

THE INDIAN DRUM

By William MacHarg and Edwin Balmer

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ALAN CONRAD.

SYNOPSIS.—Wealthy and highly placed in the Chicago business world, Benjamin Corvet is something of a recluse and a mystery to his associates. After a stormy interview with his partner, Henry Spearman, Corvet seeks Constance Sherrill, daughter of his other business partner, Lawrence Sherrill. She admits Spearman has asked her to marry him and that she hasn't given him an answer. Corvet—"Uncle Benny"—makes her promise not to give an answer "till I come back." Corvet is much agitated and acts strangely. Then he disappears. Sherrill learns that Corvet has written to Alan Conrad in Blue Rapids, Kan., summoning him to Chicago. None of Corvet's associates have ever heard of Alan Conrad.

CHAPTER II

Who is Alan Conrad?

The recipient of the letter which Benjamin Corvet had written and later so excitedly attempted to recover, was asking himself a question which was almost the same as the question which Constance Sherrill had asked. He was, the second morning later, waiting for the first of the two daily eastbound trains which stopped at the little Kansas town of Blue Rapids which he called home. As long as he could look back into his life, the question, who is this person they call Alan Conrad, and what am I to the man who writes from Chicago, had been the paramount enigma of existence for him. Since he was now twenty-three, as nearly as he had been able to approximate it, and as distinct recollection of isolated, extraordinary events went back to the time when he was five, it was quite eighteen years since he had first noticed the question put to the people who had him in charge: "So this is little Alan Conrad. Who is he?"

Following the arrival of certain letters, which were distinguished from most others arriving at the house by having no ink writing on the envelope but just a sort of purple or black printing like newspapers, Alan invariably received a dollar to spend just as he liked. To be sure, unless "papa" took him to town, there was nothing for him to spend it upon; so, likely enough, it went into the square iron bank, of which the key was lost; but quite often he did spend it according to plans agreed upon among all his friends and, in memory of these occasions and in anticipation of the next, "Alan's dollar" became a community institution among the children.

"Who gives it to you, Alan?" was a question more often asked, as time went on. The only answer Alan could give was, "It comes from C. Conrad." The post-mark on the envelope, Alan noticed, was always Chicago; that was all he ever could find out about his dollar. He was about ten years old when, for a reason as inexplicable as the dollar's coming, the letters with the typewritten addresses and the enclosed money ceased.

Except for the loss of the dollar at the end of every second month—a loss much discussed by all the children and not accepted as permanent till more than two years had passed—Alan felt no immediate results from the cessation of the letters from Chicago. Papa and mama felt them when the farm had to be given up, and the family moved to the town, and papa went to work in the wooden mill beside the river.

Papa and mama, at first surprised and dismayed by the stopping of the letters, still clung to the hope of the familiar, typewriter-addressed envelope appearing again; but when, after two years, no more money came, resentment which had been steadily growing against the person who had sent the money began to turn against Alan; and his "parents" told him all they knew about him.

In 1896 they had noticed an advertisement for persons to care for a child; they had answered it to the office of the newspaper which printed it. In response to the letter a man called upon them and, after seeing them and going around to see their friends, had made arrangements with them to take a boy of three, who was in good health and came of good people. He paid in advance \$500 for a year and agreed to send a certain amount every two months after that time. The man brought the boy; whom he called Alan Conrad, and left him. For seven years the money agreed upon came; now it had ceased, and papa had no way of finding the man—the name given by him appeared to be fictitious, and he had left no address except "general delivery, Chicago." Papa knew nothing more than that. He had advertised in the Chicago papers after the money stopped coming, and he had communicated with every one named Conrad in or near Chicago, but he had learned nothing.

Thus, at the age of thirteen, Alan definitely knew that what he already had guessed—the fact that he belonged somewhere else than in the little brown house—was all that anyone there could tell him; and this knowledge gave persistence to his internal questionings. Where did he

belong? Who was he? Who was the man who had brought him there? Had the money ceased coming because the person who sent it was dead? In that case, connection of Alan with the place where he belonged was permanently broken. Or would some other communication from that source reach him some time—if not money, then something else? Would he be sent for some day?

