

VALIANT DUST

by Percival Christopher Wren

SYNOPSIS: Lurking about the ancient Moorish Citadel of Mekka was treachery to France. But it suddenly was ended by Colonel Le Sage of the Secret Service with death for the King of Mekka, death for Jules Malloni, Margaret Malloni's only husband, and capture for Major Riccoli of the Foreign Legion, the secret traitor of the King. Riccoli surrenders to the ally entrance of Raisul, son of the King. Raisul swears that unless Margaret yields to him he will torture and kill Margaret's only child. Otho Belléme, who is in the Citadel as a private in Riccoli's command, Margaret is on the point of yielding.

Chapter 48 THE DUEL

RAISUL laughed merrily. He was amused.

"No, no, no! This won't do at all. You've got to kiss me. I'm not going to do all the kissing, maddeningly, thrillingly wonderful as it is. What the devil are you staring at?"

Turning about, Raisul followed Margaret's incredulous hypnotized gaze, and lithe and swift as a springing panther, leapt to his feet.

Otho!

"Ah!" said Otho Belléme, with a sound of unfathomable satisfaction. "Raisul ben Abd' Allah Karim."

Without taking his eyes from those of his adversary, Raisul bent sideways to the low table on which he had laid his long dagger, drew it from its sheath, and advanced, poised and crouching.

With a laugh that belied the look upon his face,

"Another visitor, Margaret!" he said. "Very much at home tonight, aren't you? I'm afraid I've overstayed my . . ."

"Steal or bare hands!" interrupted Otho Belléme as he drew his bayonet.

"Who-!" replied Raisul, circling sideways and yet advancing as he spoke. "I think we'll give the lady a dagger - versus - bayonet exhibition, eh? Bit fairer perhaps, what? Personally I'm not a professional bruiser."

"Right," replied Otho Belléme, holding the long thin bayonet before him, like a foil.

This ought to be a good fight, and with Margaret looking on. But he must go warily, for he must win - for Margaret's sake, as well as for his own.

Here was he, Otho Belléme, in Margaret's room.

In a state of absolute funk and horror he had slid down a few feet of rope that dangled over hundreds of feet of sheer drop - in pursuit of that devil. And he was in Margaret's room.

Raisul sprang, and stabbed: Otho lunged and thrust, and his left hand seized Raisul's wrist, as Raisul skillfully evaded the swift blade, and in turn, seized Otho's right wrist.

Breast to breast. Stale-mata. Yes, yes! the dagger-hand was slowly going back, back, while the hand that held the bayonet moved not at all.

Suddenly Raisul threw the whole of his weight violently forward and, mightily twisting his arm, sprang backward, releasing Otho's wrist as he did so.

Round one, and honors easy. Otho sprang and drove a lightning thrust at Raisul's throat.

With equal swiftness, Raisul ducked beneath the lean sharp blade, and simultaneously slashed upward with the terrible disemboweling stroke, which will lay a man open from thigh to breast-bone.

Well for Otho Belléme that, albeit a heavyweight, he was one of the quickest boxers of the day.

Striking swiftly downwards and sideways with lightning speed and all his strength, his left flat encountered Raisul's wrist with such force, that, as he whirled sideways, the knife fell from his hand, and clattered on the stone floor.

Disarmed, Raisul backed away from the gleaming bayonet that in an instant would be through his throat or his heart.

Setting his foot upon the knife, Otho spoke.

"There was a time when I should have told you to pick that up," he said. "I'm not quite the fool I was, but . . ."

And Otho sheathed his bayonet. "Put up your fists," he said, "and fight any way you can. I can't stab you in cold blood."

Raisul backed, backed into the corner, stooped and rose in one swift movement - Margaret's pistol in his hand, and levelled. At Margaret.

Bang!

Click.

Margaret screamed, and Otho turned his head. Her hand was pressed to her breast.

A crashing blow in the face, as the flung pistol struck him, and his hands closed about Raisul's throat.

Jove! but the fellow was strong - and agile as a cat; slippery as an eel.

Free again. Otho drove a straight left. Raisul ducked beneath it, and flung his arms about Otho's waist. Down together.

A cry from Margaret. "The knife, Otho! The knife!"

By Jove, he'd got it. Raisul leapt to his feet, and stabbed. Otho, rising, struck with his right. The blow sent him staggering backward.

As he brought up against the wall beside the balcony, his arm shot forward as he flung his knife - too hurriedly.

Again Otho struck, and as Raisul side-stepped to his left, Otho smashed home - a crashing right that drove Raisul heavily against the low balcony wall.

