"S'Matter, Pop?"

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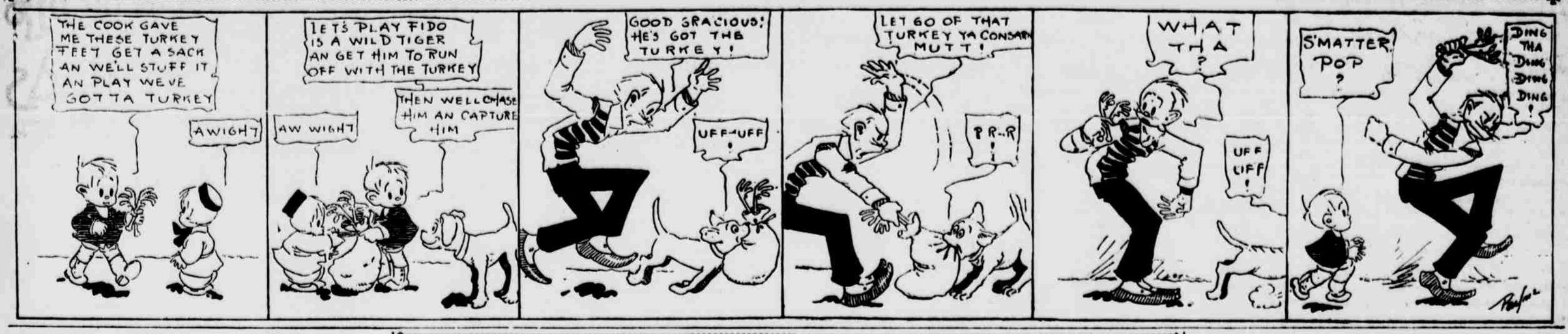
By C. M. Payne



The New Plays

"Bella Donna," With Snaky Nazimova, Poisonous Melodrama.

BY CHARLES DARNTON.

A NEW serpent of the Nile was seen at the Empire Theatre last night, when Alla Nazimova, in "greenery-yallery" colors, writhed through "Bella Donna," James Bernard Fagan's four-act version of Robert Hichens's atmospheric novel.

In getting under the skin of her part the snaky Nazimova was aided by a dressmaker with a true eye for reptilian effects. Her costumes were enough to make any man crawl. One glance at them should have convinced the trusting husband that he was sure to be poisoned during his honeymoon on the Nile. It is much more necessary in the play than in the book for Nigel Armine to suggest that love is blind. Those costumes that gleamed and glistened left him no choice in the matter.

Mme. Nazimova as Mrs. Chepstow.

Mme. Nazimova didn't trouble to remind us that the notorious Mrs. Chepstow, known as Bella Donna, was once a lady. Even before she became Mrs. Armine she was the siren pure and simple—or as pure and simple as the law governing sirens will permit. She didn't waste any time on the refinements of the role. It took only one act for this expeditious charmer to capture Nigel for her husband, much to the horror of his despairing friend, Dr. Isaacson. The second act, in the villa near Luxor, found her in the arms of Baroudi, the Egyptian with a fondness for fair-skinned, golden-haired English ladies. It was a bit odd under the circumstances to hear him call her a "white witch," since she was not only as dark as himself but wore her hair in a strange Egyptian fashion that made her distinctly Oriental. That his words should be robbed of their meaning, however, was no great loss. This was lost sight of in watching the sinuous creature dash at her lover in the ardent fashion set by Cleopatra some time ago.

Nazimova's whirling, swirling embrace in the second act, with her neck bent back to the breaking point and her arms clutching the skies after Baroudi had got a good grip on her, was picturesque, to say the least. It was quite apparent that she saw the erotic possibilities of the role. There were times when she seemed to see nothing else. But there were real flashes of temper when Dr. Isaacson came aboard the houseboat and interfered with her loving task of giving Nigel sugar of lead in his coffee. As a poisoner she was thoroughly sincere. Her best moment came, though, after Nigel had refused to believe Isaacson's story and she hissed, "You fool!" Here she was the serpent with a vengeance. After Baroudi had cast her off for business reasons and Dr. Isaacson had slammed the shutters in her face, she was like a lean hyena as she slunk off into the desert.