Externally, Alan's learning the little that was known about himself made no change in his way of living; he went to the town school, which combined grammar and high schools under one roof; and, as he grew older, he clerked in one of the town stores during vacations and in the evenings. Alan always carried his money home as part payment of those arrears which had mounted up against him since the letters ceased coming. At seventeen, having finished high school, he was clerking officially in Merrill's general store, when the next letter came.

It was addressed this time not to papa, but to Alan Conrad. He seized it, tore it open, and a bank draft for fifteen hundred dollars fell out. There was no letter with the enclosure, no word of communication; just the draft to the order of Alan Conrad. Alan wrote the Chicago bank by which the draft had been issued; their reply showed that the draft had been purchased with currency, so there was no record of the identity of the person who had sent it. More than that amount was due for arrears for the seven years during which no money was sent, even when the total which Alan had earned was deducted. So Alan merely endorsed the draft over to "father"; and that fall Jim, Alan's foster brother, went to college. But, when Jim discovered that it not only was possible but planned at the university for a boy to work his way through, Alan went also.

Four wonderful years followed. In companionship with educated people; ideas and manners came to him which he could not have acquired at home; athletics straightened and added bearing to his muscular, well-formed body; his pleasant, strong young face acquired self-reliance and self-control. Life became filled with possibilities for himself which it had never held before.

But on his day of graduation he had put away the enterprises he had planned and the dreams he dreamed and, conscious that his debt to father and mother still remained unpaid, he had returned to care for them; for father's health had failed and Jim, who had opened a law office in Kansas City, could do nothing to help.

No more money had followed the draft from Chicago and there had been no communication of any kind; but the receipt of so considerable a sum had revived and intensified all Alan's speculations about himself. The vague expectation of his childhood that sometime, in some way, he would be "sent for"; had grown during the last six years to a definite belief. And now—on the afternoon before—the summons had come.

This time, as he tore open the envelope, he saw that beside a check, there was writing within—an uneven and nervous-looking but plainly legible communication in longhand. The letter made no explanation. It told him, rather than asked him, to come to Chicago, gave minute instructions for the journey, and advised him to telegraph when he started. The check was for a hundred dollars to pay his expenses. Check and letter were signed by a name completely strange to him.

He was a distinctly attractive looking lad, as he stood now on the station platform of the little town, while the eastbound train rumbled in, and he fingered in his pocket the letter from Chicago.

On the train he took the letter from his pocket and for the dozenth time reread it. Was Corvet a relative? Was he the man who had sent the remittances when Alan was a little boy, and the one who later had sent the fifteen hundred dollars? Or was he merely a go-between, perhaps a lawyer? There was no letterhead to give aid in these speculations. The address to which Alan was to come was in Astor street. He had never heard the name of the street before. Was it a business street, Corvet's address in some great office building, perhaps?

At Chicago Alan, following the porter with his suitcase from the car, stepped down among the crowds hurrying to and from the trains. He was not confused, he was only intensely excited. Acting in implicit accord with the instructions of the letter, which he knew by heart, he went to the uniformed attendant and engaged a taxicab—his first small experience; there would be no one at the station to meet him, the letter had said. He gave the Astor street address and got into the cab.

It had begun to snow heavily. For a few blocks the taxicab drove north past more or less ordinary buildings, then turned east on a broad boulevard where tall tile and brick and stone structures towered till their roofs were hidden in the snowfall. A strange stir and tingle, quite distinct from the excitement of the arrival at

the station, prickled in Alan's veins, and hastily he dropped the window to his right and gazed out. The lake, as he had known since his geography days, lay to the east of Chicago; therefore that void out there beyond the park was the lake or, at least, the harbor. A different air seemed to come from it; sounds . . . Suddenly it all was shut off; the taxicab, swerving a little, was dashing between business blocks; a row of buildings had risen again upon the right; they broke abruptly to show him a wooden-walled chasm in which flowed the river full of ice with a tug dropping its smokestack as it cut below the bridge which the cab crossed; buildings on both sides again; then, to the right, a roaring, heaving crashing expanse.