With a loud cry he threw out his arms, clutched wildly at the rope, and before Otho could seize him, fell backward across the coping, turning and turning in mid-air, to strike the jackal-haunted rocks beside the shattered body of his victim, Jules Malloni.

After a hasty instinctive glance over the balcony at the still falling body, Otho whirled about, to find Margaret running to him with outstretched arms.

"The darling, Oh, 'Tho." "Are you hit? Are you hurt?" cried Otho.

"No, no," laughed Margaret shakily. "Oh, darling, I thought I was, and I'm not. I thought I was dead, and I did want to live long enough to see you kill him."

Her arms were round his neck. He was holding her tightly to him and stroking her hair.

Neither ever knew how the next minutes passed. At length, "Otho, it's incredible. It's too wonderful. Oh, 'Tho, why did you go and leave me? Why did you join this awful Foreign Legion?"

"Didn't you know? Why, so as to come down that rope at the psychological moment. Obvious, isn't it?"

Again they kissed. "Oh, Margaret, I love you so utterly. Do you know I have never lain down to sleep without thinking of you - since I was a boy."

They clung together, then sprang apart as heavy blows sounded on the door.

Drawing the bolts, Otho saw the aged slave who had guided them to the battlements. Seizing Otho's arm, Hassan el Miskeen dragged him across the room, and out to the balcony. Looking upwards, Otho saw several heads silhouetted against the sky, as their owners craned through the embrasures.

"Oh, Belléme, was that Raisul?" called Le Sage.

"Yes, sir. He's - or - on the rocks," Le Sage laughed grimly. "Come up," he called. "I've sent the guide for you."

Motioning to Hassan to lead on, Otho kissed Margaret once again. "Wait for me, Margaret," he said. "Wait for me."

Yes, she would wait for him. She would wait a lifetime for him.

In the absence of the Kaid, Raisul, Mohammed Ali el Amin and every other leader or executive authority, the organization of the Citadel of Mekka went to pieces; what should have been the garrison of Moorish soldiers became an armed rabble (quickly disarmed); the castle fell of itself. The loosely knit native life of the citadel swiftly disintegrated, and the work begun by the betrayal of the issuance of orders - instructions in the Kaid's name, by the Kaid's Vizier, the Señor Pedro Malloni.

Until the tricolor flew at the mast-head on the Sultan Tower, and Colonel Le Sage was in fact Governor of the Citadel, the orders of the Vizier were accepted and obeyed, for want of better.

"The longer we can conceal the fact of the deaths of the Kaid and Raisul, the longer we can use your authority as Vizier," said Le Sage. "Not that we shall need that for long, Señor Malloni."

"And the other half of the reward, promised me after the consummation of your work here?"

"It shall be paid to you personally, at Tangier, as soon as possible after I receive a letter from your daughter-in-law - in her own handwriting - from Yelverbury. The sooner she gets there the sooner you will get the other fifteen pieces."

"Fifteen pieces, Colonel!" "Oh, I beg your pardon, Señor Malloni. I was thinking of 'thirty pieces of silver.'"

(Copyright, 1932, F. A. Stokes Co.) Monday, Major Napoleon Riccoli faces a new, and terrible test.

due this month. Interest on the amount was \$10,865.

Phone 542. We'll haul away your refuse. City Sanitary Service.

8x10 Photo for 75c. The Peasleys, opp. Holly Theater.

FIVE FROM SALEM JOLTED FOR RUM

PORTLAND, April 5.—(AP)—Jack O'Hara, restaurant owner at Salem,

was sentenced to thirteen months in federal prison when he appeared in federal court here today on liquor charges.

Four others, indicted jointly with O'Hara, were given various sentences and placed on probation. They were Mrs. Freda Palmer, waitress, sentenced to four months and placed on probation for one year; Ted Gordon, service station operator, one

year in a federal road camp, and one year's probation; Paul Rippe, eight months in jail and paroled, and Jack Boah, four months in jail and paroled.

Lenency was also extended to several others who pleaded guilty to violation of the prohibition laws. Broken windows glazed by Trowbridge Cabinet Works.

SALEM AUTOS WIN POLICE CONTRACT

SALEM, April 5.—(AP)—March payrolls affecting all state departments

and institutions were certified to the secretary of state Tuesday by the board of control and warrants covering the salaries for the past month will be issued within a few days.

A contract for supplying the state police department with 15 light automobiles was awarded to a Salem agency. The bid was \$584. The contract is subject to approval of Chas.

P. Pray, superintendent of state police. An additional physician was authorized at the Eastern Oregon state hospital.

Pre-Easter bargains. Shoes \$1.45 to \$3.95; hats 25c to \$3.95; dresses \$1.25 to \$5.95; coats and suits \$4.95 to \$10.95 "The Store that Saves You Money" The Band Box & Shoe Box.

