

# VALIANT DUST

by Percival Christopher Wren

**SYNOPSIS:** Not far away from the Citadel of Mekeas, Major Napoleon Hooch of the Foreign Legion plots treason with France and to his fellow conspirator the Kaid of Mekeas. In Hooch's childhood sweetheart Otha Bellame; in the Citadel is Hooch's wife and her husband Jules. The Kaid receives an emissary, ostensibly from Germany, and comes to an agreement with him.

## Chapter 17 THE GREEDY KAID

VERY well," observed the Kaid, at the conclusion of the interview. "All is now clear as the limpid waters of the rivers of Paradise, and we understand each other, as a plow, learned, and true believer understandeth the words of the Book.

"Two hundred and fifty thousand marks in gold; four thousand guns, such as take to pieces to be carried on the backs of mules; ammunition; and a good and faithful man to instruct my gunners in the use and care of such guns.

"And you yourself to remain in my country until full and complete delivery of all things agreed upon," added the Kaid.

Sitting cross-legged upon his cushion, the big stranger bowed low from the waist, his head almost touching his feet.

"It is agreed," he said, and on that happy note the interview concluded.

"What think you of him, oh Kaid, my son?" inquired the Kaid, when the stranger had been conducted from the council-chamber to the dungeon-like guest-room which had been allotted to him, "and what said you to him in his own tongue?"

"I spoke to him in English," replied Hooch. "Spoke suddenly, as you observed, and bade him reply instantly in that tongue. He did so, and with a marked German accent. Personally, I never trust any man, oh my father, but I believe he is a German and what he professes to be. I say keep him in this country and let him send what messages and messengers he will. Messengers chosen by you, of course."

"And you, my friend? Speak your mind fully and frankly," said the Kaid, turning to the Señor Pedro Mallign seated next to and slightly below him.

"Undoubtedly he is our German, and undoubtedly the genuine agent," was the prompt reply. "Invaluable. My friend the German consul at Tangier sent me a photograph of the fellow, and said, in the covering letter, that his information from the Friedrichstrasse was that he had started. That would about tally with his arriving now.

"And then, of course, he has the password," he continued, "and that was known to no other living person but you, the consul and myself. Oh yes, he's genuine all right, and you can have complete confidence in him.

"Let me see the picture again," said the Kaid Abd'Allah Karim. "Yes, that is undoubtedly the same man," he continued, after a careful study of a portrait, bearing the name and address of the German photographer, which Señor Pedro Mallign produced from the leather case which he always carried about his person.

"He asked for nothing for himself—which is a little suspicious," observed the Kaid, whose natural habit it was to judge others by himself.

"No need to do so," the Señor assured him. "He'll get something for himself, all right."

"Bribes, commission, pickings, do you mean?" "Well, well," smiled Mallign, "perhaps. But I was not thinking of that. What I meant was that he'll get his reward in his own country, from his own employers. Honor, promotion, payment, if he is successful here—if he foments trouble among the tribes, and helps you to wage successful war against the French."

"I am to be the wasp that stings the hand of Germany's enemy as he is about to strike, eh?" smiled the Kaid.

"Or as he is about to defend himself," agreed Mallign.

"So," murmured the Kaid, and sat awhile in thought. "Have you any words to utter, Mohammed Ali el Amin, the Trustworthy, the Reliable? What is in your mind—or is it vacant, as usual?"

The fine soldierly Moor smiled, bowed, and salaamed to his master. "I am no thinker, nor clever schemer, oh Kaid," he replied in a deep, sonorous voice. "The man seemed to me to be a good man, solid and

quiet, and a man of his hands. I know nothing of policies and plots, nor of the use of words that have two meanings, and my opinion is of no worth; but I tell you this, oh my master—that man is a soldier, a fighting man. If he deny it, he is a liar.

"There is no denial nor pretence, oh Mahoume Ali el Amin," the Señor Pedro Mallign assured him. "The man is no mere messenger. He is an officer of the army of the Germans, and has fought in this country of Africa where he learned Arabic and the ways of the people."

"It is well," said Mohammed Ali el Amin, and fell silent. "And shall we hear your voice, oh son of my old and faithful friend?" inquired the Kaid courteously of Jules Mallign. "For I am told that, though young, you are a man of learning, wisdom, and understanding."

"How should I speak words worthy the attention of such a one as the Kaid Abd'Allah Karim and in the presence of my father and these wise men?" was the modest reply. "But, even as Mahoume Ali el Amin the Trustworthy, the Reliable, knows that this man is a soldier, so I know that he is a German. Speaking to him in French, as one who knew no German, I received a reply in French, and it was the French of a German. He is, without a doubt, a German, though I can say nothing else about him.