The sound, Alan knew, had been coming to him as an undertone for many minutes; now it overwhelmed, swallowed all other sound. It was great, not loud; all sound which Alan had heard before, except the sighing of the wind over his prairies, came from one point; even the monstrous city murmur was centered in comparison with this. Over the lake, as over the land, the soft snowflakes lazily floated down, scarcely stirred by the slightest breeze; that roar was the voice of the water, that awful power its own.

Alan choked and gasped for breath, his pulses pounding in his throat; he had snatched off his hat and, leaning out of the window sucked the lake air in his lungs. There had been nothing to make him expect this overwhelming crush of feeling. The lake—he had thought of it, of course, as a great body of water, an interesting sight for a prairie boy to see; that was all. No physical experience in all his memory had affected him like this; and it was without warning; the strange thing that had stirred within him as the car brought him to the Drive down-town was strengthened now a thousand-fold; it amazed, half-frightened, half dizzied him. Now, as the motor suddenly swung around a corner and shut the sight of the lake from him, Alan sat back breathless.

The car swerved to the east curb about the middle of the block and came to a stop. The house before which it had halted was a large stone house of quiet, good design; it was some generation older, apparently, than the houses on each side of it, which were brick and terra cotta of recent fashionable architecture; Alan only glanced at them long enough to get that impression before he opened the cab door and got out; but as the cab drove away, he stood beside his suitcase looking up at the old house which bore the number given in Benjamin Corvet's letter, then around at the other houses and back to that again.

The neighborhood obviously precluded the probability of Corvet's being merely a lawyer—a go-between. He must be some relative; the question ever present in Alan's thought since the receipt of the letter, but held in abeyance, as to the possibility and nearness of Corvet's relation to him, took sharper and more exact form now than he had dared to let it take before. Was his relationship to



On the Train He Took the Letter From His Pocket and for the Dozenth Time Reread It.

Corvet, perhaps, the closest of all relationships? Was Corvet his . . . father? He checked the question within himself, for the time had passed for mere speculation upon it now. Alan was trembling excitedly; for—whatever Corvet might be—the enigma of Alan's existence was going to be answered when he had entered that house. He was going to know who he was. All the possibilities, the responsibilities, the attachments, the opportunities, perhaps, of that person whom he was—but whom, as yet, he did not know—were before him. He went up the steps and, with finger-

excitedly unsteady, he pushed the bell beside the door.

The door opened almost instantly—so quickly after the ring, indeed, that Alan, with leaping throb of his heart, knew that some one must have been awaiting him. But the door opened only half way, and the man who stood within, gazing out at Alan questioningly, was obviously a servant.

"What is it?" he asked, as Alan stood looking at him and past him to the narrow section of darkened hall which was in sight.

Alan put his hand over the letter in his pocket. "I've come to see Mr. Corvet," he said—"Mr. Benjamin Corvet."

"What is your name?" Alan gave his name; the man repeated it after him, in the manner of a trained servant, quite without inflection. Alan, not familiar with such tones, waited uncertainly. So far as he could tell, the name was entirely strange to the servant, awakening neither welcome nor opposition, but indifference. The man stepped back, but not in such a manner as to invite Alan in; on the contrary, he half closed the door as he stepped back, leaving it open only an inch or two; but it was enough so that Alan heard him say to some one within:

"He says he's him." "Ask him in; I will speak to him." It was a girl's voice—this second one, a voice such as Alan never had heard before. It was low and soft but quite clear and distinct, with youthful, impulsive modulations and the manner of accent which Alan knew must go with the sort of people who lived in houses like those on this street.

The servant, obeying the voice, returned and opened wide the door. "Will you come in, sir?" Alan put down his suitcase on the stone porch; the man made no move to pick it up and bring it in. Then Alan stepped into the hall face to face with the girl who had come from the big room on the right.

She was quite a young girl—not over twenty-one or twenty-two, Alan judged; like girls brought up in wealthy families, she seemed to Alan to have gained young womanhood in far greater degree in some respects than the girls he knew, while, at the same time, in other ways, she retained more than they some characteristics of a child. Her slender figure had a woman's assurance and grace; her soft brown hair was dressed like a woman's; her gray eyes had the open directness of the girl. Her face—smoothly oval, with straight brows and a skin so delicate that at the temples the veins showed dimly blue—was at once womanly and youthful; and there was something altogether likable and simple about her, as she studied Alan now. She was slightly pale, he noticed, and there were lines of strain and trouble about her eyes.

