

# The Mascot of Sweet Star Guich

By HENRY WALLACE PHILLIPS

CHAPTER III

It was a strange scene, a scene that would have made a man of any ordinary mind stare at it with a wide-eyed wonder. The little boy, who had been the mascot of the Sweet Star Guich, was now the center of a group of people who were looking at him with a mixture of curiosity and admiration.



THE WHIRLING DEFIANCE OF A BATTLE-SMARE.

Felton, whispered the little voice. "This is the best time I ever had, even if I am sort of."

"I think you're a brave boy, Ches. Now go to sleep."

A small hand reached timidly around until it found the man's and gave it an affectionate squeeze. "Good night, sir," said Ches.

Jim lay awake, thinking dreamily, hour after the boy's regular breathing showed that he was at peace again. The man felt a tenderness for the wife so abruptly put in his care that only a lonely man can feel. He speculated about the boy's future; he wondered what kind of a man he would make. Surely, with a foundation of such courage, the better part could be brought out.

Then he wondered what Anne would say to the adoption, or rather, what advice she would give, for he felt entirely sure of her broad humanity outside of their own difference. He felt the need of her practical sense. Soon he had drifted into thinking of Anne entirely—no bitterly now, but with a steady longing. The gray light of the waning moon shined through the bonche was the true lumina for reverie. Why had he not answered her letter? Perhaps by this time—

What was that moving in the grass? He had noticed a sort of something before. He threw up his right hand in a threatening gesture to frighten the intruder away.

Instantly he got his answer, and an eye wild seemed to ruff his hair—that insistent, dry, shrilling sound that will make a man's blood turn cold if anything will, the whirling defiance of a rattlesnake.

Jim thought quick and hard, with chills and fever quivering over him and frighten the boy. He managed to slip his arm out without disturbing the sleeper. But now! There was a club around except the short sticks of the fire. A two foot stick is not the proper equipment for rattler hunting except to those born with nerves so strong that they do not hesitate to catch Mr. Crotalus by the tail and snap his head off.

Jim thought of the rope he had used for a club and made for it with his eye on the snake lest the latter should approach closer to the boy.

With a deep thankfulness for the left of the rope he returned and struck with all the strength of his big body and pounded away in a sort of crazy rage, although the first stroke had done the business. The rattler was snapped the sweat from his brow as he looked down at the still writhing reptile.

"My God! What might have happened if the boy hadn't waked me?" he thought. The suspicion of the river rose in him rampant. "I believe that kid's going to bring me good luck," he said. "Darned if I don't. Well, I could stand some."

He took up the body of the rattler on a stick and heaved it far away, then lit his pipe.

"I don't think I care for any more sleep tonight," he laughed. "Like Ches, it ain't that anything will hurt me out here, but I'm everlastingly scared."

He watched the night out, reveling in his enjoyment of the mystery of the coming morning, that phase of the day which never ceases to be unreal and which calls out of the wretched sentiments and emotions he is a stranger for the rest of the day.

The sun hung on the sharp point of Old Dog Tooth like a portent before he woke the boy.

Ches was all amazement for a second, then he gave a glad cry.

"Good! You still here, ain't yer? No pipe in dis?" He looked all around him. "Say, dis is a realer treat'er up or place, ain't it?" he remarked. "Dis is der scene where der villain al-most gits der gent wild der sword if der stage-mannecher didn't send sum-ter ter help 'im out."

Jim laughed at the sophisticated infant. "You der best believe in the theater much, then, Ches?"

"Aggh!" replied Ches. "If it ain't seven it's seven on der stage, but it's mostly craps in der street."

"Well, son, there are such points on the show," admitted Jim. "That let's have something to eat and we'll feel better."

Ches rustled around after sticks in his funny, angularly active style, singing a song the while from the gladness of his heart. It was a merry song about mother showing going down the bank's path of phthisis pulmonalis and sister, who has, one is led to believe, taken to small bottles, small

# TRIAL BY ORDEAL.

The Farce Called Justice That Siam Used to Play.

TESTS OF FIRE AND WATER.

The Accused and the Accuser Each Had to Face the Same Kind of Music, and Whichever Way the Case Was Decided the Judges Were Winners.

The modern methods of justice in civilized Europe do not include trial by ordeal, but in the east it is still a recognized means of proving an accused person's innocence or guilt. In a country like Siam, now so closely in touch with western influences, the ordeal by fire was practiced a generation ago.

This is the oldest form of ordeal in Siam, as in any country. When preparing for the ceremony two trenches were dug side by side. They were each about ten feet long, two feet wide and two feet deep. These were filled with layers of red-hot coal to a depth of ten inches. The plaintiff, or accuser, walked over one fiery path and the defendant over the other. In order to prevent the parties from unduly hurrying over their tasks rods were placed across their shoulders, and certain of the officials leaned heavily on these, one at the end of each rod. In reality they partly defeated their own ends, for the great pressure of the horny soles of feet unused to boots somewhat quenched the fire beneath them. When the walk was completed the soles of the feet were examined in order to detect any burns or blisters. This examination was repeated every day for fifteen days, and at the end of that time the man who showed no signs of being hurt in any way was adjudged the winner. During the course of the trial the judge sat in a specially erected and gaily decorated pavilion, where they feasted royally, the expense of which had to be defrayed jointly by the persons engaged in the lawsuit.

It happened more than once that the rods failed to make any impression on the feet of the competitors. In such cases they were both compelled to undergo another trial by means of the water ordeal. If both parties got singed, then they were both held to be guilty of something or other, and so they were both punished with heavy fines.

