

# PIDGIN ISLAND

By HAROLD MACGRATH

(Continued.)

"What has happened?" she asked faintly.

"You fell and badly strained your arm. And there's a cut on the side of your head. Now, please, don't talk; keep perfectly quiet. I'm going to pull you out of this all right. The blow will go down by midnight, and early tomorrow we'll make for home. Try to sleep."

"A drink."

A strong cup of coffee was given her forthwith. She drank it greedily, but refused the buttered bread, and lay back, closing her eyes. She was so far gone in exhaustion that Cranford knew the coffee would have no other effect than to hold off hunger weakness.

He sat at three o'clock, for he had drunk three cups of coffee, for he was dead tired, and yet he must wait. Her head throbbed so that it neutralized the pain in her arm.

She kept her eyes shut, not so much to escape sleep as to avoid watching the roof revolve and the four sides of the boothhouse expand and contract. And Cranford had so many pale, careworn faces! Truth was, a bit of delirium had possession of her.

How grotesque he looked with a halo above his head and another under his chin, the effect of the contra-lights of the lanterns! "What was it she had forgotten? What was it she ought to be doing? Why had she fallen? What had really happened?"

But even as she tried to pierce the fog which seemed to oppress her, sleep footed as the snow fell upon her. She slept for four hours. When she awoke it was with clear recollection.

She saw Cranford, sleeping with his mouth open, most intolerable, his arms slumped at his sides. She knew now what she had to do. She must rise without disturbing him, steal out. Oh, the pain and misery of it! She fell back, groaning.

Brave and stoical she was, but there are some pains which wrench the cry out of us still in how we try.

Instantly Cranford was awake. "What is it?"

"My ankle!"

"Which one?"

"The right one." She set her teeth in her lips.

"Off went the shoe."

"No, no!"

But he gave no heed to her protest. He bound the stockinged foot and saturated it with warm amica remained in the bottle.

He saw the tears running down her cheeks, but he did not know the real cause of them.

"Diana! Diana! What can I do? What can I do? Poor girl! Poor girl!" Tender and sensitive, he hated the sight of pain, and to see it twist the lips of the woman he loved was doubly maddening.

"That's better. I'm all right now. Thank you."

But her thought was: She had failed, failed miserably, after all these weeks of careful planning—failed! She could not stand, let alone walk. There was as much misery in her body as in her mind.

Either she must tell him or let everything go. Why had fate brought him here? It was cruel. If only he had not followed!

Outside, under the light, Uncle Billy was putting questions to the lightkeeper.

"No. Nobody left anything with me," said the latter, shifting his corcob. "A hydroplane stopped here for an hour or so, cooked shore dinner and got out. Sensible, I call 'em. They didn't leave anything with me. One of the men limped. But I wasn't watching 'em close."

Uncle Billy sighed. All for nothing! "Why do you want 'r know?" asked the lightkeeper. His curiosity was negligent.

He was not much interested in the doings of guides and folks who wasted their time fishing.

"Oh, nothing. Miss Wynne was expectin' sumpin'. That's why we made th' light. Thought maybe they'd left it 'r you."

"None. How's the young lady?"

"I dunno. Weard."

"Pack o' fools, all of you. You've been fishin' Pidgin thirty years, and it was times you learned you can't fish here in safety. Aren't there just as many boats on your side o' the line?"

For a moment Cranford heartily wished he had not made the landing; that he had gone out where there was neither trouble nor disappointment. That she was married he had begun to accept as a fact for which, so far as he was concerned, there was no remedy. Friends.

He was an honorable man. He could still love her and be her friend, for he realized that she might need one. But his fingers continued to play through his hair, which presently stood on end in all directions.

To a rogue—married to a rogue. The thought was more bitter than death. She had been fooled, deceived, by a handsome rogue.

And she still thought enough of him to speak his name in her dreams! His fingers continued to play through his hair, which presently stood on end in all directions.

He saw her outfit coat hanging from a nail.

Lightly he stepped over the sleeping girl and reached for the coat. It was still heavy with water. He ought to have turned the pockets when he hung it up; the coat would have been half dry by now.

He regained his stool and carefully drew out pocket after pocket. He laid the handkerchief and the gloves on the gunnel of the boat. Smiling suddenly, he took the gloves, folded them wet as they were and put them into a pocket of his own.

He returned to the work. As he pulled out the inside pocket a water-soaked envelope fell out. He stooped for it. Mystery and fog were no more. There was no need to see the contents of that peculiar style of envelope. He had received many of them, postmarked, but stampless—official business of the United States customs!

Uncle Billy was up and outside long before sunrise.

The water was flat, the sky cloudless save in the low east, and not a breath of air was stirring. Thus the great emotions of nature came and go. Only one boat rode the shallow waters of the shoal—his own. Lester's was gone.

