

CARIBBEAN CRISIS

BY EATON K. GOLDTHWAITE

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MARTHA SHOWS HER COLORS

CHAPTER XXIII

HE was conscious, first, of a buzzing in his ears, and then a light in his face. The light was very near. Its heat sent needles of pain through his closed lids and burned his brain. He tried to raise his hand to shade his eyes but the effort was too much.

He lay still, eyes closed, forcing air into his dry lungs. The heat was a little less and the light a little less intense, but he became conscious that his body was heaving and bouncing as though tied to a burro's back. Slowly the buzzing faded from his ears. Again he tried to raise his hands and found he could not.

His mind seemed to be functioning pretty well. He remembered being sick, and falling. And he could hear; there was a rustle of silk nearby. He could smell, too; an exotic perfume. But move a muscle, even to opening his eyes, he could not.

He lay a long time, listening to the rustle of silk, trying to identify the perfume and connect it with the sound. He attempted to speak, but his tongue gave no response. He gave that up, gave up trying to move, content only with listening. And then he heard a barrage of knuckles on wood.

"Who is est?" a voice called from his side.

"Pringle, ma'am. We're calling for Mr. Talcott—" The door banged. There was a feminine scream, and Pringle's "Excuse me, ma'am!" in hasty, embarrassed withdrawal.

Talcott tried to call out, to open his eyes, to move his hands. His mightiest effort succeeded only in raising one indescribably heavy eyelid. A glaucous flash revealed to him only part of a stateroom; a wardrobe blocked his view. But he did see the back of a woman who was in complete negligee. Her glistening dark hair was a cloud on her shoulders and her dark eyes were hard with anger from the interruption. He was only mildly surprised to recognize Martha Swenson.

The effort was too much; his lid dropped back and he lay, listening to the rustle of silk. The sense of feel was returning; he could feel the warmth of Martha Swenson's nearness—

"This man is strong. He just opened an eye!"
A man's voice. From behind and beyond Talcott. It was low, almost whispered. He heard Martha Swenson respond, "You should not remain here, Carl. It is not safe. I sent the captain away, but that fool doctor will come in soon. And the girl. She will be looking for him."

There was movement but no answer. A new presence. Fingers on Talcott's wrist. "Don't try to play possum," the low voice said. "Open your eyes!"

WITH tremendous effort, Talcott opened them. He was lying in a lower berth; the light that had blinded him was a reading lamp. Its rays glinted on the bald, ugly head of Gerhardt von Stampf.

The baron smiled mockingly. "Surely you had not shared the opinion of the others that I had left the ship!"

Talcott couldn't have answered even if he had desired. No. He hadn't shared that opinion—His body was numb. Only his brain and his eyes were alive.

"That pin," the baron chuckled. "You are very careless my friend. I could just as easily have poisoned you. Can it be that I overrated you? It is no matter. You have caused me a great deal of trouble. I am not one to take loss lightly. I am prepared to bargain with you—"

"Carl! Please go! The others will come back and this time I cannot save you. They will hang you for murder—"

"Silence, fool! I come and go at will. No one can touch me! And you, Lieut. William Talcott—My patience is only so much. That envelope you stole from Halsey. What did you do with it?"

You are a fool yourself, Baron von Stampf, Talcott thought. You know I can't answer and yet you ask me questions. Well, maybe I can speak but I don't dare just now—

As if reading his mind, von Stampf said softly, "You are worried? In an hour you will be your normal self. I have spared you because to save my work I wish to bargain. I offer you your life and that of the blonde girl for the contents of that envelope."

The man was mad. Trading with the life of June Paterson—What tortures had he devised for her if Talcott refused? And how could he assent? He couldn't even speak!

The baron said, "That hurt you, eh? Good! Now, you will do as I direct. You will not return that envelope and its contents to Halsey. You will take it instead directly to the office of Federal Chemical Company and there hand it to Mr. Winters' private secretary. You and she are to be alone when the transaction takes place. There will be no tricks. That is my bargain. You understand?"

A raving maniac. I want to smash your grinning face. I want to see the blood start from your nose as it started from Sebastian and MacDowell—

"Ah! You close your fist! You are very strong. It would be a pity to kill you—" He moved, swiftly, beyond the wardrobe; be-

yond Bill Talcott's vision. Minutes or perhaps hours passed, and then the sound, as of the scratching of fingernails, came from the bathroom door. Swiftly and unceremoniously Martha Swenson pulled a blanket over Talcott's eyes. When she removed it the bathroom door swung idly and von Stampf was gone.

HE awoke suddenly, surprised that he had been asleep. He heard the sound of angry voices and lifted his head to stare with heavy eyes at a full-blown argument between Martha Swenson and the ship's physician. It didn't occur to him immediately that he was able to move again. The tableau was too interesting.