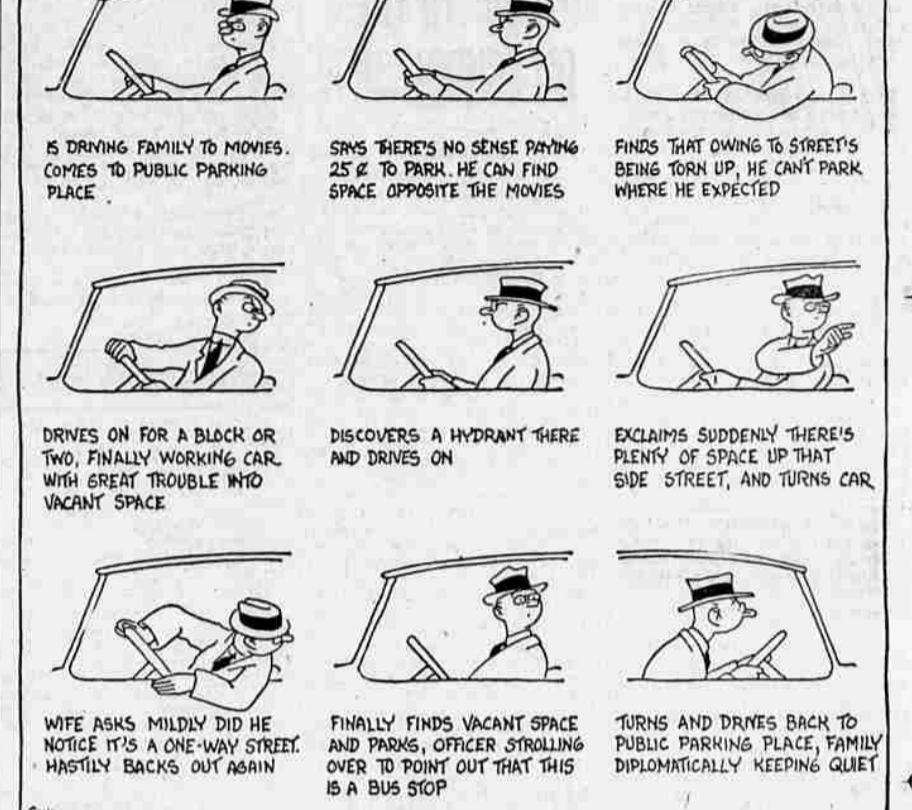
S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



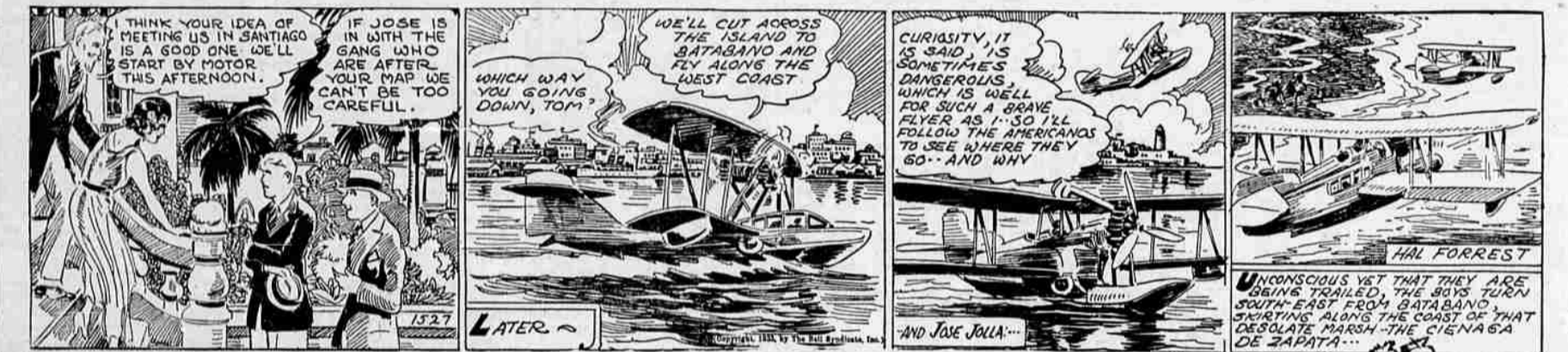
PARKING

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



TAILSPIN TOMMY—From Havana To Santiago De Cuba!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



BOUND TO WIN—Ben Comes To!

By EDWIN ALGER



THE NEBBS—References, Please

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



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