The water ordeal is a kind of diving competition. The spot chosen was either a large, deep pond. The law insisted that the spot must be one where the water was clear and cool and free from rocks and mud. In the middle of a river there was to be no strong current. The preliminary preparations were simple and consisted in driving two tough poles into the bed of the pond or river for the competitors to take hold of on their descent. These poles were placed about ten feet apart. Before the actual trial took place a cockfight was held, in which the two birds were supposed to represent the two litigants, and the result of this preliminary contest was held to be ominous of the results that would attend the serious trial.

This was never omitted, because the spectators, who were assembled in hundreds to watch the event, always treated it as a kind of holiday and gathered largely on the issue of the day; hence the cockfight was a sort of guide to them in their speculations. The two persons next addressed themselves to their protection and help, each beseeching them to help to win the trial and each promising gifts and offerings should he be successful.

Then they stepped into the water until it reached up to their necks. They were hampered by heavy cloths similar to those sometimes worn by Chinese prisoners. Bound their wrists were bracelets of unspun thread, which had been blessed by the priests and which were considered to possess a protective charm against all adverse influences. Finally each one had a strong rope fastened to the issue of the waist by means of which he could be hauled out of the water, because when both men were possessed of great breathing capacity it sometimes happened that after prolonged immersion the competitors were too much exhausted to get themselves out of the water.

When all was ready a horizontal pole was placed across the shoulders of each person, and at a given signal from a metal gong the two poles were simultaneously depressed by the off-clas, and so the two heads were thrust under water. The divers gripped their wooden stakes and grimly held their heads under the surface of the river until one or both found themselves in danger of immediate suffocation. The man who remained under the water the longer of the two won the day. The trial was subject to a time limit.

In certain cases diving by proxy was allowed, and then a general search was made for able and willing substitutes. There is a story extant of a young man in the London Tatler, of how a Persian trader quarreled with a Burmese about some commercial fraud. The Burmese engaged as his representative the champion diver of the district, but the Persian outwitted him by employing as his substitute a professional pearl diver from the Persian Gulf. In 1882 this form of trial was in vogue in the north of Siam.

There are but three classes of men—the retrograde, the stationary and the progressive.—Lester.

Petulant Tennison.

Tennison was one of the most fortunate of poets in that he was rarely criticised adversely, yet Mr. Henry Steiner, who saw him often while his plays were in course of production at the Lyceum, said that he used constantly to complain of the attacks made on him. He actually wound up one day by declaring that he often wished he had never written a line.

Antimony.

Antimony was first extracted from the ore in 1400 by a monk.

A Wearisome Walk.

At Sheffield, England, in 1850, Richard Manks walked 1,000 miles in 1,000 hours, commencing each mile at the beginning of each hour. He was completely exhausted at the expiration of the task, and for a time it was thought that he would die, but he finally recovered his strength.

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A magazine article is entitled "What It Costs to Fly." A good deal must depend, however, on your taste in tombstones.—Denver Republican.

Aviation as a science commands a sincere respect that can hardly be accorded to aviation as a sport and a public diversion.—Washington Star.

There are at least two vital objections to death by aeroplane. It serves no purpose, and it no longer brings distinction to the victim.—Topeka Capital.

Don't Wear a Truss

It will not sit comfortably, no matter what it costs, it will do you more harm than good. A truss that won't stay in its place under all conditions you can get your body into should be thrown away at once. It can never be depended upon and is sure to fail you at a critical moment. We sell a truss at \$2.00 that we guarantee under all conditions to positively retain the most complicated form of rupture painlessly. This truss is neither clumsy nor uncomfortable about the body, and wears well. All our fitting is done by an expert and our stock is most complete in every surgical requisite.

Town Topics.

"Prepayment era" is what they call the pay as you enter vehicles in Boston. How very Bostonian!—Pittsburg Gazette-Times.

New York has shipped 25,000 Bibles to San Francisco. Nobody in New York has any use for Bibles—Milwaukee Sentinel.

As the time has passed when the Chicago river had a sun baked crust which could be walked upon, it needs bridges.—Chicago News.

Court Rulings.

A Wisconsin case has decided that a husband must furnish his wife with false teeth if she wants them, but he is under no obligation to lend her his.—Charleston News and Courier.

A court advises wives who would keep their husbands to prepare a little surprise dish for their lords and masters every day. Sometimes the surprise dish is the last straw.—New York Herald.

Trust Thrusts.

The lumber trust now goes to the judicial plating mill.—Lafayette Courier.

Cast a bread crust in Wall street and it'll come back watered.—Washington Star.

It costs the country \$845,184.56 in two years to trust bust, but the trusts look the least busted.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Proverbs.

The honors of genius are eternal.—Latin Proverb.

All sunshine makes the desert.—Arabian Proverb.

Cheerful company shortens the miles.—German Proverb.

He hurts the good who spares the bad.—French Proverb.

A determined heart will not be counselled.—Spanish Proverb.

Of two evils the one that attacks conquers the other.—Portuguese Proverb.

African Rivers.

All the rivers of Africa have remarkable peculiarities. They seek the ocean that is farthest away from their source. Their course is always broken by falls, and their mouths are stopped by numerous sand banks.

Grindstones.

If a grindstone be left exposed to the sun the side kept uppermost by the weight of the handle will harden and the wheel will be ground out of a true circle.



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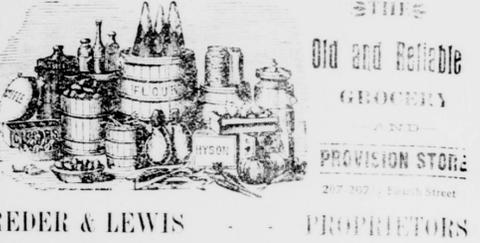
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