

# VALIANT DUST

by Percival Christopher Wren

**SYNOPSIS:** Even Margaret Maligne's husband Jules has failed her; she is pursued by Ralsul, son of the powerful Emir of Mekazen, and in all the Emir's impregnable citadel she can find no refuge. How Herr Schlicht, who appears to be a German secret agent, is given her a pistol, and asks her to report to him what she learns about Major Napoleon Riccoli of the Foreign Legion, who is about to arrive at Mekazen. His head full of traitorous, extravagant dreams of empire—with himself as emperor.

## Chapter 33 THE LEGION ARRIVES

The bugles . . . The crisp, clear, rousing notes of the silver-voiced brass longed bugles. The very sound of them did one good, it thought Margaret. Bracing like a cold bath, after the noises of the shrill native instruments. The breath of the bugles, albeit foreign bugles, was as a breath from home.

Foreign bugles. Bugles of the Foreign Legion. Otho's Regiment.

It was entirely possible that there might be a man in that detachment, marching far below, through the Mekazen city, marching up to this very Citadel, who had known Otho. All of them would know Otho Bellême, anyhow—the man who had defeated the Senegalese boxer (who had fought and beaten the champion of Europe) in what must have been one of the finest and stubbornest fights ever seen. That was what the Echo of Otho had called it, anyhow.

Would it be possible to get to know some of the men, and to find out if any of them had known him? If the detachment left Mekazen before she did, it might be the quickest way of getting a letter to him.

But why should the detachment leave Mekazen before she did? Why should she not leave with them—or at least more or less under their convoy and protection?

This Major Riccoli, whose acquaintance Herr Schlicht was anxious for her to make, might prove most useful.

If he would help her to escape, could she not follow the detachment wherever it went until it reached civilization again—or with in a camel-journey of civilization? Anything to get away from this sinister terrifying prison.

After all, this Riccoli was an "officer and gentleman" of sorts, presumably; and he and his men were Europeans with whom a white woman would be safe. Yes, surely, she could manage Major Riccoli, if only he could, and would, procure her a camel and what little else was necessary.

Swiftly completing her toilet, she looked her incongruous-looking dressing-case, unbarred her door, and ran down the steep and narrow flight of steps to the point of vantage whence she could see the soldiers march into the citadel.

Yes—there they came, an officer riding ahead—he must be the peculiar Major Riccoli—then the buglers blowing their march, then the little column with a tall non-commissioned officer in front.

How awfully smart, self-confident, up-standing and alert, "steady and strong, marching along, like the boys of the Old Brigade"—like the guards themselves for style, bearing—and discipline.

But oh, how dusty and dirty, weary and worn and hollow-eyed they looked, in spite of their brave swagger.

Margaret felt a rush and glow of emotion. A feeling in the throat, and a tear. Very foolish.

Otho's Regiment.

Later that day, a tall, broad-shouldered young légionnaire stood on sentry outside the guard-room by the quarters allotted to the detachment.

Washed, shaven, brushed and cleaned, his accoutrements as bright and smart as "spit-and-polish" could make them, he looked the picture of a soldier, a tough, hard fighting-man, an old campaigner, though a young man.

Blue-eyed, handsome, fair though sunburnt, with aristocratic features, he looked a very forceful person, a man of great strength of character as well as of body.

A woman, bearing a jar of water on her right shoulder, crossed the vast courtyard, passed near the sentry, drew her veil across her face and one eye, and had a good look at him with the other.

Handsome, she decided. "White and beautiful as Suseia," as they say in Mogador. What did it matter to her whether he were French, Spanish, English or German? She was not the Lady El Isa Beth el Ain. Anyhow, the soldier was one

of the white kind; the Christians. What was it they said about them in Mogador? The Christian cares for nothing but money; not interested in a pretty girl, even? Well, her mistress, the Lady El Isa Beth el Ain would be interested to know there were Christian, perhaps English, soldiers in the citadel.

A man, a young Moor, in a beautiful hooded blue-cloth cloak, like a Roman toga; big turban, and riding-boots, emerged from a near-by entry and also passed the sentry.

As dark as the latter was fair, the Moor was, in his own style, equally handsome, clean-cut and stamped with the seal of breeding. Smaller and lighter though he was, his walk and upright graceful bearing spoke of agility, speed and strength.