He ran down to the dock. There she was in four feet of water, her bow split like a pistol shell. He had left Lester sound in slumber, and he rather hated the task of awaking him and announcing the misfortune.

CHAPTER XV.

LESTER'S boat had broken her cable some time during the night and had pounded her nose against the dock till she had split open. No patching would ever rehabilitate the boat, but her engine might be saved, and engines were the things that cost.

All guides on the river were first class boatbuilders; Lester would have to buy nothing but material. Good old Navarre! She had ridden the storm without a scratch.

He did not return to the boathouse, but wandered aimlessly up the light. Lester's oars were gone; by this time they were far out into the lake. He saw the remains of a recent fire, a shore dinner fire, one he was certain neither he nor Lester had built. This was a cobble range, while he and Lester had portable stoves.

"By jingo! What 'r y' know bout that?" he ejaculated. Behind the pink granite boulder lay two rods in their gray cotton casings.

"Somebody's-be'n fishin' 'n' got out in a hurry. Well, well; findin' 'a keepin's. Good rods 'r always handy in these parts. Luck's with you, Uncle Billy."

In the east the Roman scarfs were becoming brilliant. Uncle Billy laid down his find, took off his clothes and boldly waded into the water.

He tugged in the boat, and the sun was up by the time he had cleaned her bow to stern, set the cushions out to dry and put the new found rods in the "pantry," as he called the extra fish box on the port side.

Lester came out, rubbing his eyes. At a glance he saw what had happened.

"Four feet o' water 'er beyond th' dock," explained Uncle Billy. "Engine'll be all right, but th' boat's gone 'r glory. Y'll haf 'r build this winter. Them two sleepin' yet?"

"Yes, they're still sleeping," answered Lester moodily. He had loved that old boat as another man might have loved a dog. For seven years it had been his faithful servant.

"I'll help y' when it comes 'r buildin', seein' 's how I'm 'r blame. But, Lester, sumpin' I ain't told y' yet. She offered me a hundred dollars 'r make Pidgin."

"A hundred dollars? Lord's name, what for?"

"I can't tell y' that. But don't you worry none. Mr. Cranford'll see that y' don't lose nuthin'. I know him. But I'm worried 'bout Miss Wynne. She's hurt. But when a plucky woman's hurt she don't holler, 'n' so y' can't tell how bad she's hurt. It ain't goin' 'r be no fun fittin' her back 'r th' farm. Th' sooner we start th' better. 'F we start right away we'll make th' farm by 9 'r so."

"I'll have to stay and get the engine out and soak her in kerosene. Come back for me this afternoon or have the bait boat come for me."

"All right. I'll do th' square thing 'n' divide that hundred."

"Coffee 'n' eggs in half an hour if you want 'em," sang out the lightkeeper from his doorway.

"Good for you!"

At 7:30 Uncle Billy, Cranford and Diana were homeward bound.

They had taken out the middle seat, so that she could lie at a considerable angle. Her head no longer throbbed, but her arm and ankle caused her excruciating misery.

So she kept absolutely quiet, and Cranford had tact enough not to pry her with questions, though the temptation was almost irresistible. In the secret service like himself and playing her woman's hand alone against as accomplished a band of rogues as ever set the Atlantic ports by the ears, and one of them her husband!

Her quietness was as much due to resignation as anything else. She was firm in the intention not to drag Cranford into these quicksands of cross purpose and treachery and dishonor.

If it had been an ordinary case, impersonal, she would have confided to him at the beginning. But it was not ordinary, it was terribly personal, and he must never, never know what lay back of it all.

If she had told him anything it must be all, and oh, she did not want him to go away, thankful for his escape. She wanted always to remain the subtle mystery, sometimes to enchain his thought in the dim future. All why had she not died in the kindly convent, with all her beautiful illusions?

They reached the farm at 9.

The two men made a hand chair for her and carried her into the parlor and laid her on the sofa.

"Why, Miss Wynne?" said Uncle Billy amiably, "but you ain't no fairy."

"She's a goddess, Billy," said Cranford.

She smiled.

Here the landlady bustled the man into the hall. Miss Wynne must be put to bed at once. Half an hour later she opened the door.

"You can come in now, but only for a moment. Billy, Miss Wynne wants you to send this telegram right away."

She gave the guide a sealed envelope. "The operator is to open it."

"Have her off 'n hour," declared Uncle Billy happily.

Everything was to turn out right. While Cranford was engaged in telling the adventure to the landlady, Billy took the opportunity to stoop and whisper to Diana: "They wa'n't nuthin' 'n' th' pesky island. Th' lightkeeper said they left nuthin' 'n' I looked, too. They ain't brung it yet." His idea of treasure was indissolubly linked with oak chests or iron boxes. "Jes' you don't worry."

