streaming from the Evil Wood and at their heels certain darting, quick-moving figures that we knew must be the warriors of the Eight Clans.

"It is time to bring our women and children inside the stockade," proposed one of the Cahnuagas.

Murray shook his head.

"We have not room nor food to spare. See," he said, as the sound of firing came from the southward, "we are surrounded. We are ignorant of the strength of the Iroquois. It may be all we can do to defend ourselves. Women and children would be so many inconveniences to us."

And whilst a squad of savages conducted us to our prison the rest manned the firing platforms around the stockade and prepared to cover the retreat of the Keepers, who were falling back rapidly before the hard-driving attacks of the Iroquois.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Use of Rifle Dates From Border Warfare

The use of the rifle in America has been general since the war of 1754-63, known to us as the French and Indian war, in which Braddock was defeated.

From what I can learn, the flint-lock rifle, as we generally understand the weapon, dates from about the beginning of the Eighteenth century. My reasons for believing this are the statements that Captain Dillon has a good specimen with a date of 1719, if I recall correctly, stamped in the metal of the barrel. The photo of this rifle shows it to have been the conventional long-barreled, short-stocked, single-triggered model made and used so widely in the border wars and the Revolution.

I have read in very old books that King Philip, the Indian chieftain of New England, in his great war with the Colonists in 1675 or some such date, had a rifled weapon. It may have been true, but I believe the rifle dates to the early part of the Eighteenth century as far as general use is concerned. I believe the first makers were the German settlers of Pennsylvania.—Mr. Wiggins, in Adventure Magazine.

Mexican Superstition

The Mexicans have a superstition that whoever partakes of food that has been gnawed by rats will be falsely accused of wrongdoing.

Proof Positive

Everybody says it, and what everybody says must be true.—James Fenimore Cooper.

NEW COAT SHOULD HAVE SMART BOW; BEACH ATTIRE IS GAY OF COLOR

WHEN buying that new coat for the vacation trip, see to it that there is a handsome bow somewhere in its make-up. The interesting part of the new bows are they keep one guessing as to where on the coat they will choose to locate. A bow is just as apt to be positioned on the shoulder as at the back of the collar or perhaps it may find placement where the coat fastens to one side, as instanced on the model here pictured. This coat of beige kasha is all that fancy would picture when it comes to patrician style as attained in exquisite line and smart detailing. As to swagger bow-trimming it elects to place little bows even at the wrists in addition to the self-material bow where it fastens.

NEW SUMMER COAT MODEL

That is another fascinating eccentricity of the modern bow, it is no respecter of fabrics, it would as soon be of the cloth of the coat as of ribbon or mayhap it will be of velvet or, more interesting still—of fur. A flat fur bow-trim at the side or back of the neckline is the newest thing out for coats. Another stunning effect is for the shawl collar of fur to finish at the low waistline with a bow of the fur tied in one loop with two sash ends.

Often the same shawl-collar and bow treatment is followed, substituting moire or faille silk or crepe satin for the fur.

The new summer coat models are most alluring, both as to fabric and color. There is a lovely new creamy beige shade which appears its handsomest in heavy double-faced satin—used reversibly. The effectiveness is heightened by clever manipulation of the material.

A coat of almond-green velveteen or of beige is another of the mode's novelties for summer.

"Mother, may I go out to swim?" "Yes, my child, but do not go near the water." The color splendor of present-day beach attire seems just like that—as if it dare not "go near the water." However, the enlightened know to the contrary. Thanks to modern invention, no wave can wash away the gorgeous glamor of color and design, for the materials of which these resplendent garments and accessories are made are now processed to the point of being rendered waterproof. It is a fact, nowadays silks are being rubberized, likewise cretonnes and even velvet is actually being rubberized. So if the apparently conservative dresser is secretly beset with an urge for gay and hectic color, the beach is the place appointed by the mode, for a pageantry of attire as vividly colorful as the human eye can picture.

The beach ensemble in the picture is typical of the trend to elaborate and fanciful effects. Beach coats are a favorite fashion topic of the day. The one illustrated is of cretonne flowers of yellow, green and red being printed on a tan background. The clipped wool collar and cuffs make the garment ideal for a chilly day.

Favorite media for the beach coat include terry cloth, moire fabrics, hand blocked linens, also tinted silks and crepe de chine. Most of the gay fig

A GAY BEACH COSTUME

ured fabrics are either hand-blocked in striking modernistic design, or brightly printed or what is exceedingly popular—hand-painted. Especially is the much exploited cooli coat decorated with bizarre motifs.

As to the bathing suit, the two piece jersey comprising slip and trunks or tights is outstanding for practical use. As to silk bathing suits taffeta in solid color or in gay plaids seems to be taking the place of the crepe de chine types which were so popular last season.

JULIA BOTTOMLEY.

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Everything Else High; Why Not the Anklet?

Senator Robinson, at one of his famous duck luncheons, was marveling over the high prices that prevail in the night clubs of New York.

"A young man," he said, "visited a night club not long ago. The cover charge was $5. Champagne was $41. The young man shook his head and started for the door without ordering anything.

"'What's the matter?' a pretty girl at a desk near the door said to him. 'Anything wrong?'

"'What's that round your neck?' said the young man.

"The girl put her hand up to her gold chain.

"'That,' she said, 'is a necklet. Why?'

"'Well,' said the young man, 'everything's so high in this club, I thought it might be an anklet.'"—Detroit Free Press.

Immense Camera "Eye"

A huge lens, specially made for the United States air service, weighs 45 pounds and is said to be the largest camera "eye" ever ground in America. With the mounting it measures 9 by 9½ inches and has a focal length of 36 inches. It will take pictures of entire cities at one exposure.

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