

The Girl a Horse and a Dog

By FRANCIS LYNDE

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(Continued.)

Coming all three together as it seemed to me, there were splittings like those of an angry cat, a puff of choking powder smoke, and the crack of the rifle. For just about three seconds nothing further happened; but at the fourth second or thereabouts—oh, boy! The cabin was stoutly and solidly built of logs, as I may have mentioned.



In the Flash of the Explosion We Had a Glimpse of Doors and Windows Caving In.

but in the flash of the rending explosion we had a glimpse of doors and windows caving inward and a section of the split-shingle roof leaping toward the spacious firmament on high.

"Now, darn ye," was Daddy Hiram's morose comment, made with an eye to a peep-hole, "now, darn ye, maybe you'll let folks sleep peaceable for a little spell!"

Of course, in the darkness, made thicker by the cloud of dust the explosion had kicked up, we couldn't tell what had become of the cabin garrison, or whether or no we'd killed all or any of it. But the immediate result was perfectly soul-satisfying. There were no more roof bombardments, and after we had remained on watch together for perhaps half an hour, Daddy sent me to the blankets for my forty winks; did this, and afterward played a low-down trick on me. For, what with the previous night's broken rest, and the more or less exciting and strenuous day, I slept like a tired baby, and when I awoke the sun was shining in at the two high window holes at something more than an acute angle, and Daddy Hiram was making coffee and frying bacon and baking pan-bread over a chip fire built on a piece of boiler iron we had turned down for hearth purposes the previous evening.

The old angel took my reproachful abuse for his unselfishness quite good-naturedly, as he did most things, and made his report of the night's doings. Up to midnight there had been nothing stirring; but after that there had been noises on the blacksmith shop side, and indications that the jumpers were at work on something in the boiler shed. Since this lay beyond our field of vision, we couldn't see what was going on, nor could we apply the dynamite remedy.

Shortly after we had finished breakfast the work noises began again, but with the blanketing blacksmith shop in the way we couldn't see a thing and could only make wild guesses as what the raiders were up to. Along about the middle of the forenoon they fired up one or more of the boilers; a whiff of wind coming along the side of the mountain blew the smoke over so that some of it drifted into the shaft-house through the high windows. Still we were completely lost in the guessing wilderness.

It was a little after noon, while we were squatting on the floor to eat another meal warmed up over the chip fire, that we found out the answer to all the guesses and learned what the mechanical noises of the night and forenoon had been leading up to. One of the left-overs from the working period of the mine was a good-sized steam force pump which, we took it, had once been installed on one of the lower mine levels and had been hoisted out of the shaft ahead of the advancing water flood and put under shelter in a corner of the boiler shed. As I was passing my tin cup for more of Daddy's excellent coffee the rattle and clank of a pump began to make itself heard, together with the coughing chug-chug of the steam exhaust therefrom.

"That's that low-level pump!" I ex-

claimed. "They must have connected it up with the boil!"

Whoosh! that was just as far as I got. In the middle midst of the word "boilers" a two-inch jet of muddy water came curving up through one of the window openings to arch over and fall, splash, all over us as we sat munching our dinner. Everlastingly ruined the dinner, put out the fire, upset the coffee pot, and made drowned rats of both of us in less time than it takes to tell it—much less.

So much for that. Of course, we ran and ducked and dodged, like the drowned rats I speak of hunting for a hole. But now Bullerton's devilish engineering ingenuity came into play. By some means as yet unknown to us, he had contrived a movable nozzle to his squirt-gun, and in another minute there wasn't a single dry spot left in that shafthouse. I venture to say that Daddy and I and the dog ran a full mile trying to get out of range of that demoniacal nozzle-machine, but there wasn't a corner of the place that it couldn't, and didn't, reach.

During the night the scoundrels had laid a pipe line from the pump in the boiler shed alongside of our prison fortress; this with an upright extension on the business end of it. At the top of the sandpipe stem there was an elbow with a short joint of pipe screwed into it to point out way; and on the end of this nozzle there was a piece of rubber hose. Under the jerky impulses of the pump strokes this flexible extension of the nozzle flopped up and down and around and sideways, like the nose of a patent lawn sprinkler; and there you are—or there we were.