Neither sympathy nor interest followed Bella Donna. In this respect she suffered by comparison with Iris, in whose fate Miss Virginia Harned made us feel a great deal more than interest. "Bella Donna" may be described as poisonous melodrama. The play owed most of its atmosphere to the scene-painter. It was splendidly staged. But as drama it proved rather uninteresting. The clash between the American doctor and the Jewish specialist that holds your interest in the book didn't "play" well. The scene between Nigel and Dr. Isaacson in the last act, however, was the most effective one of the play.

Frank Gilmore as the Hon. Nigel Armine.

While Charles Bryant was English rather than Jewish as the noted doctor, he acted with dignity, intelligence and quiet force. Frank Gilmore made Nigel a pitiable object when he showed the effects of lead poisoning, but pulled himself together splendidly in calling the doctor a liar. As Baroudi, Robert Whitworth was so thoroughly Oriental that he stood out as the best of the men. A. Romaine Callender made Abraham an oily rascal, but he was not boyish enough to realize the character completely. It remained for the scenery to keep up the illusion.

Picked Up From Here and There.

A MEASURING device for X-rays has been invented.

The hens of the United States now lay about eighteen billion eggs a year.

A local preacher in a Methodist church in Japan has been made a member of the house of peers by the emperor.

Shipments of American apples to Germany have proved that the Western farmer is more honest than the Eastern.

The Austrian courts have recently affirmed the principle first established in the United States that a typewritten will is legal.

In making tons of lead pencils Europe has depended on the imports of American cedar. A firm in one German city has made 300,000,000 lead pencils a year from this cedar.

A rubber stamp to be strapped to the palm of one hand has been patented by a Minnesota man for dating eggs as they are taken from nests.

The sale of Argentine frozen meat in Switzerland is not so satisfactory as originally expected, and the large importers are now buying live cattle from that country, importing through Italy, and slaughtering there.

Reports from Germany say that the stork is disappearing. Naturalists have been investigating the cause of the stork's disappearance and peasants have been encouraged to build nests for the birds and supply them with food.

Within ten years twenty-five square miles of land around New York has been reclaimed by being filled in with coal ashes gathered in the city.

The first steam fire engine was made in 1829 in London from the designs of Capt. John Ericsson, the designer of the Monitor. The fire engine was a failure.

Many years ago, when Senator Ingalls was in the Senate, oleomargarine was a bone of contention. The debate led Ingalls to utter one of those epigrammatic sentences which made him famous. "I have never, to my knowledge, tasted oleomargarine," said Ingalls, "but I have stood in the presence of genuine butter with awe for its strength and reverence for its antiquity."

The Girl of Yesterday

2—SPINNING.

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By Eleanor Schorer

Maybe if she found herself in 1912 she would stop in her spinning and gaze awestricken and wonderingly at the marvellous gowns which are at the feet of the Girl of To-day. And to think of the long, long while it took her to have her own wishes fulfilled.

Betty Vincent's Advice

Unrequited Love.

BETTY VINCENT.

IF every girl responded at once to the young man who loves her, and if every young man knew enough to court the nice girl who has secretly fancied him, the world would be a good deal happier.

Things being as they are, the only thing to do with unrequited love is to keep it dignified. The girl whose love is not returned has a specially hard part to play, because tradition says that she must conceal her feelings. The unsuccessful masculine suitor, on the contrary, is simply supposed to put more zeal into his wooing—a task he is usually eager to undertake.

Both girl and man may console themselves with the thought that theirs is not the only tragic fate in the world. And "hope springs eternal" in the lover's heart—as it should. But no matter how unhappy you are, try not to be ridiculous.

"A. M." writes: "A certain young man who seems to like me, and whom I love, has gone away to college. He promised to write to me but has not done so. Would it be proper to send him my card as a reminder?"