"I shall be out this evening," said Cranford, approaching the sofa. "I'm going to send for the best surgeon in Watertown. I don't like the looks of those fingers."

"You've been very good to me. I'd never have made the landing but for you. You must be dead. Go back and sleep 'all day,' Mr. Cranford; then come."

"All my good friends call me Cran."

"Cran," shyly.

Cran was touched and pressed her uninjured hand and went out, followed by the guide. They got into the boat and proceeded to the village full speed.

"Cran!" murmured the girl, her gaze reaching beyond the pines outside the window, even beyond the fair, blue sky.

A man, strong bodied, clean in the mind, tender and gentle and boyish.

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### Bits of Byplay

By Luke McLuke  
Copyright, 1915, the Cincinnati Enquirer

Paw Knows Everything.  
Willie—Paw, when has a man horse sense?  
Paw—When he knows enough not to bray, my son.

Enough Is Plenty.  
Lives of great men oft remind us  
That we should control a thirst,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
This fair warning, "Safety first."

That's the Place.  
"Were you ever in New York?" asked the American who was sojourning in London.  
"I believe I did visit that city," replied the Englishman. "Isn't that the place where the cafes display signs reading, 'Walters Will Please Report Any Discourtesy on the Part of the Guests?'"

Wuff!  
The holiday man had a stern way  
Of making us heed his commands:  
He went into a clock store, and  
The poor clocks all held up their hands.

A Live Town.  
"The merchants in this place do not seem to do any advertising," remarked the stranger.  
"No," replied the editor of the local paper. "They are too busy bragging that this town has the finest cemetery in the state."

Ho, Hum!  
"Back to the farm," is now the cry,  
And yet we stay in towns and cities.  
To have a farm would be real nice  
If we could only raise the price.

Names Is Names.  
Mrs. Ura Nickel lives in Kentucky.

Sure!  
"Why do they call those noisy patterns Balkan neckties?" asked the old fogy.  
"Because they make horses balk, I guess," replied the grouch.

Things to Worry About.  
The natives of the Andaman Islands never sing.

The Editor Sings His Swan Song.  
We don't know who will succeed us,  
But we sincerely hope he will receive  
The support due him, but we fear he will not, for there are more tightwads,  
Big jacks and two faced hypocrites in  
This town than any place we ever knew.—Exchange.

Is That So!  
Dear Luke:  
Luke McLuke, you are some wise.  
Your corn fed is a darling.  
He who wins her wins a prize.  
She's much too fat 'r quarreling.  
—M. Z., New Albany, Ind.

Our Daily Special.  
An easy mark is always hard up.

Luke McLuke Says:  
The old fashioned theatrical producer who used to scour the country for plays now has a successor who forgets to scour the plays he sends around the country.

A woman who is always having things charged is always shocked when the bills come in.

Lots of men who are wearing medals for heroism haven't nerve enough to call a woman's bluff.

What doth it profit a man if he is long on prayer and yet short on weights and measures?

It is pretty hard for a man to love his neighbor when said neighbor has a rusty phonograph that plays "Tipperary," eighty-nine times a day.

When two women who haven't seen one another for five years happen to meet on the street they embrace and kiss and hang on to each other, and each tells the other how fine she looks and that she hasn't changed a bit. And then they part, and each says of the other: "Did you ever see such an old crow? She is painted and powdered and her hair is stained, but she looks as if she was a hundred years old."

Before they marry he says that she is nice enough to eat, and she says that he is nice enough to eat. And after they marry she tells him that he is a lobster, and he tells her that she is a hen.

Every time a married woman exclaims "Dear me!" her husband frisks his pockets and agrees with her. He knows that a hundred years old, and that she has to take the kisses with the scratches.

Any woman who has a fern and a canary and a poodle to care for will always agree with you when you say that a woman's work is never done.

When mother serves breakfast with her face dirty and her hair wadded into a baseball on the back of her head and wears a greasy wrapper and sloppy pair of slippers father will take a long look at the enlarged picture that hangs in the dining room and shows mother as a bride, and father will make a mental note of the fact that anything can happen in the course of time.

The faddists have started a move to make Feb. 29 a national holiday by observing it in some useful way. We know some men who could observe it in a useful way by taking a bath on that date. Once in four years is better than never.

There isn't any law compelling a man to put in four hours a day arguing about the war in Europe. A lot of people seem to think that there is such a law, and we are putting them wise.

Honest, Anyhow.  
"So you are marrying the man o' your choice."  
"Not exactly the man of my choice rather the man I could get."—Detroit Free Press.

Quite Manly.  
Mother—I'm afraid you are overeating. Tommy (keeping on)—I ain't afraid. Women get scared at things 'fore men do.—Boston Transcript.

Football claimed 16 lives in the season of 1914.

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