"I am Constance Sherrill," she announced. Her tone implied quite evidently that she expected him to have some knowledge of her, and she seemed surprised to see that her name did not mean more to him.

"Mr. Corvet is not here this morning," she said.

He hesitated, but persisted: "I want to see him here today, Miss Sherrill. He wrote me, and I telegraphed him I would be here to-day."

"I know," she answered. "We had your telegram. Mr. Corvet was not here when it came, so my father opened it." Her voice broke oddly, and she studied her in indecision, wondering who that father might be that opened Mr. Corvet's telegrams.

"Mr. Corvet went away very suddenly," she explained. She seemed, he thought, to be trying to make something plain to him which might be a shock to him; yet herself to be uncertain what the nature of that shock might be. Her look was scrutinizing, questioning, anxious, but not unfriendly. "After he had written you and something else had happened—I think—to alarm my father about him, father came here to his house to look after him. He thought something might have . . . happened to Mr. Corvet here in his house. But Mr. Corvet was not here."

"You mean he has—disappeared?" Alan gazed at her dizzily. Benjamin Corvet—wherever he might be—had disappeared; he had gone. Did any one else, then, know about Alan Conrad?

"No one has seen Mr. Corvet," she said, "since the day he wrote to you. We knew that—that he became so disturbed after doing that—writing to you—that we thought you might bring with you information of him."

"Information?" "So we have been waiting for you to come here and tell us what you know about him or—your connection with him."

CHAPTER III

Discussion of a Shadow

Alan, as he looked confusedly and blankly at her, made no attempt to answer the question she had asked or to explain. His silence and confusion, he knew, must seem to Constance Sherrill unwillingness to an-

swer her; for she did not suspect that he was unable to answer her.

"You would rather explain to father than to me," she decided.

He hesitated. What he wanted now was time to think, to learn who she was and who her father was, and to adjust himself to this strange reversal of his expectations.

"Yes; I would rather do that," he said.

She caught up her fur collar and muffled from a chair and spoke a word to the servant. As she went out on to the porch, she followed her and stooped to pick up his suitcase.

"Simmons will bring that," she said, "unless you'd rather have it with you. It is only a short walk."

They turned in at the entrance of a house in the middle of the block and went up the low, wide stone steps; the door opened to them without ring or knock; a servant in the hall within took Alan's hat and coat, and he followed Constance past some great room upon his right to a smaller one farther down the hall.

"Will you wait here, please?" she asked.

He sat down, and she left him; when her footsteps had died away, and he could hear no other sounds except



Alan Gazed at Her Dizzily—Benjamin Corvet—

the occasional soft tread of some servant, he twisted himself about in his chair and looked around. Who were these Sherrills? Who was Corvet, and what was his relation to the Sherrills? What, beyond all, was their and Corvet's relation to Alan Conrad—to himself? The shock and confusion he had felt at the nature of his reception in Corvet's house, and the strangeness of his transition from his little Kansas town to a place and people such as this, had prevented him from inquiring directly from Constance Sherrill as to that; and, on her part, she had assumed, plainly, that he already knew and need not be told.

He straightened and looked about, then got up, as Constance Sherrill came back into the room.

"Father is not here just now," she said. "We weren't sure from your telegram exactly at what hour you would arrive, and that was why I waited at Mr. Corvet's to be sure we wouldn't miss you. I have telephoned home, and he's coming home at once." She hesitated an instant in the doorway, then turned to go out again.

"Miss Sherrill—" he said.

She halted. "Yes."

"You told me you had been waiting for me to come and explain my connection with Mr. Corvet. Well—I can't do that; that is what I came here hoping to find out."

She came back toward him slowly. "What do you mean?" she asked.

He fought down and controlled resolutely the excitement in his voice, as he told her rapidly the little he knew about himself.

He could not tell definitely how she was affected by what he said. She flushed slightly, following her first start of surprise after he had begun to speak; when he had finished, he saw that she was a little pale.