No, it would be too forward, since you are not engaged.

A Peacemaker.

"M. B." writes: "My chum and the young man who is attentive to her have quarrelled. Do you think I am doing right in trying to make them good friends again?"

I think peacemaking is an exceedingly thankless task.

"A. A." writes: "What is your opinion of a young man who has paid attention to a girl for a year and then refuses to carry her umbrella when they are out together?"

He is discourteous, of course.

"A. M." writes: "When introducing a young man to a young lady should the young lady's name be mentioned first or the young man's?"

A natural form is, "Miss A., may I introduce Mr. B.?"

"S. W." writes: "A man friend and myself are invited to attend together the birthday party of a girl we know. Who should pay for the present?"

I think you should go halves.

"L. S." writes: "I have been acquainted with a young man for some time, although he has not been paying me regular attentions. I heard that he had another girl and asked him to show me a letter in which I understood she was mentioned. Was I within my rights?"

I think not, since the young man was not pretending to make love to you.

Lack of Interest.

"C. R." writes: "If you have been paying attention to a girl for two years and she seems to like your company less than she did at first, what is the best thing to do?"

I think you had better direct your energies elsewhere.

"A. N." writes: "I became engaged to a young man, but agreed to wait a year at my guardian's request. Now I have found another man whom I really do love, but the first professes to be heart broken because I have given him up. What shall I do?"

Marry the man you care for, but make sure that you know which one it is.

The Conquests Of Constance

The Calamity Croaker.

(SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR AT THE HOTEL RICH)

By Alma Woodward

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"YOU look kind of like the remnants of things," I observed.

"An' I feel worser!" she answered tersely. "I feel this morning like the last gasp uv a bean what's just struck Boston!"

"Heavens! What's happened?"

I had never heard Connie acknowledge such overwhelming defeat.

"Oh, I seen las' night what a counterfeit I wuz! I seen what MY furniture covering looks like, next to real upholstery, that's all! An' I seen how MY map an' MY bought hair stacks up against them massaged, manicured, nifty dames what smells like the breath uv a million flowers when they sift by yuh."

"Glory be!" I commented, astonished at the complete subjugation, "where've you been?"

"Las' night wuz the opening uv the opera," she began dolefully, "an' I'd heard uv that bloomin' place ever since I come to work in this joint, an' I knew they sing them classy things like that piece it takes six uv 'em to gargle in vaudeville. An' I thought I'd like to hear somethin' real kitosh fer a change; so my girl friend an' me went home early, an' my gosh, by seven-thirty we wuz diked out 'nough to knock the expression out uv any ordinary guy's face!

"Well, we takes a car an' run down there an' stand in line to buy admission—a bone an' a half to abuse yer feet fer three hours—SOME SOAK, I say—an' we get in, an' get a fine place right next to the rail. An' about twenty minutes after in comes the aces! Let me tell yuh sumthin': I never dreamed there wuz such backs in the world! Why gee, when I go low, I got to kalsomine fer an hour with skin food an' then corner the talcum market, an' even then I don't shine like whipped cream.

"But these skirts—sufferin' cats! Their backs looked like white velvet with moonlight on 'em! An' their hair all simple an' glossy an' great big waves. Yuh can't get THEM by doin' it up in celluloid curlers, three on a card for a dime! Oh, I just ached inside uv me! I guess I won't butt in no more, up in the clouds—I'll jus' stay down on the sidewalk where I b'long."

"Nonsense!" I said by way of consolation. "You, with all your conquests, talking in that strain?"

"Conquests? Yeh! But I never yet copped a real heavy swell, like them last night—an' I won't never, neither!" she added mournfully.

"The next?" I suggested, and gave her a little, rousing shake.