"But what need?" he added, "since my father can—and has his photograph, his passport, and the statement of the German consul that such a man was being sent from Berlin. Surely his description and the photograph prove it, and obviously he could not have obtained the chosen password by guile."

"Surely," agreed the Kaid, stroking his beard. "Very well. Relying on the pithy word of my friend and adviser, the Sidí Pedro Mallign, and on the wisdom of my counselors here present, I will trust this man and accept him for what he appears to be. But he shall remain with us until we have the money and arms. And, indeed, until the fighting is over, since he is a soldier.

"Doubtless he would fight for us," he continued, turning to Mallign. "Doubtless," agreed that gentleman. "Of a certainty. He would willingly take command of your artillery, or of your cavalry, or of such portion of your infantry forces as you choose to put in his charge. They are great soldiers, these Germans, and this man knows all three branches, and could command and manoeuvre a brigade of all arms."

"You know much of him," observed the Kaid. "I talked long with him last night," replied Mallign. "Almost till the dawn, we talked."

"And he convinced you that he could do all this?" "Completely. He can drill and manoeuvre your cavalry, and lead a cavalry charge that will sweep away your enemies. He knows the ranging and loading and firing of the guns that will come; also the care of them; and will train your gunners to handle them so as to blow your enemies to Hell.

"He can drill and train your footmen and form them in regiments so that, in addition to being the marvellous marksmen that they are, they will have the discipline and steadiness of the French Foreign Legion."

"Would that we could get a few of those fine warriors, those desert lions," mused the Kaid. "They would be worth their weight in minted silver. One or two of them have come to me, have served me well, risen to rank and honor, and died in battle. Two or three I have captured in battle. But none of these prisoners would fight for me against the French, and since as slaves they are not worth their keep, we had a little merry sport with them."

"Dropping them from the walls on to the hooks, eh, my father?" laughed Raisul. "After bringing them face to face with a dozen deaths," chuckled the Kaid. "Would that I had a regiment of them, willing to fight for me against their former masters."

"So many and very many more, you shall have, oh my father," promised Raisul. "Willing volunteers. That I swear to you by the Beard of the Prophet. A gift from me to you."

(Copyright, 1932, P. A. Stokes Co.) The crafty Raisul reports further plans, tomorrow, to the Kaid.

## OREGON LOANED \$883,600 R. F. C.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28.—(AP)—The reconstruction corporation board today voted an emergency relief loan of \$1,432,734 for Detroit, Mich., one of \$883,600 for Oregon and \$1,648,719 for Oregon.

The Oregon loan will be spread over 12 counties. The Detroit loan was made on application of the governor of Michigan but becomes a direct obligation of the city.

## PORTLAND FURNITURE DEALER SUCCUMBS

PORTLAND, Ore., Feb. 28.—(AP)—Ira F. Powers, 61, prominent Portland furniture dealer, died at his home here today from a heart attack. The Powers company, manufacturers, wholesalers and dealers, was established in 1895 by Ira F. Powers, Sr., and the younger man became associated with it in 1895.

## FOX COLUMBIA TO ENTER NORTHWEST

SEATTLE, Feb. 28.—(AP)—The Fox-Columbia corporation of Delaware today announced the purchase of the assets of the Pacific Northwest Theaters, Inc., for \$425,000, 77 per cent

of the appraised value. The deal was made yesterday on recommendation of E. W. Scott, trustee in bankruptcy, and with the sanction of Ben L. Moore, federal referee in bankruptcy.

