

THE CITY OF TIMBERED DAYS

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THE MIDWAY

SYNOPSIS.

Chief engineer of the Niquola dam, goes out from camp to a strange light and finds an... party camped at the canyon... meets J. Wesley Cortwright... Genevieve, of the auto... explains the reclamation work... Cortwright sees in the project... money. Brouillard... to make money. Brouillard... to the flint... Genevieve that the engineer... down and hook himself if the... well covered. Cortwright... company and obtains government... to furnish power and material... dam construction. A busy city... about the site. Steve Massin... to start a gold rush if... does not influence President... to build a railroad branch to the... an easy market for... "Little Susan" mine... the company's promoter... from orders from Washington... turns over the plans for the... installation.

intuition. "He means to give you the casting vote? He will build the extension if you advise it? Then it will lie in your hand to make us rich or to keep us poor," she laughed. "Be a good god-in-the-car, please, and your petitioners will ever pray." Then, with an instant return to seriousness: "But you mustn't think of that—of course, you won't—with so many other and greater things to consider."

"On the contrary, I shall think very pointedly of that; pointedly and regretfully—because your brother has made it practically impossible for me to help."

"My brother?" with a little gasp. "Yes. He offered to buy my vote with a block of 'Little Susan' stock. That wouldn't have been so bad if he hadn't talked about it—"

"When Mr. Ford comes you must forget what Stevie said and what I have said. Good-by."

An hour later Brouillard was closeted in his log-built office quarters with a big, fair-faced man, whose rough tweeds and unbrushed soft hat proclaimed him fresh from the dusty-dry reaches of the Quesado trail.

"It is your own opinion that I want, Victor," the fair-faced man was saying, "not the government engineers. Can we make the road pay if we bring it here? That is a question which you can answer better than any other living man. You are here on the ground and you've been here from the first."

"You've had it out with Cortwright?" Brouillard asked. And then: "Where is he now—in Chicago?"

"No. He is on his way to the Niquola, coming over in his car from El Gato. But never mind J. Wesley. You are the man I came to see."

"I can give you the facts," was the quiet rejoinder.

A smile wrinkled at the corners of the big man's eyes.

"You are dodging the issue, Victor, and you know it," he objected. "What I want is your personal notion. If you were the executive committee of the Pacific Southwestern, would you, or would you not, build the extension? That's the point I'm trying to make."

Brouillard got up and went to the window. When he turned back to the man at the desk he was frowning thoughtfully, and his eyes were the eyes of one who sees only the clearly etched lines of a picture which obscures all outward and visual objects.

"The picture he saw was of a sweet-faced young woman, laughing through her tears and saying: 'Besides, the railroad is coming; it's got to come.'"

"If you put it that way," he said to the man who was waiting, "if you insist on pulling my private opinion out by the roots, you may have it. I'd build the extension."

During the strenuous weeks when Camp Niquola's straggling street was acquiring plank sidewalks and getting itself transformed into Chigringo avenue, with a double row of false-fronted "emporiums" to supplant the shack shelters, Monsieur Poudreaux Bongras, late of the San Francisco tenderloin, opened the camp's first counter-grill.

Finding monsieur's name impossible in both halves of it, the camp grinned and rechristened him "Poodles." Later, discovering his dual gift of past mastery in potato frying and coffee making, the camp gave him vogue. Out of the vogue sprang in swift succession a cafe with side tables, a restaurant with private dining rooms, and presently a commodious hotel, where the food was excellent, the appointments luxurious, and where Jack—clothed and in his right mind and with money in his hand—was as good as his master.

It was in one of Bongras' private dining rooms that Mr. J. Wesley Cortwright was entertaining Brouillard, with Miss Genevieve to make a harmonizing third at the circular table. The little dinner had been a gustatory triumph. Nevertheless, when Miss Cortwright had gone upstairs, and the waiter would have refilled his glass, Brouillard shook his head.

If the millionaire saw the refusal he was too wise to remark it. He was still the frank, outspoken money-maker, hot upon the trail of the nimble dollar. Yet there was a change of some kind. Brouillard had marked it on the day, a fortnight earlier, when (after assuring himself morosely that he would not) he had gone down to the lower canyon portal to see the Cortwright touring car finish its second race across the desert from El Gato.

