

# VALIANT DUST

by Percival Christopher Wren

**SYNOPSIS:** Margaret, an English girl married to Jules Meloni, a half Moorish agent of the notorious Kaid of Meschuria, finds herself helpless under the announcement of the Kaid's son, Rissal, that he is coming to France with the Legion. Margaret's first sweetheart—but she does not know it, Otho and his friends in the Legion are told of dangerous doings to come.

## Chapter 35

### SUSPICIOUS ORDERS

"WELL, what do you think of that, Bob?" asked Joe, as they made their way to a shady corner of the court-yard that they had made their own.

"Don't much like it," replied Otho Belleme, but I suppose we've got to obey orders. Hint of treachery about it, isn't there?"

"War is war, my child," observed Tant de Solf. "There has been a state of war between this country and France for years. It is notorious that this Kaid has raised French territory, besieged it not captured French posts, captured French convoys, cut off and annihilated relief columns."

"H'm. All's fair in love and war, eh?"

"And suppose it doesn't come off?" observed Joe Mummy. "According to Vittorelli, the Major has wangled us in here to seize the Citadel for France. But what price us, if they do the seizing—and seize us for the Kaid?"

"Us for the 'looks," observed Sallor Harris tersely. "Ar, that's right," agreed William Boesum. "If the Kite lets us come 'ere, 'e knows enough to look after himself, don't he? What's the odds against us in this castle alone? Not to mention that lot we marched through, comin' in. Armies of 'em."

"I suppose the Major'll wait until he gets reinforcements," commented Pors Ponsain.

"I doubt it, my child," replied Tant de Solf. "He'll seize the castle, and then send for the reinforcements in case there's trouble in the city—as there will be."

"Why not get the reinforcements first and make a sure job of it?" objected the old soldier.

"Because the Kaid wouldn't let them come, my good camel. He's not going to let a French army march in here, is he?"

"No," agreed Otho. "He's not. And the mystery, to me is that he let us come."

"Mystery's right," agreed Joe Mummy. "It's a rum go."

"Well, duty's duty," said Tant de Solf decisively. "And orders are orders. If we can seize this robbers' nest for France, they'll give the section le fougere."

"What's that?" asked William Boesum.

"The collective decoration given to a unit for valor," was the reply. "And every man of us will wear a shoulder-cord plaited in two colors. And you take it with you, too, if you go to another company. Yes, we shall capture the castle, cover ourselves with glory and get the cord of honor."

"Get a cord of some sort, I've no doubt," growled Sallor Harris.

That evening a ceremonial banquet, half Moorish, half European, was given in honor of the distinguished visitor—the French officer understood to be the representative of his great country, and the head of the military mission sent by France to the Kaid.

At this feast of welcome, which Margaret forced herself to attend, the effect of the sour looks that she received from her mother-in-law, El Isa Beth el Ain, from Zamb and the girl Sara, should have been entirely counteracted by the definitely sweet ones of the guest of honor.

Apart from the fact that his was a type that she did not admire, Margaret found him interesting when he would cease from fulsome flattery, and talk on the matters, or rather matter, that apparently obsessed him—the subject of himself and his career.

As all roads lead to Rome, so all topics, however apparently unpromising and alien to the theme, led to the career of Major Riccoli, past, present and future.

When at length, the banquet finished, the other ladies retired, Margaret rose, and remarking that she was going for her evening stroll on the battlements, left the banquet room, soon to discover that she had been followed by Major Riccoli.

"May I walk with you, Mademoiselle?" he asked as he overtook her. "Such an oasis in the desert of my life, it is hard to be a soldier

and to love beauty. To know the love of beauty and the beauty of love."

Margaret, untruthfully stating that the pleasure would be entirely hers, led the gallant and ardent officer to her favorite and private spot upon the battlements, and to the subject of France, Bordeaux and the remarkable son of that city, Monsieur Aureille de Tonnens who became King of Arauco.

Then indeed were the flood-gates opened, and what had been a babbling brook—that had reminded Margaret of "Men may come and men may go but I go on for ever"—became a torrent in full spate. After the uttering of that name, Margaret had no need of further speech, nor any slight anxiety as to Major Riccoli's attitude and conduct.

