

THE VAGRANT DUKE

By GEORGE GIBBS

Author of "The Splendid Outcast," "The Yellow Dove," "The Secret Witness," Etc.

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THIS BEGINS THE STORY

Nicholas, Russian Grand Duke, fled by revolution, came to this country as Peter and goes to work on the estate of Jonathan K. McGuire, a millionaire who is being molested by one John Kennedy. Kennedy says McGuire killed a man named Ben Cameron, their partner in gold prospecting in the West years before, and Peter believes McGuire and sets out to circumvent Kennedy. McGuire learns that Ben Cameron, a girl living in the neighborhood, is the daughter of his former partner, and promises Peter to pay her a million dollars the moment the name of Kennedy is removed from the McGuire estate to visit Peter, and there meets Ben Cameron and learns who she is. He believes Peter is double-crossing and carries the girl off. Peter has received word from Princess Gallitzin, a friend in Europe, that the Bolsheviks are on his track, and by the presence among them of a number of malcontents, led by Shad Wells, his first assistant. Wells is jealous of Ben Cameron, and aims to bring Peter to the camp of immediate trouble.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES

AT FIRST Peter had thought that individually many of the men he had done what he could for their comfort and paid them the highest wages justifiable, but gradually he found that his influence was being undermined and that the good-natured lagging which Peter had at first tried to tolerate had turned to loafing on the job, and finally to overt acts of rebellion. More men had been sent away and others with even less conscience had taken their places. Some of them had enunciated Bolshevik doctrines as wild as any of Flynn's or Jacob's. Jonathan K. McGuire stood as a type which represented the hierarchy of wealth and was therefore theireditary enemy. Peter in a quiet talk at the bunk-house one night had told them that once Jonathan K. McGuire had been as poor as, if not poorer than, any one of them. But even as he spoke he had felt that his words had made no impression. It was what McGuire was now that mattered, they told him. All this land, all this lumber, was the people's, and they'd get it, too, in time. With great earnestness, born of a personal experience of which they could not dream, Peter pointed out to them what had happened and was now happening in Russia and painted a harrowing picture of helplessness and starvation, but they smoked their pipes in silence and answered him not at all. They were not to be reasoned with. If the Soviet came to America they were willing to try it. They would try anything.

But Shad Wells was "canny" and Peter had never succeeded in tracing any of the accidents or any of the dissensions directly to his door. With evidence against him Peter did not think it wise to send him out of camp, for many of the men were friendly to Shad and his dismissal was sure to mean an upheaval of sorts. Peter knew that Shad hated him for what had happened at the cabin, but that in his heart he feared to come out into the open where a repetition of his undoing in public might destroy his influence for so. So Peter's face he was sullenly obedient, taking care to give the appearance of carrying out his orders, while as soon as Peter's back was turned he laughed, loitered and encouraged others to do the same.

And for the last week Peter had not liked the looks of things. At the lumber camp the work was almost at a standstill, and the mills were sent out of the camp was no other than the agent of the Soviets, who had forwarded to London the information as to his whereabouts. Peter had not seen this man since the day of his dismissal, but he suspected that he was in the plot with Flynn, Jacobi and perhaps Shad Wells to make mischief in the lumber camp.

The opportunity that Peter sought to bring matters to a focus was not long in coming, for when he reached the sawmills, which had resumed desultory operation, he found that Flynn and Jacobi, the "Reds," calmly sat out of the office, smoking and talking with Shad Wells. Peter had left his "flivver" up the road, and his sudden entrance was a surprise. The men got up sullenly and would have slung out of the door, but Peter closed it, put his back to it, and faced them. He was cold with anger and held himself in with difficulty, but he had taken their measure and meant to bring on a crisis, which would settle their status and his own, once and for all time.

"What are you doing here?" he began shortly, eyeing Flynn.

The Irishman stuck his hands into his pockets and shrugged impudently.