"Of course I was quite prepared to have you stand off and throw stones at our little cob house of a venture, Brouillard," the host allowed at the lighting of the gold-banded cigars. "You're the government engineer and the builder of the big dam; but you can't build your dam in one day, or in two, and the interval is ours. I tell you, we're going to make Mirapolis a

buzz-hummer while the daylight lasts. Don't you forget that."

"Mirapolis?" queried Brouillard. "Is that the new name?"

Cortwright laughed and nodded. "It's Gene's name—'Miracle City.' Fits like the glove on a pretty girl's arm, doesn't it?"

"It does. But the miracle is that there should be any money daring enough to invest itself in the Niquola."

"Why, bless your workaday heart, Brouillard," chuckled the host, "nothing is permanent in this shuffling, growing, progressive world of ours—absolutely nothing. Some of the biggest and costliest buildings in New York and Chicago are built on ground leases. Our ground lease will merely be a little shorter in the factor of time."

"So much shorter that the parallel won't hold," argued Brouillard.

"The parallel does hold; long time, small profits and a quick return. You've eaten here before; what do you pay Bongras for a reasonably good dinner?"

Brouillard laughed. "Oh, Poodles. He cinches us, all right; four or five times as much as it's worth—or would cost anywhere else."

"That's it. He knows he has to make good on all these little luxuries he gives you—cash in every day, as you might say, and come out whole before you stop the creek and drown him. When we get in motion we're going to have Alaska faded to a frazzle on prices—and you'll see everybody paying them joyfully."

"And in the end somebody, or the final series of somebodies, will be left to hold the bag," finished Brouillard.

"There needn't be any bag holders, Brouillard. Let me put it in a nutshell: we're building a cement plant, and we shall sell you the output—at a good, round price, I promise you, but still at a lower figure than you're paying for the imported article now, or than you will pay even after the rail-



"If You Insist on Pulling My Private Opinion Out by the Roots, You May Have It. I'd Build the Extension."

road gets in. When our government orders are filled we can afford to wreck the plant for what it will bring."

"That is only one instance," objected the guest.

"Well, Bongras, here is one more," laughed the host. "And our power plant is another. You made your little kick on that to Washington—you thought the government ought to control its own power. That was all right, from your point of view, but we beat you to it. Now the reclamation service gets all the power it needs at a nominal price, and we're going to sell enough more to make us all feel happy."

"Sell it? To whom?"

Mr. Cortwright leaned back in his chair and the sandy-gray eyes seemed to be searching the inner recesses of the querying soul.

"That's inside information, but I don't mind taking you in on it," he said between leisurely puffs at his cigar. "We've just concluded a few contracts: one with Massingale—he's going to put in power drills, electric ore cars, and a modern equipment generally and shove the development of the 'Little Susan'; one with a new mining syndicate which will begin operations at once on half a dozen prospects on Jack's mountain; and one with a lumber combination that has just taken over the sawmills, and will install others, with a planing mill and sash factory."

Brouillard nodded. The gray eyes were slowly hypnotizing him.

"But that isn't all," continued the promoter. "We are about to incorporate the power plant as the Niquola Electric Power, Lighting and Traction company. Within a fortnight we'll be lighting Mirapolis, and within a month after the railroad gets in we'll be operating trolley cars."

The enthusiast paused to let the

information sink in, also to note the effect upon the subject. The noting was apparently satisfactory, since he went on with the steady assurance of one who sees his way clearly.

"That brings us down to business, Brouillard. I don't mind admitting that I had an object in asking you to dine with me this evening. It's this: we feel that in the reorganization of the power company the government, which will always be the largest consumer, should be represented in some effective way; that its interests should be carefully safeguarded. It is not so easy as it might seem. We can't exactly make the government a stockholder."

"No," said Brouillard mechanically. The underdepths were stirring, heaving as if from a mighty groundswell that threatened a tidal wave of overturnings.