## Oregon Weather.

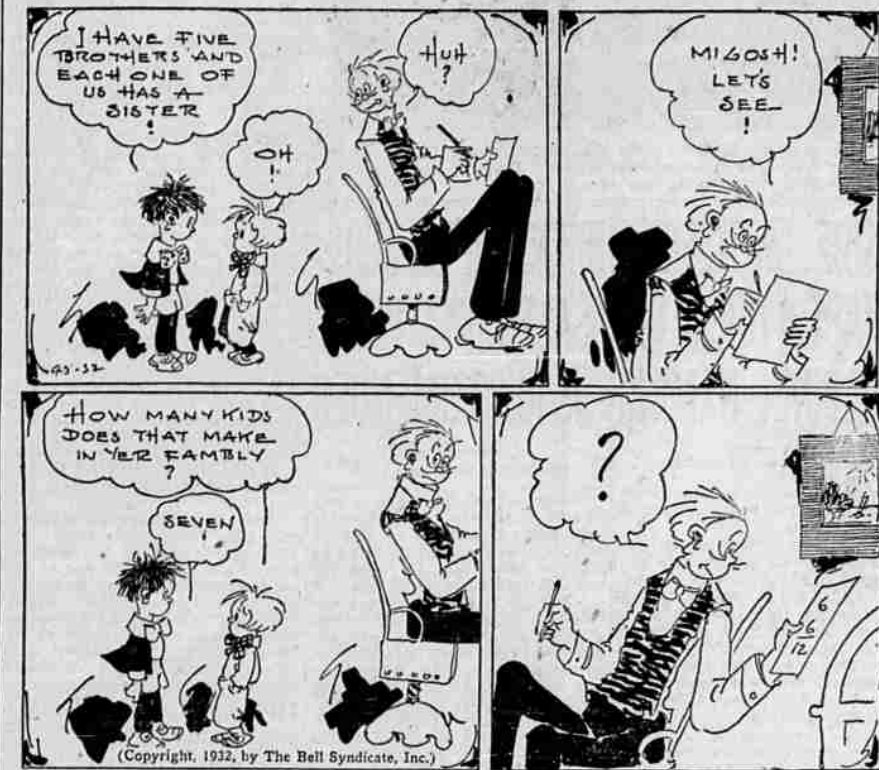
Unsettled weather with snow east portion and rain mixed with snow west portion tonight and Wednesday; cooler southwest portion; fresh southeast and south winds offshore.

## ARMS EMBARGO PLAN BLOCKED IN HOUSE

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28.—(AP)—The house Democratic leadership today

blocked action on President Hoover's arms embargo proposal. Although approved by the house foreign affairs committee, the rules committee declined Chairman McReynolds' request for a hearing and Speaker Garner said today he would not permit the proposal to be brought up under a suspension of the rules. Real estate or insurance—Leave it to Jones. Phone 796.

## S'MATTER POP—



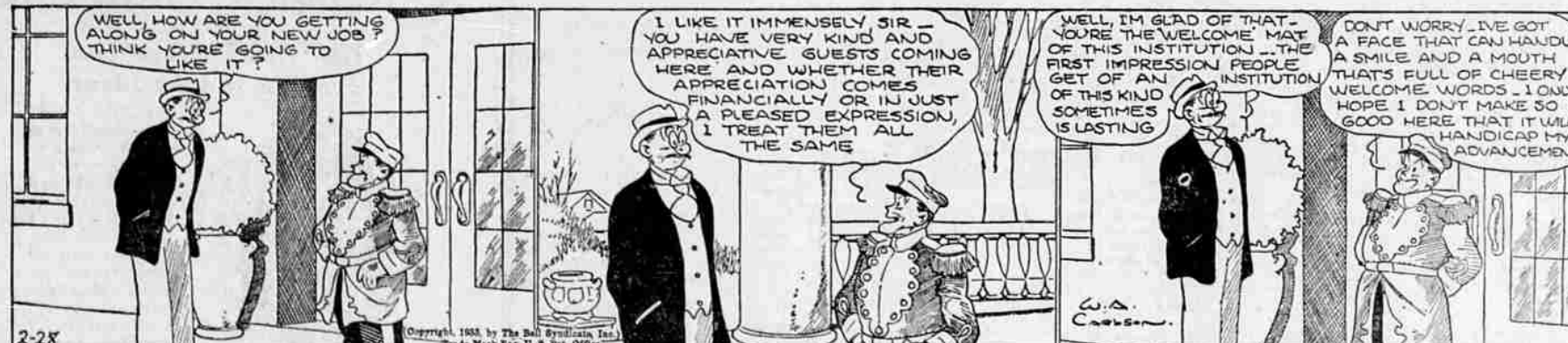
## TAILSPIN TOMMY—And Skeeter Can Only Play A Mouth-Organ



## BOUND TO WIN—The Happy Stranger!



## THE NEBBS—On The Job



## BRINGING UP FATHER



## CALIFORNIA CAGERS NAME ALL-STARS

BERKELEY, Calif., Feb. 28.—(AP)—Four University of Southern California players and one from U.C.L.A. were picked as an "all-opponent" southern division, Pacific coast con-

ference basketball team by the University of California squad at its annual post-season dinner here last night.

The selections were: Piper, U. C. L. A., and Nemer, U. S. C., forwards; Guttoro, U. S. C. center, and Bescot and Kelly, U. S. C., guards.

Broken windows glazed by Trowbridge Cabinet Works. Fender and body repairing. Prices right. Brill Sheet Metal Works.

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