"That's my business," he muttered. "I'm charged because you were incompetent because you were getting money you didn't earn and because you were trying to persuade others to be as worthless as yourselves. You were ordered to keep us off—"

"I'll come to that in a moment. What I want to say to you now is this: with the coolness of a murder-baiting bull. 'Some men go wrong because they've been badly advised, some because they can't think straight, others because they're rather go wrong than right. Some of you I believe in what you preach, that the world can be made over and all the money and the land divided up in a new deal. You don't believe in anything except getting a living without working for it—and trying to make honest men do the same. You, Jacobi, are only a fool—a cowardly fool at that—who hides behind the coat-tails of a man stronger than you.'"

"Look-a-here, Mister—"

"Yes, Flynn's your master, but he isn't mine. And he isn't the master of any man on this job while I'm superintendent. We'll see about that," said Flynn with a chuck.

"Yes, well. Very soon. Now, as a matter of fact—"

"How?"

"By proving which is the better man—you or me—"

"Oh, I'm not afraid to fight?"

"Exactly."

The Irishman leered at him cunningly.

"I'm too old a bird to be caught with that stuff—puttin' you with the right on yer side. We're after sheddin' no blood here, Mister Nichols. We're on this job for peace an' justice for all."

"Then you're afraid to fight?"

"No. But I'm not a-goin' to—"

"Not if I tell you you're a sneak, a liar and a coward—"

Flynn's jaw worked and his glance passed from Jacobi to Wells.

"I'll make ye do this man names backwards one day, Mister Nichols, but not now. I'm here for a bigger cause. Stand away from the door."

"In a moment. But first let me tell you this, and Shad Wells, too."

"You're going out of this door and out of this camp—all three of you. And if any one of you shows himself aside this minute, this property he'll have to take the consequences."

"Meanin' what?" asked Peter.

"Meanin' me, the law. Now go."

He stood aside and swung the door open with one hand, but he didn't take his eyes from them.

They laughed in his face, but they obeyed him and went into the open, and stroled away.

Peter had hoped to coax a fight out of Flynn, thinking that the Irish blood in him couldn't resist his taunts and challenge. But Flynn had been clever for him. A defeat for Flynn meant loss of prestige, a victory possible prosecution. Either way he had nothing to gain. Peter was bent toward like Jacobi or a beaten bully like Shad. Whatever he was Flynn seemed to have the very best of himself and Peter, though apparently master of the situation for the present, was conscious of a sense of defeat.

But he breathed more freely now that he had made his decision with regard to Shad Wells. He spent a large part of the morning going over the mills, getting the men together and giving them a little talk, then went up to the camp in search of Jesse Brown. The news of his encounter with Shad and the "Reds" had preceded him and he saw that trouble was brewing. Jesse Brown wagged his head in a deprecating way and tried to sidestep the entire situation. But Peter had reached a point where he was tired of equivocation.

"I say, Jesse," he said at last, "you've let things get into a pretty bad mess down here."

"I'm a peaceable man, Mr. Nichols," said Jesse. "I've tried to steer this camp along easy-like, 'til this bit of woods is cleared up, and here you go stirrin' up a hornet's nest about our camp."

"I've done the best I could," muttered Jesse.

"That isn't the best I want. You knew Flynn and Jacobi were back in camp yesterday. Why didn't you tell me so?"

"I can't do nothin'." They've got friends here."

"And haven't you got friends here, too? I sent those men out of camp. If they're here again I'll find the power to arrest them."

"I'd advise you not to try that."

"Why?"

"They're stronger than you think."

"I'll take my chances on that. But I want to know where you stand. Are you with me or against me?"

"Well," said Jesse, rubbing his head dubiously, "I'll do what I can."

"All right. We'll have a fresh start. Round up all hands. I'm going to talk to them at dinner time."

Jesse glanced at him, shrugged and went out, and Peter went into the office, where he spent the intervening time going over the books. It was there that one of the clerks, a man named Briggs, brought forth from the drawer of his desk a small pamphlet which he had picked up yesterday in the bunk-house. Peter opened and read it.