"The next," she repeated, indifferently, "wuz the calamity croaker. Why, say, that guy could 'a' seen trouble through a tin veil! An' just when yuh wuz having the elegantest time, up he'd spring, hoop-la, with a hark-from-the-tomb word uv consolation! He had a piece uv crape an' a bunch uv immortelles tied to his brain the whole time. An' he saw sudden death in a bowl uv gruel!

"Why, yuh know, he used to spoil my appetite so much that the waiters'd grin when we come in, cause they knew they'd get a square meal off our leavin's. I went with him for two months an' I got so's I wuz afraid uv my own shadow. I'd never cross the street without sayin' my prayers, an' I seen a POISON label on every bottle I met. Talk about the pen! Why, it ain't one, two, three with that feelin'! When yer up the river yuh KNOW they got yuh, but when yuh don't know an' SUSPECT all the time, why, it's fierce!

"Well, the end come when we wuz at a movin' picture show one night. He said sumthin' 'bout marryin' and I said 'Ye-eh?' An' then he went on to say that he wouldnt, though, 'cause when I wuz a young widow he'd be afraid some designin' man'd marry me for his two-hundred an' fifty insurance an' make me unhappy. An' he couldn't bear to see me unhappy!

"Wouldn't that palpitate yuh? With the engagement ring not bought yet? Well, it wuz the end!"

Clothes for The Autumn And Winter

THE fall and winter materials are now fully represented in all the shops by extensive and handsome displays.

The present favor shown draperies has developed a demand for goods of a soft and supple texture, and this is found in the exquisite silks and pliable woollen materials of the season.

The prevalence of pile fabrics is noticeable and there promises to be a strong demand for rough weaves in general.

The serges, however, still retain their popularity and the blues are again in favor. The browns are also strongly in evidence. There are the wood, tobacco and leather browns, as well as the tans and champagnes, and all will be equally fashionable. A nice serge can be had at $1.49, and even at 69 cents there is a good assortment. 42 inches wide. Cheviot continues in favor, and one shop is showing an armure wool cheviot in a large variety of colors at 69 cents a yard.

The whipcords are again favorites, and a navy blue, 54 inches wide, is $1.49. Beautiful two-tone whipcords, among which a brown and gold combination is especially noteworthy, are $2.97 a yard. Then there is a large line of two-tone whipcords at $2.75.

In high-class woollen dress goods the sponge cloths are popular, and other prominent fabrics are the velours and peaux de soies. The sponge cloth or sponge is $2.89 a yard. A novelty in silk and whipcord velour is $1.98, and the black and white effects are especially pretty. Wool velours are $2.79 a yard.

In one shop there is an attractive display of panne suitings, a long-haired glossy fabric that charmingly carries out the two-tone idea. This is $2.97 a yard.

Broadcloth is having a strong revival and it is being offered, "sponged, shrunk and spot-proof," in all fashionable colors at $1.98 a yard.

Ribbed effects are popular and handsome, all-wool corduroys are being shown at $2.49 a yard. The velours with narrow, sunken stripes in colors on dark grounds are very beautiful in their iridescent shimmerings, and similar effects are produced in the two-tone velveteens that are only $1.50 a yard. These are being largely used in separate skirts and suits, and, by the way, the narrow cord is preferable this season.

In coatings the chinchillas with plaid backs are the accepted fabrics this season. They are 54 inches wide and $3.69 a yard, with a wide range of colors to select from. The plain black chinchillas are $3.39 a yard.

Those who prefer the two-tone effects can secure a handsome Scotch coating in exquisite mixtures at $4.49 a yard, and many plaid back coatings can be had at $2.39 a yard.

The Coming of the Law

"THE TWO-GUN MAN'S" Greatest Novel

By Charles Alden Seltzer

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Kent Hollis, a New York newspaperman, comes to Dry Bottom to take charge of his dead father's newspaper and ranch. The law is openly defied in that region by the Cattlemen's Association, headed by a bully named Dunlavey. This association has robbed Hollis's father and made his life a burden. Hollis resolves to take up his father's fight against Dunlavey and in behalf of law and order. On his arrival at Dry Bottom his first act is to thrash Dunlavey for insulting a pretty girl. Hollis next confers with Judge Graney, the law's only local representative. The two pledge an alliance against the corrupt interests of the association. Hollis then drives out to the Circle Bar ranch, bequeathed to him by his father, and is there introduced to his four cowboys by Norton, the range boss. Norton, a few days later, shows Hollis a "crossing" at a nearby creek, and warns him to keep away from it, because Dunlavey's men have established a "dead line" there and guard the line with loaded rifles.