"Gosh-to-Solomon!" Daddy spluttered, "we ain't on the water wagon—we're spans inside of it! Are you rememberin', Stannie, that they can keep this gosh-darn thing up forever? All in the world they've got to do is to put a stick o' wood on the fire now and then! Say, son; they got us goin' and comin'; we can't eat, and we can't sleep no more whatever!"

"By heavens, I own those boilers, and if I could get a stick of dynamite

be in for another ducking—and one that we can't stop."

Daddy was shaking his head and wringing the moisture—and mud—out of his beard.

"Jerusalem-to-gosh, Stannie, we got to take a chance!" he muttered. "Anyways, I'd about as lief die as be drowned to death. We'll have to muss that blacksmith shop up and get it out o' the way, somehow. Gimme a match out o' that tin box o' yours'n—so they ain't all soaked to a jiz-whizzlin' sop."

I found the matches, which, luckily, were still dry, and handed him one. Before I fairly realized what he was going to do, he had taken one of the dynamite cartridges out of its bucket hiding place and was splitting the fuse with his pocketknife.

"Open that there door into the shop," he commanded; and when I obeyed mechanically, out went the bomb, fizzing and sputtering, to land in a heap of scrap iron piled on the farther side of the stone-built forge. The sight of it smoking and spitting sparks in the heap of scrap half hypnotized me. I guess, for I stood gaping at it, with the door held open, until Daddy Hiram jerked me away, slammed the door and yelled to me to help him bar it.

We had barely time to get the door closed and fastened with the heavy wooden bar and to throw ourselves flat on the floor behind the hoisting machinery before the crash came. As I have previously said, the blacksmith was a rather flimsy, shod-like affair, roofed with corrugated iron, and it seemed to us as if broken timbers and pieces of sheet metal were raining down for a full minute after the blast went off.

The shock to everything in the vicinity was, of course, tremendous and the stout old shaft-house itself rocked and swayed like a tree in a hurricane. But the walls still stood intact, and when we got up and peeped through a hole which a piece of the flying scrap had torn in the door, we could see what we had done. It was a plenty. The blacksmith shop had disappeared, leaving nothing but a scattering of wreckage. The heavy anvil had been thrown from its block and the forge looked as if a giant had kicked it. Out by the boiler-shed a rack of cordwood bad been toppled over and under it a man was struggling to free himself. When he saw the imprisoned enemy that mild-mannered, soft-spoken old soldier that I was shut up with would have opened the door and shot the straggler if I hadn't stopped him.

This blowing up of the shop settled the shower-bath business for us definitely. With the impediment out of the way we had a clear view on this third side; could command the row of miners' cabins, as well as the boilers in their open shed. When I got through persuading Daddy Hiram that we couldn't afford to murder the wounded, the fellow who had been wrestling with the woodpile had made his exit and there was nobody in sight. Shortly afterward a bullet, fired from somewhere in the forest background, whanged upon our roof, and there were several to follow; but aside from punching a few more holes in the iron they did no harm.

"Looks like the 'Hercules' is the one thing they're most skeered of," said Daddy, with his queer little stuttering chuckle. "Now maybe they'll leave us have time to get ourselves dried out a mite."

Totting up the results of the shower-bath we'd had, a bread famine promised to be the worst of them. The few cans of beans, tomatoes and peaches—the campers' standbys—were unharmed, of course, and the muddled bacon could be washed with water drawn from the flooded shaft. But the flour in its sack was merely a blob of paste and was beyond redemption and the cornmeal was the same. In view of the results I wondered if Bullerton hadn't shrewdly calculated upon washing our commissary out of existence when he planned his overgrown lawn sprinkler. But maybe that was giving him credit for more ingenuity than he really had.