In passing, he too glanced at the fine soldierly figure and handsome face of the sentry who, now pacing his beat, passed close to him. No feature of the Moor's impassive face changed in the slightest, but as he quickly looked away, his large bright eyes blazed.

"Allah Kerim!" he whispered, and as he turned in at the entry through which the girl had disappeared, he stood still, stared before him at nothing, and then laughed softly to himself.

"Praise be to Allah! I must find our excellent and obliging friend, Jules. But I can't be mistaken," and he hurried along the passage and up a winding stair of stone.

A few minutes later another man passed the sentry, a slower, fatter person, in khaki jacket and riding-breeches beneath a white cloak. A small white turban and hanging neckcloth effectually concealed his face.

He too looked at the sentry, as he marched past him, looked quickly and glanced away again.

A minute later this man joined the other who had hidden him go and take stock of the sentry by the newcomers' quarters.

Bursting into the room and flinging himself down on a divan, he roared with laughter—not drunken laughter nor the laughter of a quite sober man.

"By God, Ralsul, you're right," he said. "It is he. Otho Bellême—by all that's wonderful!"

"Not so wonderful, either, my good Jules," replied Ralsul. "We knew he joined the French Foreign Legion. And we knew a detachment of the French Foreign Legion was coming here. Well, it's come—and he's in it."

"But—by Allah!" Ralsul added, and licked his lips while his hands moved in a curiously suggestive and unpleasant gesture.

"Absolutely amazing!" continued Jules Maligne. "Otho Bellême here. Here—and in our hands . . ."

"Yes. Here—and in our hands," said Ralsul, playing with the long dagger that he wore stuck perpendicularly in the centre of the sash around his waist.

"What next?" asked Jules, eyeing his cousin speculatively.

"Oh, something quite interesting next, my good Jules. Quite funny. Now that, by the grace and goodness of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate, we have got the good Otho Bellême just where he will be most useful, just where we want him, something quite amusing is going to happen. To him—and to me, and to your lady wife, the proud Margaret."

"Eh? You mean twist his tail a bit? What about Margaret?"

"You aren't very fond of Otho Bellême, my good Jules, are you? Your wife's lover. The man for love of whom she married you—out of pique, because he stole a purse of money. The man she still loves—and with whom she'd go off, any day, if he whistled to her, as you yourself have tearfully told me in your cups. Not very fond of him are you?"

"No, damn him," replied Jules Maligne. "He was always first favorite—from the time we all played together as kids at Yelverbury. Used to think he was Almighty because he was going to be Sir Otho Robert Mandeville-Bellême of Yelverbury Castle. Just as cocky when he was Bob Blame the bruiser, and boxed for a living at fair-grounds. No, I've no use for him—and don't care what happens to him."

"I'm sure you don't, my excellent Jules. Well, something will happen to him before long, you'll see. Meantime—not a word to Margaret. Not a word. I'm going to spring a little surprise on her. A nice little surprise . . ."

Riccoli's great scheme gets underway, tomorrow.

# MINING SCHOOL IS LOCAL PLAN

O. D. Adams, state director for vocational education, is in Medford to arrange for the establishment of a mining school to open here soon.

providing the money being furnished by the federal government can be matched here by the county authorities.

Mr. Adams, who is thoroughly conversant with mining conditions elsewhere, is making an investigation of local needs and requirements, in cooperation with E. H. Hedrick, superintendent of schools, and the Southern Oregon Mining association.

Thursday, Mr. Adams, Mr. Hedrick and J. C. Thompson of the California Oregon Power company made a trip

with some members of the mining association to the territory embraced by the Sterling, Little Applegate and Big Applegate streams, acquainting themselves with the local conditions and acquiring a first-hand knowledge that will enable them to proceed intelligently.