"Then you don't know anything about Mr. Corvet at all," she said. "No; until I got his letter sending for me here, I'd never seen or heard his name."

She was thoughtful for a moment. "Thank you for telling me," she said. "I'll tell my father when he comes."

"Your father is—?" he ventured. She understood now that the name of Sherrill had meant nothing to him. "Father is Mr. Corvet's closest friend, and his business partner as well," she explained.

He thought she was going to tell him something more about them; but she seemed to decide to leave that for her father to do. She crossed to the big chair beside the grate and seated herself. As she sat looking at him, hands clasped beneath her chin, and her elbows resting on the arm of the chair, there was speculation and interest in her gaze; but she did not ask him anything more about himself.

"I've brought you," he said evenly, "the key to your house."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Our Own Webster. Love: An ocean of emotion entirely surrounded by expenses.

The ancient Egyptians made every day that the weather is fair

FARM LIVE STOCK

SWINE SANITATION BY FILM

Roundworm Causes Great Losses Each Year to Hog Growers—Parasites Shown Growing.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

The life and adventures of a worm would not seem to be promising material for a movie scenario, but a film recently issued by the United States Department of Agriculture proves that the doings of such a lowly organism as the roundworm that infests the intestines of swine may be absorbing. Ascaris lumbricoides is the scientific name for this parasite that causes great losses every year to swine growers, and the title of the educational picture is "Exit Ascaris."

The screen story is built around two neighbor farmers, one of whom has success with his pigs and the other so much hard luck that he is discouraged almost to the point of giving up the business. The man with the unthrifty herd goes down the road to see the successful hog raiser about his troubles and is told that roundworms are the probable cause of his failure. But he is skeptical and remains unconvinced until a federal veterinarian is called in to diagnose the case.

The veterinarian brings a high-power microscope and sets it up on a box in the hog yard where he shows the farmer and his neighbor that the soil of the lot is badly infested with the minute eggs of the roundworm. The eggs with the squirming young worms plainly visible within the walls are shown in the field of the microscope that is reproduced on the film. Then the entire life history of the worm is shown, from the time the egg is swallowed by the unwitting pig until the parasite is mature and one of hundreds in the intestines. The growing worms are shown to the owner right in his own sick pigs where there are plenty of specimens in various stages of development from the very



One Little Pig Had Worms, the Others Had None.

small, newly hatched forms up to those that are full grown and more than a foot in length.

This film, "Exit Ascaris," will be sent to extension workers and field men of the department and the state agricultural colleges and to farm bureaus. Other organizations that are interested in improving the swine industry may get reels when they are available, and prints of the film may be purchased at cost by anyone who cares to own it. Inquiries should be addressed to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

MIXED INFECTION IN SWINE

Hog Industry Would Be Better Off if More Attention Given to Cholera, Says Expert.

Mixed infection in hogs is receiving too much notoriety. This name was invented by a biological house for the purpose of putting a new bacterin on the market. The new bacterin is supposed to prevent several of the complications of hog cholera, such as swine plague. From a scientific standpoint, the term "mixed infection" means nothing. If more attention were given to hog cholera and less to "mixed infection," the hog industry would be better off.—Dr. G. S. Weaver, South Dakota.

FEED FOR FATTENING LAMBS

Animals in a Dry Lot Should Have Shelled Corn Twice Daily—Allow Plenty Salt.

To fatten feeder lambs in dry lot allow them each a pound of shelled corn twice daily, two pounds of corn silage, with about one-sixth pound of oilmeal with the silage, and plenty of clover, alfalfa or soybean hay in the afternoon. Allow plenty of salt.

For growing lambs a good ration is made of equal parts of corn, oats, bran and oilmeal. Furnish plenty of good hay.

PROPER EXERCISE FOR EWES

Part of Roughage Should Be Fed in Field at Some Distance From the Barns.

Breeding ewes should get enough exercise. One of the causes of weak lambs is due to the fact that ewes have not adequate exercise. When it can be arranged, at least a part of the roughage should be fed in the field at some distance from the barns or the shed, and the ewes should be out every day that the weather is fair.

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