Through what remained of the afternoon the rifle firing continued, coming sometimes from one angle and sometimes from another but always can from a safe distance and always under cover of the surrounding forest. Daddy Hiram, grimly optimistic, extracted a swallow or so of encouragement out of the persistent pot-shooting.

A spinning twirl of the engine throttle valve set our machinery in motion, and when I had thrown the pump clutch in, we crouched again in the least-wet corner to watch the index of the tell-tale steampage connected into the supply pipe.

We knew that the centrifugals were voracious steam-eaters; we had proved that when we were running them in the week-long test. I had a notion that maybe Bullerton had fired only one of the battery of three boilers to run his shower-bath machine, and the result speedily confirmed this assumption. In a few minutes the steam pressure had dropped to a point at which it would no longer drive any of the pumps, either ours or the one outside, and the window cataract stopped.

"This will be only a breathing space," I prophesied, getting up to squeeze some of the superfluous water out of my clothes. "Bullerton will do one of two things: fire the other two boilers, or disconnect this steam pipe of ours."

"Reckon so?" said Daddy.

"You'll see in a minute or so."

The attack began even while we were speaking, sundry hammerings and twistings that shook the pipe overhead proving that the besiegers were going to stop the leak by cutting us off from the boilers.

"Take your whirl at the inventions this time, Daddy!" I urged. "When they get this supply nine cu' out . . ."

it from hand to hand he went on much as if picking up bullets that were fired at him had been his daily recreation.

"Curiosity killed the cat, Stannie, son. You let some one o' the folks down yonder in 'Tropia say, 'By god—I wonder what all that shootin's for; and the next thing you know, somebody'll be moggin' up here to find out!'

Along about dusk some member of the besieging party tried to make a reconnaissance. I happened to be keeping the lookout on the cabin side of our fortress and saw a man dodging among the pines back of the house. When I reported to Daddy he took a snap shot at the place I pointed out to him and there was a wild yell and a stir in the young pines as though a hog were galloping through them.

"Just to let 'em know that we're still alive and kickin'," said the old man, with another of his quavery chuckles. "I reckon maybe that's what they was aimin' to find out."

Possibly it was. At all events, the rifle fire stopped with the coming of darkness, and as we faced our second night of defense we had plenty of time to sit around and think and speculate upon what the outcome was going to be.

Taking it all in all, it was the fantastic humor of the thing that hit me hardest. Six short weeks earlier people at home had been calling me at the hard names that fall to the lot of the idle ne'er-do-well; a young chap with enough inheritance money to keep him in ties and shoes and shirts and to buy gas for his car—though that last asked for a good bit on the rising cost of gasoline—and not enough to make life, or anything connected therewith, very much worth while.

Also these same people were saying—behind my back, of course, but there were always plenty of them to repeat the saying to my face—that I was good stock gone to seed, would never amount to a hill of beans in anything that asked for initiative or resourcefulness, or primitive rough stuff of any sort; that I was due to go on dolling myself up and playing skittles to the end of the chapter—which would probably stage itself in an asylum for the feeble-minded. Also, again, at that same time, which was six weeks—or six thousand years—ago, I was engaged to Lisette; with mighty little

success. The oxford ties keep a stock of them in the shops, but the majority of these oxfords indulge in the high, sloping heel and wide ribbon bow on the instep.

There is no evidence that high-laced or buttoned boots will be returned to fashion. The low shoe is the thing. It has everything its own way.

The demand of some women for black oxford ties keep a stock of them in the shops, but the majority of these oxfords indulge in the high, sloping heel and wide ribbon bow on the instep.

Of course, there are sensible shoes in the shops and on the feet of women. All the world is not given to fanciful foot covering.

The sensible shoe of the hour is of brown leather, an African brown that matches the frocks and furs. There are sensible shapes as for the heels and the slender instep, but the pointed vamp is difficult to escape. It is giving way slowly to something that might be called heart-shaped, which follows the natural outline of the foot at the joints of the ball of the foot, where the hard work is done. This is an improvement in comfort and in structural.