CHAPTER IV.

(Continued.)

At the Circle Bar.

HE made a grimace: "It's my opinion that a good many Circle Bar cattle have crossed the crick in them two places—never to come back."

He swept a hand up the river, indicating the sentinel like buttes that frowned above the bed of the stream. "The crick is pretty shallow," he continued, "but Big Elk an' the Narrows are the only two places where a man can cross in safety—if we consider that there wouldn't be any Circle Cross man hangin' around them two places. But there ain't no other place to cross an' so we don't go on the other side much."

He turned to Hollis, looking at him with a quaint smile.

"From here you can see everything that amounts to anything in this section—which ain't a heap. Of course over there are some mountains—where we was a few days ago lookin' up the boys"—he pointed to some serrated peaks that rose sombrely in the southwestern distance—"but as you saw there ain't much to them except rocks an' lava beds. There's some hills there"—pointing to the south—"but there ain't nothin' to see in them. They look a heap better from here than they do when you get close to them. That's the way with lots of things, ain't it?"

Hollis smiled. "I like it," he said quietly, "much better than I did when I came." He turned to Norton with a whimsical smile. "I suppose it will strike you as peculiar, but I've got a notion that I would like to ride around a while alone. I don't mean that I don't like your company, for I do. But the notion has just struck me."

Norton laughed indulgently. "I reckon I don't consider that you're trying to slight me," he returned. "I know exactly how you feel; that sort of thing comes over everybody who comes to this country—sooner or later. Generally it's later, when a man has got used to the silence an' the bigness an' so on. But in your case it's sooner. You'll have to have it out with yourself."

His voice grew serious. "But don't go ridin' too far. An' keep away from the river trail."

In spite of his ready acquiescence he sat for some time on his pony, watching Hollis as the latter urged his pony along the ridge. Just before Hollis disappeared down the slope of the ridge he turned and waved a hand to Norton, and the latter, with a grim, admiring smile, wheeled his pony and loped it over the back trail.

Once down the slope of the ridge Hollis urged his pony out into the level of the basin, through some deep sacaton grass, keeping well away from the river trail as advised by the range boss.

In spite of his serious thoughts Hollis had not been dismayed over the prospect of remaining at the Circle Bar to fight Dunlavey and his crew. He rather loved a fight; the thought of clashing with an opposing force had always filled him with a sensation of indefinable exultation. He revelled in the primitive passions.

He had been endowed by nature with those mental and physical qualities that combine to produce the perfect fighter. He was six feet of brawn and muscle; not an ounce of superfluous flesh encumbered him—he had been hammered and hardened into a state of physical perfection by several years of athletic training, sensible living and good, hard, healthy labor.

Circumstances had not permitted him to live a life of ease. The trouble between his parents—which had always been much of a mystery to him—had forced him at a tender age to go out into the world and fight for existence.

Before leaving Dry Bottom to come to the Circle Bar he had telegraphed his mother that he would be forced to remain indefinitely in the West, and the sending of this telegram had committed him irrevocably to his sacrifice.

He knew that when his mother received a letter from him explaining the nature of the work that required his presence in Dry Bottom she would approve his course. At least he was certain that she would not advise surrendering.

After riding for more than an hour he came to a shallow draw and urged his pony through the deep sand of its centre. On the other side of the draw the country became suddenly rocky; great boulders were strewn indiscriminately about, as though some giant hand had distributed them carelessly, without regard to their final resting place.