Miss Swenson was dismissing her erstwhile swain in no uncertain terms. Telling him off for a fool, a sap, a sucker and a lecherous old dope.

Talcott grinned. It was very interesting to see the doctor's stuffiness being beaten out of him like dust out of a carpet. He stopped grinning quite suddenly when the door swung open to admit Captain Pringle, Halsey, Professor Constantine and—June Paterson.

Her eyes were frosty and she showed that she had heard enough of the argument to allow her to form some thoughts of her own. But Bill Talcott had no time for explanations.

"Pringle!" he called hoarsely. "Webber's still on the ship. He was just here—threatened June—"

Martha Swenson turned. Her eyes, cold, furious, blazing at him. Slowly she moved away, backing toward the bureau.

"Webber doped me with something," he continued doggedly. "On a pin in the lining of my sleeve. Not sure yet if I can stand— Watch that woman!"

Professor Constantine was nervous, and he moved with remarkable speed for one who was usually so bewildered. Smashed the revolver to the floor, and with eyes averted, smothered the struggles of the insufficiently-clad Miss Swenson.

(To Be Continued)

WAR BABY
FORT WAYNE—Mr. and Mrs. Barber are the parents of daughter. Her name is Pearl.

FRIENDLY CREDIT

ON ALL PURCHASES OF MEN'S WEAR

- No Interest
- No Carrying Charge
- No Red Tape

OREGON WOOLEN STORE
8TH AND MAIN

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



ANSWER: Yes! The Germans "have not" the morale, supplies, and chances of winning that they had a year ago.

NEXT: The unpredictable mongoose!

PRESIDENT'S AIDE

HORIZONTAL

1,5 Pictured presidential aide, —

11 Bristlelike part.

12 Short-napped fabric.

14 Welcomes.

16 Siamese coin.

17 Surgical thread.

19 Lubricator.

20 Symbol for ethyl.

22 Musical instrument.

23 Compass point.

24 Chest of drawers.

28 Crimson.

31 Area measure.

32 Make a mistake.

33 Old Testament (abbr.).

35 Measure.

36 Instrument.

37 Hackneyed.

38 Symbol for glaucium.

39 Female saint (abbr.).

40 Cloth measure.

41 Symbol for chlorine.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

CAMEL ZOO WATER
EVEN NAPER Y E
AN ECHO ROAM HA
NOO T SR POD
E TEGO SS R V
T E S A R C A M E L
R E E L S B I F I D
A R E S E A T
T I T H A M T H O R N
H I S U R A N I A N E L L
O F E M I R P R I G B A
N D E P A R T P O E T K
G I R L S Y O U N E E D Y

VERTICAL

42 Worm.

44 Half an em.

45 Classifier.

47 Electrical term.

48 Negotiate.

49 North Africa (abbr.).

55 Maxim.

58 Gorment.

59 Snare.

62 Wealthiest tribe of Indians in the U. S. A. (pl.).

64 Editors (abbr.).

65 Pierce.

66 Position in fencing.

67 Nuisance.

21 Abounds.

24 Boat.

25 Russian mountains.

26 Rugged mountain crest.

27 Outer garments.

29 Excess of the solar over the lunar year.

30 Ravines.

34 Eagle's claw.

43 Harem.

46 Rave.

50 Rupees (abbr.).

51 Piece out.

52 He is the President's naval (abbr.).

53 Transposes (abbr.).

55 Volume.

56 Hops' kiln.

57 Gaelic sea god (myth.).

60 Consume.

61 Symbol for terbium.

63 South Carolina (abbr.).

65 Symbol for selenium.

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66 67



Our Boarding House With Major Hooper



Little Orphan Annie



rockles and His Friends



TAXI



Alley Oop



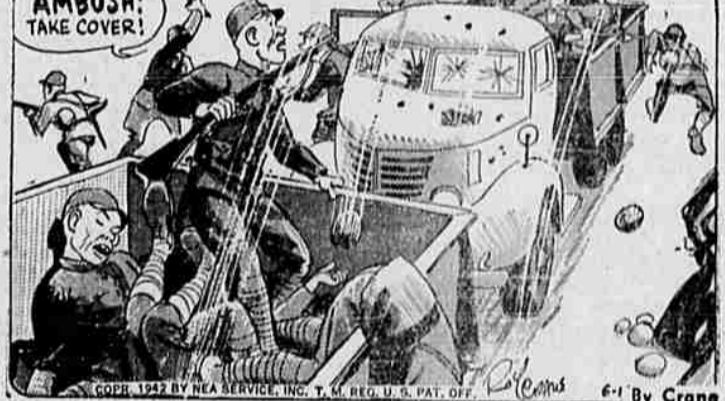
Our Boarding House With Major Hooper



By Fred Harman



By Harold Gray



By Martin



By V. T. Hamlin