It was a copy of the new manifest of the Union of Russian Workers and though written in English, gave every mark of origin in the Lenin-Trotsky name and was cleverly written in catch phrases meant to trap the ignorant. It proposed to destroy the churches and erect in their stead places of amusement for the working people. He was anxious to see what the blood-covered barricades, beyond all terrors of civil war, there already shines for us the magnificent, beautiful form of man, without a God, without a master, and full of authority." "The doctrine is: The pamphlet derided the law and the state, and urged the complete destruction of private ownership. It predicted the coming of the revolution in a few weeks, naming the day of a general strike of all industries which would paralyze all the functions of commerce. It was Bolshevik in ideal, Bolshevik in inspiration and it opened Peter's eyes as to the veracity of the contention with the black mustache. Brierly also told him that whisky had been smuggled into the camp the night before and that a fire in the woods had luckily been put out before it had become menacing. Brierly was a discharged soldier who had learned something of the value of obedience and made no effort to conceal his anxiety and his sympathies. He voiced the opinion that either Flynn or Jacobi had brought in the liquor. Peter frowned. Jesse Brown had said nothing of this. The inference was obvious.

At the dinner-shed, Peter was to be made aware immediately of the difficulty of the task that confronted him, for four looks met him on all sides. There were a few men who sat near him whom he thought he might count on at a venture, but they were very few and their positions difficult. Some of them still showed the effects of their drink and hurried glances about the room, obviously meant for Peter's ear, but he sat through the meal patiently and then got to his feet and demanded their attention.

As he began to speak he was interrupted by hoots and cat-calls but he waited calmly for silence and seeing that they couldn't rattle him by buffoonery they desisted after a moment.

"Some of you seemed to be friendly toward me and those are the men I want to talk to now. The others don't matter."

"Oh, don't they?" came a gruff voice from a crowd near the door. And another, "We'll see about that."

Peter tried to find the speaker with his gaze for a moment and then went on imperturbably. "I'm going to talk to you in plain English, because some things have happened in this camp that are going to make trouble for everybody, trouble for me, trouble for McGuire, but more trouble for you."

THE YOUNG LADY ACROSS THE WAY

The young lady across the way says she sees by the paper that Tom Gibbons is extremely anxious to meet Jack Dempsey and it seems strange that two prominent young men of such similar tastes have never happened to be thrown together socially.

THE TOONERVILLE TROLLEY

"I WARNED THEM WHEN WE COME TO THIS OPEN SWEEP THEY'D ALL HAFTA MOVE OVER TO TH' WINDWARD SIDE TO KEEP HER BALANCED BUT NAW! THEY WOODEN LISSEN TO ME!"

SCHOOL DAYS

WHY DOUGLAS HE MENTHE! THE IDEA OF YOUR GOING TO SCHOOL WITH SUCH EARS! STOP YOUR SQUAWMING! YOU COME DOWN HERE, NOW, YOUNG MAN, OR Y'LL COME UP THERE TO YOU! I'VE A GRAND NOTION TO GIVE YOU A GOOD SPANKING!

OUCH! OUCH! STOP! STOP! STOP! STOP! STOP!

ANY TIME TODAY!

HURRY UP, DOUG!

THE STEEPLE JACK

THE GUMPS—Andy Goes Unanimous

By Sidney Smith

GEE THAT ZANDER WOMAN IS A SMART ONE— YOU CANT TAKE IT AWAY FROM HER— NATURE DIDNT DO SO MUCH FOR HER BUT ART— SHE CERTAINLY HAS A STRANGE HOLD ON ART— HER HATS— HER GOWNS— WHAT TASTE— SUCH HARMONY— BLENDING OF COLORS— LIKE A NIGHTINGALES SONG— NOT A DISCORDANT NOTE—