A lava bed, looming gray and dead under a barren rock hill, caught his attention, and he drew his pony to a halt and sat quietly in the saddle examining it. From the lava bed his gaze went to a weird mineral shape that rose in the distance—an inverted cone that seemed perfectly balanced on its narrowest point. He studied this long without moving, struck with the miraculous stability of the thing; it seemed that a slight touch would send it tumbling down.

He realized that he stumbled upon a spot that would have provided pleasure to a geological student. To him it was merely a source of wonder and awe. Some mighty upheaval of nature had created this, and he continued to gaze at it, his mind full of conjecture.

To his right rose a precipitous rock wall surmounted by a fringe of thick shrubbery. On the left another wall, perpendicular, flat on its top and stretching away into the distance, forming a grass plateau. Directly in front of him was a narrow canyon through which he could see a plain that stretched away into the unknown distance.

It was a magnificent country; he did not now regret his decision to remain here. He pulled out his watch, noting that its hands pointed to ten, and realized that he must be off if he expected to reach the Circle Bar by noon.

He sat erect in the saddle, about to wheel his pony toward the draw through which he had entered, when he heard a sharp sound. Startled, he glanced swiftly to his right, searching the immediate vicinity for the agency which had created sound in this vast silence. He stiffened slowly in the saddle, his face gradually paling.

Not over a hundred feet from him, partly concealed by a big boulder, stood a man with a rifle, the muzzle of the weapon trained fairly on him.

CHAPTER V.

The Girl of Dry Bottom.

HOLLIS was not frightened, though he was in a position that might have aroused fear or apprehension in any man's mind. He was alone, the man had him covered with the rifle, and assuredly this was one of Dunlavey's hirelings.

Hollis glanced swiftly around. Certain signs—some shrubbery that he saw through the canyon, a bald butte or two rising in the distance—told him that he was near the river. And Norton had told him to keep away from the river trail. In his eagerness to explore the country he had forgotten all about Norton's warning.

The prospect was not a hopeful one, yet Hollis could not have admitted to feeling any alarm. He realized that had the man intended any immediate harm he would have shot him down long before this—while he had sat motionless in the saddle inspecting the place. Concerning the man's intentions he could only speculate, but assuredly they were not peaceful.

For a little time the man remained motionless and Hollis sat quiet, looking at him. The weapon had not moved; its muzzle still menaced him and he watched it closely, wondering whether the man would give him any warning when about to pull the trigger.

Many minutes dragged and the man did not move. A slow anger began to steal over Hollis; the man's inaction grated on his nerves.

"Well!" he challenged sharply. "What do you want?"

There was no answer. Hollis could see only the man's head and shoulders projecting above the boulder, and the rifle—steady and level—menacing him. With an exclamation of rage and disdain he seized the bridle rein and pulled sharply on it, swinging the pony's head around. The rifle crashed venomously; Hollis felt the right sleeve of his shirt flutter, and he pulled the pony abruptly up.

"Just to show you!" came the man's voice, mockingly. "If you move again until I give the word you won't know where you've been hit!"

Hollis was satisfied—the man undoubtedly meant business. He settled back into the saddle and looked down at his shirt sleeve. The bullet had passed very close to the arm. If the man had meant the bullet for that particular spot he was a deadly marksman. In the face of such marvellous shooting Hollis did not care to experiment further. But his anger had not yet abated.

"No doubt you are enjoying yourself!" he said with bitter sarcasm. "But the pleasure is all yours. I am not enjoying myself a bit, I assure you. And I don't like the idea of being a target for you to shoot at!"

A laugh came back to Hollis—a strange, unnatural, sardonic cackle that, in spite of his self-control, caused his flesh to creep. And then the man's voice:

"No, you don't like it. I knew that all along. But you're going to stay here for seven weeks while I shoot holes in you!" He laughed again, his voice high and shrill, its cackling cadences filling the place.

"Seven weeks in Devil's Hollow!" came the voice again. "Seven weeks! Seven weeks!"

(To Be Continued.)