The flat heel is still too broad and ungainly except for country lanes, but there is little evidence that the Cuban heel of moderate height will prevail.

It is adopted by those who are making French shoes to order, but it is perilously high.

Soft, black patent leather is a rival of the Moroccan brown leather for street use, and both are covered with fanciful and frequent stitching to give body and substance.

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Twenty-one other counties produced more than a half million pounds. The highest average prices were in Bucks and Delaware counties, where butter averaged 93 cents a pound. The lowest price was 32 cents, in Fulton.

—Harness should be in good repair if Dobbin is expected to render a maximum amount of service.

Sewing of any kind should be done with a strong waxed linen thread. Every buckle should be sewed solidly in place. Furthermore, the harness should be washed and oiled frequently.

The washing of harness is best accomplished by the use of tepid water, castile or white laundry soap and a sponge or fairly stiff brush. A dull knife may be used for scraping off the hardened deposits. After washing the harness thoroughly, rinse in tepid water and hang in a warm place until it is no longer wet but still damp. Oil or grease should then be applied and the harness hung in a warm place for twenty-four hours.

Oiling when the harness is still damp prevents a great absorption of the oil or grease which may cause the harness to pull out of shape or accumulate grit, which is injurious and gives a bad appearance.

—Soil consists principally of small particles of rock, nearly all of which contain more or less potassium, calcium, phosphoric acid, etc. The soil water each year dissolves off a thin surface layer from each particle.

Plants take this water, and in that way secure mineral plant food. Thirteen chemical elements are employed in the growth of plants, nine of which obtain directly from the soil. These elements are known as mineral plant foods and recognized as phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sodium, iron, silicon, chlorin and sulfur.

Besides these nine elements four others—namely, hydrogen, oxygen, carbon and nitrogen are needed by the growing plants.

Ordinary plants depend exclusively upon decaying organic matter for their nitrogen. The nitrates are exceedingly soluble, and are washed out of the soil unless utilized by the growing crops.

The cultivation of leguminous crops is an economical and important method for maintaining a supply of nitrogenous plant food in the soil.

Commercial fertilizers may supply nitrogen, but as such fertilizers are very expensive, it has been found more profitable to resort to growing legumes, or by the application of stable manure which, when properly handled, is rich in nitrogen. It is good farm practice to use both leguminous crops and stable manure.

Crops grown to turn under as manure is also a valuable source of humus. The legumes are especially valuable for this purpose.

FOR AND ABOUT WOMEN.

DAILY THOUGHT.

Common sense is instinct and enough of it is genius.—H. W. Shaw.

Colored umbrellas outnumber the black ones, and rainy day "blues" are a thing of the past.

Not long ago it was dull on rainy day and black umbrellas made things appear duller; now colored ones cheer things up on a rainy day.

Novelty metal girdles are replacing those of self material and lending a bright touch to the all-black coat and dresses which are now so popular.

Clocked hosiery in both silk and wool is being recognized by many more persons now than had been noted heretofore.

Long evening gowns are becoming more popular and more noticeable. A striking black velvet gown was worn several days ago featuring the new musketeer sleeves and a skirt that just cleared the floor in the back, while the front was slightly shorter.

Stomacher of rhinestones is used to finish off girdles.

White gowns of the more formal type, heavily trimmed in crystals, seem to be popular and are made along straight lines.

In many prominent places it is a "toss up" as to whether velvets or crepes are the more popular.

At a reception given recently velvets and crepes were worn almost exclusively.

In all branches of the silk industry echoes are sounded with regard to georgette crepes being a popular material for spring wear.

During the winter a great many georgettes have been sold in the gray.

Brocades still take an important part as dress material with brocaded voiles and crepes, followed by Canton and satins, outstanding.

Brown tones and dull gold are used extensively for dress wear.

Afternoon dresses to be worn for informal dinners are mostly in bright crepes, georgettes, in dull gold and ochre shades.

Crepes and georgettes are usually combined with laces to lighten the effect.

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