While that subject occupied his mind, no room was left for thoughts of love or love-making.

"Ah, that was a man indeed," he mused. "But mad, you know, mad. A megalomaniac. Through his own ambitious schemes he fell like Vauroi again—if he did fall—and is not at this very moment a great ruler in his own right, a king, an emperor, in the great and unexplored interior of this mighty and marvellous continent."

"And who was Monsieur Vauroi?" asked Margaret, anxious to keep the mind of this amorously enterprising officer to the one subject that she judged to be more powerful in interest than even love.

"Vauroi? You know not of the brave Captain Vauroi, and his bid for power and wealth and fame? No, being English, I suppose you would not have heard of him. The military authorities, whom he defied, defeated and outwitted, did not exactly advertise his name to the world.

"Ah! that was a man—such another as Aureille de Tonnens of whom you have just spoken; such another as Voulet and Chanoine, but not so mad."

"Vauroi! A simple captain of artillery, and now perhaps an emperor. But as to the truth of that, no man knows. No European, that is to say, although the French government pretend to know. No European knows for certain, but it is my opinion—and believe me, Mademoiselle, my opinion is worth having—that millions upon millions of Africans know: Arabs, Negroes, Touareg, and possibly races of whom we have heard nothing.

"Otherwise, tell me this. Why is there to this day throughout the Southern Sahara, a persistent and widely prevalent rumor of a White Sheikh? Yes, of a Great White Sheikh whose orders all men obey, and whom they fear and reverence as the Genius! fear and reverence their great religious and political leader, the Sheikh el Senussi himself."

"What did Vauroi do? I'll tell you, Mademoiselle.

"Finding himself stuck in the desert, buried alive, forgotten, neglected, lost in a wretched hole called Mescheria, he determined to carve out a career for himself. Why should he, a man of courage, ability, brains and ambition, be doomed to rot in Mescheria, while in Paris, guttersnipe politicians made themselves figures of international importance, masters of Europe—and made generals of their worthless military protégés, panders and toadies?"

"Why should he? A man mentally as great as they, and indeed far greater. Why should he consent to grow grey in obscurity, poverty and misery while these dogs carved out careers for themselves?"

"He would not consent to it.

"Since no brilliant career to fame and power lay open to him, he would carve out one for himself."

"Skillfully and cunningly he opened negotiations with a great Arab sheikh, paramount ruler of the Beni-Amama and allied tribes—and when his plans were made and the time was ripe, he departed from Mescheria with the whole of his battery complete and entire, guns, limbers, ammunition-column, men, horses, mules and camels. He was, of course, received with open arms by the Arabs, who led him deep into the desert where perhaps no white man had ever been before.

"Deep and ever deeper into the desert, until they came to the capital of Beni-Amama, a native city which—as the French military authorities afterwards discovered to their cost—he turned into a great fortress, a real citadel.

Another crown is offered Margaret, tomorrow.

## YOUNG BANDSMEN COMPETE APRIL 15

EUGENE Ore., March 21—(AP)—The annual Oregon state high school band contest will be held here April 14 and 15, John H. Stehn, director of the University of Oregon band, general chairman of the contest announced Sunday.

The event was held last year at Oregon state college and it is planned to have the competition alternate between the two institutions. Visiting bands will compete in three classes. Division A will include all schools with enrollment of 600 or more, class B those having from 400 to 600 and class C for those below the 400 mark. Bands organized less than a year may step down one division.

## STATE C. E. CONCLAVE SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED

Main speakers for the state Christian Endeavor convention in Eugene, Ore., April 27 to 30, will include Dr. Perry C. Hopper, pastor, Westminster Presbyterian church in Portland; Dr. Victor P. Morris, professor of economics at University of Oregon; Dr. Levi T. Pennington, president, Pacific college, Newberg, Ore., and Rev. Chester P. Gates, district superintendent, Oregon Evangelical conference.

The addresses will be built around the convention theme, "Treasure Seekers." Special conferences dealing with Christian Endeavor problems will be conducted Friday and Saturday mornings, April 28 and 29.