SHE'S NOT AFRAID TO FLIRT WITH THE JUVENILE STUFF EITHER— WHEN I MET HER LAST NIGHT IF SHE'D BEEN CRYING I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THE TEACHER HAD SCOLPED HER FOR BEING LATE TO SCHOOL OR SOMEBODY HAD STOLEN HER BOOKS— IT'S LIKE PUTTING A BIB ON THE SPHINX BUT SHE GETS AWAY WITH IT— WHEN SHE'S ALL DOLLED UP SHE MAKES THE FOLLIES LOOK LIKE UNCLE TOM'S CABIN—

IF SHE WERE A MAN WHAT A MARVEL SHE WOULD HAVE BEEN— SHE COULD HAVE TALKED A STARVING MAN OUT OF THE WHITE MEAT OF A CHICKEN— SHE WOULD HAVE OWNED THE WORLD— ALL THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN LEFT WOULD BE THE MOUNTAINS AND JUMOLEST— SAGE BRUSH ALKALI AND DEBERT—

SOMEBODY'S STENOG—She Listens In On Nelle

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By Hayward

NELLE, MISS O'FLAGE IS BUSY - DON'T FORGET TO TELEPHONE AND ASK ABOUT THAT MATTER I TOLD YOU.

LOOK AT 'NEVERSIANK NELLE' - SHE'S BEATING IT FOR THE TELEPHONE - SHE'S STEPPING TOO!

SHE ACTS QUEER LATELY, LET'S LISSEN IN ON HER!

HELLO, IS THIS THE SKOOXIX AUTOMOBILE CO.?

GOOD NIGHT - I BET SHE'S BUYING A CAR!

HOW MUCH COSTS YOUR TWO-TON TRUCK?

NO-NICK-I'M AFRAID I MUST WAIT

I'M SORRY NICK BUT I DON'T THINK YOU CARE ENOUGH

LOOK-I'VE GOT A 'PALSIX THAT RUNS SOMETIMES-I'VE GOT A LITTLE BUNGALOW-I'VE-

YES NICK-BUT IF YOU REALLY LOVED ME YOUR CHEST WOULD GO UP AND DOWN LIKE THEY DO IN THE MOVIES!

GEE FAN-YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I CARE FOR YOU-WON'T

OGEE FAN-YOU KNOW I'D DO ANYTHING FOR YOU-

LOOK-I'VE GOT A 'PALSIX THAT RUNS SOMETIMES-I'VE GOT A LITTLE BUNGALOW-I'VE-

YES NICK-BUT IF YOU REALLY LOVED ME YOUR CHEST WOULD GO UP AND DOWN LIKE THEY DO IN THE MOVIES!

PETEY—The Most Important Things Are Always Left Out

By C. A. Voight

YEP— THEY'RE YOURS— I'VE GIVEN IT UP AS A BAD JOB— I'M DONE!

YEAH, MISTER, YEAH!

— WELL, MAYBE IF I GIVE THIS GOLF THING A LITTLE STUDY I'LL BE ABLE TO PLAY NEXT SPRING— I GOT ME ALL THE DOPE I COULD FIND— THE STANCE IS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN GOLF— DIAGRAM 'C' FULLY ILLUSTRATES HOW IT SHOULD BE DONE— ETC.

— THE MASHIE-NIBLUCK PITCH AND RUN SHOT IS BEST ACCOMPLISHED BY HOLDING THE LEFT ELBOW JUST BELOW THE THIRD BUTTON ON YOUR VEST, THROWING YOUR CIGAR AWAY AND BRINGING BACK THE CLUBS BUT HALF WAY SO AS NOT TO FRIGHTEN THE BALL— ETC.

OUTSIDE! OUTSIDE!— THERE'S NOT A LINE IN ALL THOSE BOOKS TELLING HOW TO FIND A LOST BALL OR HOW TO KEEP A CADDIE QUIET— BAH!

HOW TO PLAY GOLF

GOLF MADE EASY

CONTINUED TOMORROW