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Broken windows glazed by Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

# G. PASS TO SEEK COPCO REVENUE

GRANTS PASS, Ore., March 18.—(AP)—Declaring that the "perpetual

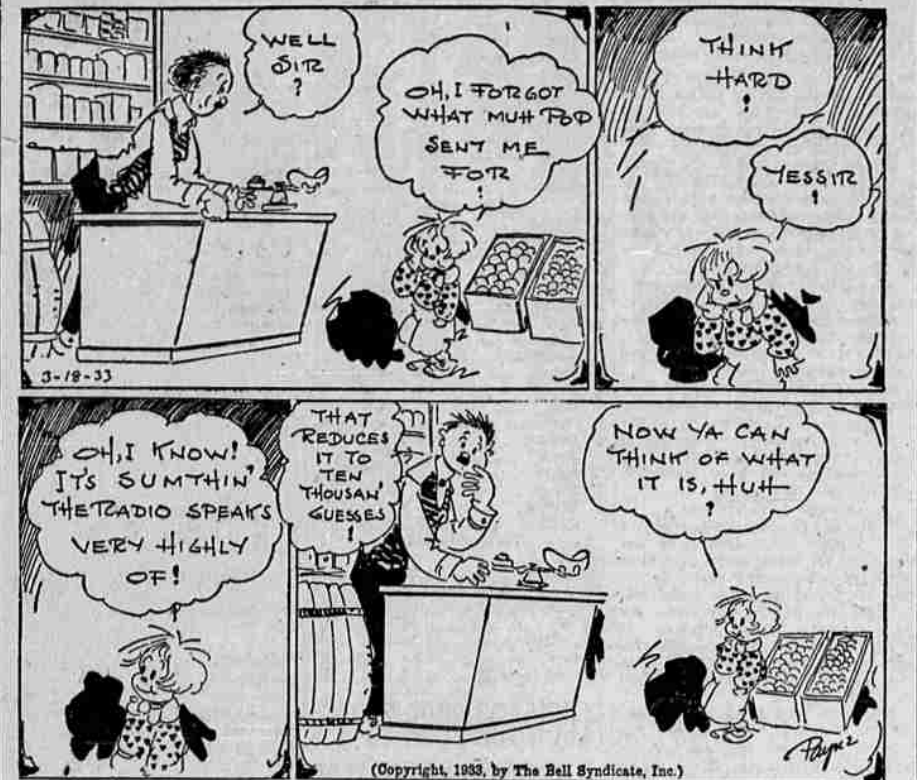
franchise" to operate in Grants Pass claimed by the California Oregon Power company is illegal, and that Copco has been distributing power in that city since 1900 without one, City Attorney James T. Chincock last night asked the city council for permission to confer with power company officials regarding a new agreement. The council voted him permission

and it was indicated that the city would be able to insist upon a utility tax such as Medford has enjoyed for years.

Mrs. Clarence Wheeler has assumed active management of the Wheeler Apartments, 249 So. Riverside. Phone 542. We'll haul away your refuse. City Sanitary Service.

# S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



# TAILSPIN TOMMY—Skeeter—Just A Gigolo!

By HEN CHAFFIN and GALL FORREST



# BOUND TO WIN—Dan Digger's Arrival

By EDWIN ALGER



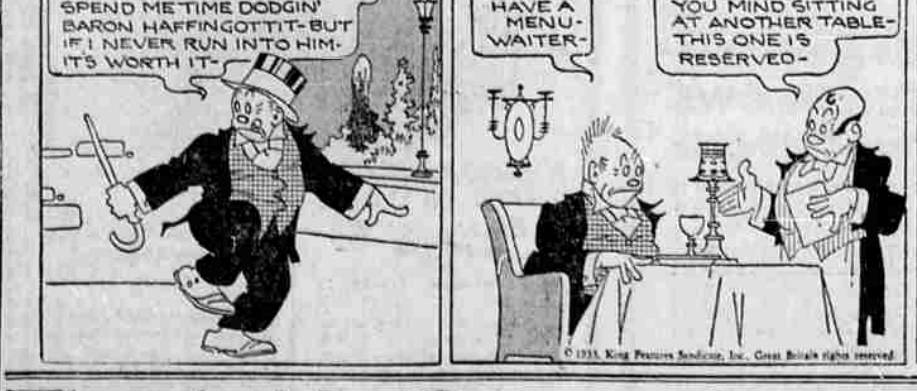
# THE NEBBS—Popularity

By SOL HESS



# BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



# NOTHING TO DO

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



# FIRESTONE TO SPEAK IN MEDFORD IS WORD

Announcement was made Friday by

the chamber of commerce that Leonard Firestone, son of Harvey Firestone, rubber king, will be a speaker in this city in the near future.

Mr. Firestone is making a tour through the Pacific coast region. He was invited by the chamber of commerce to speak at a forum here and acceptance of the invitation was received today.



# There's No Guesswork in Tribune A. B. C. Circulation