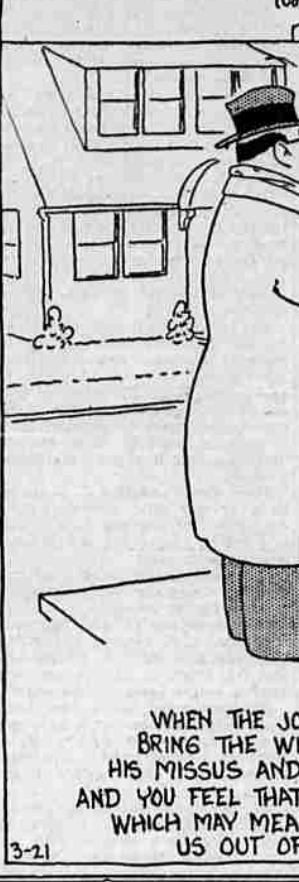
## Mrs. Kinleyside Passes In South

Death of a former Medford resident, Mrs. R. F. Kinleyside, is reported from Barstow, Cal., where she has been living for several years since leaving here. According to word of the death received by Mrs. Charles Gay, Mrs. Kinleyside passed away suddenly March 18. Mrs. Kinleyside was prominent in parent-teacher affairs, the College Women's Club and the Methodist church while a resident of Medford.

Real estate or insurance—Leave 18 to Jones. Phone 798.

## DIFFICULT DECISIONS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS  
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WHEN THE JOVIAL PARTY DECLARES YOU MUST BRING THE WIFE OVER ON SATURDAY TO MEET HIS MISSUS AND THEY'LL ALL HAVE A REAL GET-TOGETHER, AND YOU FEEL THAT SHARP NUDGE IN THE SMALL OF THE BACK WHICH MAY MEAN EITHER "O.K. ACCEPT," OR "GET US OUT OF THIS ON PERIL OF YOUR LIFE"

GLUYAS WILLIAMS

## S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Excitement While You Eat!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



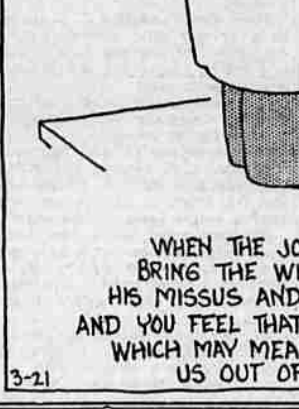
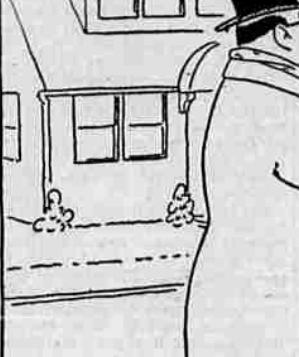
## BOUND TO WIN—Plenty Of Evidence

By EDWIN ALGER



## THE NEBBS—What's The Matter Here?

By SOL HESS



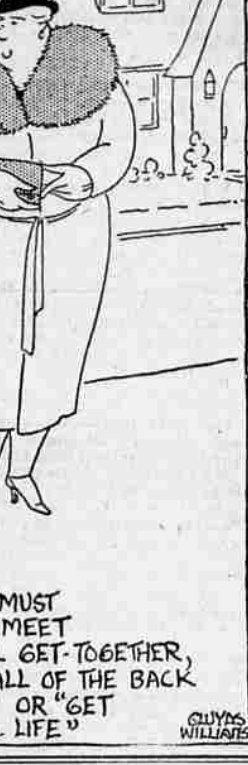
## BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



## LISTEN—I AIN'T GONNA LIVE ON THIS OR ANY OTHER FLOOR ANY MORE—I'M GONNA RENT THE PENTHOUSE

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED YOU TO RENT THE PENTHOUSE—



**Oregon Weather.**  
Fair east portion and generally cloudy west portion tonight and Wednesday; frost or freezing temperature interior tonight; fresh northwest to north winds offshore.

Development of metal-connected glass electrodes by bureau of standard

ards scientista is expected to save considerable money, as much waste has resulted in industry from the breakage of plain glass ones.

Harvesting of the 1932-33 oyster crop from the Chesapeake bay to the gulf of Mexico gave employment to about 17,000 men.

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