"We are going to make you the government director, with full power to investigate and to act. And we're not going to be mean about it, either. The capital stock of the company is ten millions, with shares of a par value of one hundred dollars each, full paid and nonassessable. Don't gasp; we'll cut a nice little melon on that capitalization every thirty days, or my name isn't Cortwright."

"But I have no money to invest," was the only form the younger man's protest took.

"We don't need your money," cut in the financier with curt good nature. "What we do need is a consulting engineer, a man who, while he is one of us and identified with us, will see to it that we're not tempted to gouge our good Uncle Samuel."

Brouillard smoked in silence for a full minute before he said: "You know as well as I do, Mr. Cortwright, that it is an unwritten law of the service that a civilian employee of the government shall not engage in any other business."

"No, I don't," was the blunt reply. "Supposing your father had left you a hundred thousand dollars to invest instead of a debt of that amount—you see, I know what a load your keen sense of honor is making you carry—suppose you had this money to invest, would your position in the reclamation service compel you to lock it up in a safety vault?"

"Certainly not, but if the department should learn that I am a stockholder in a company from which it buys its power—"

"There wouldn't be a word said—not one single word. They know you in Washington, Brouillard, better, perhaps, than you think they do. They know you would exact a square deal for the department even if it cost you personal money. It's your duty and part of your job as chief of construction. And we'll leave the money consideration entirely out of it if you like. You'll get a stock certificate, which you may keep or tear up or throw into the wastebasket, just as you please. If you keep it and want to realize on it at any time before you begin to put the finishing forms on the dam, I'll do this: I'll agree to market it for you at par. Now let's quit and go and find Gene. She'll think we've tipped ourselves under the table."

"One moment," said Brouillard. "I couldn't serve as your engineer, Mr. Cortwright, not even in a consulting capacity. Call it prejudice or anything else you please, but I simply couldn't do business in an associate relation with your man Hosford."

Cortwright had risen, and he took his guest confidentially by the button-hole.

"Do you know, Brouillard, Hosford gets on my nerves, too? Don't let that influence you. We'll let Hosford go. We needed him at first to sort of knock things into shape; it takes a man of his caliber in the early stages of a project like ours, you know. But he has outlived his usefulness and we'll drop him. Let's go upstairs."

Late in the evening Brouillard passed out through the cafe of the Metropole on his way to his quarters. There were a few late diners at the tables, and Bongras, smug and complacent in evening regalia, was waddling about among them like a glorified head waiter.

Holding the engineer for a moment at the street door, "I'll been wanting to h-ask you," whispered the French man with a quick-fung glance for the diners at the nearest of the tables, "doze flood—when she is coming M'sieu Brouillard?"

"When we get the dam completed."

"You'll bet money h-on dat?—h-ah de money you got?"

"Why should you doubt it?"

"Moi, I don't doubt nothing! I make de grass to be cut w'ile de sun is shine. But I'll been hearing somebody say dat maybe-so dis town she grow so fas and so beeg dat de government is not going to draw her."

"Who said that?"

"I don't know; it is bruit—what you call rumour. You hear it h-on de avenue, in de cafe, h-anywhere you go."

"Don't lower your prices on the strength of any such rumor as that, Poodles. The dam will be built, and the Niquola will be turned into a lake with the Hotel Metropole comfortably anchored in the deepest part of it—that is, if it doesn't get gay enough to float."

"Dat's jus what I'll been thinking," smiled the little man, and he sped the parting guest with a bow that would have graced the antechamber of a Louis le Grand.

Do you believe that Brouillard will permit himself to be seduced by Cortwright's smooth form of bribery? Does Brouillard understand Cortwright?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

BIG OIL LEASE SUIT IS FILED

LENZBURG-CRICHTON CO. SUES
ATKINS INTERESTS FOR AN-
NULLING CONTRACT.

1665 ACRES ARE INVOLVED

It is Alleged at Time of Sale Defendants Had Already Breached Contracts With Their Respective Lessors in Bossier.

Shreveport—

The Lenzburg-Crichton Oil and Gas Company, incorporated, has filed suit in the Shreveport district court against H. E. J. W. W. S. H. and Herbert Atkins for judgment rescinding a contract of May 4, 1915, whereby the petitioners purchased large oil and gas leases on lands in Bienville, Webster, Red River and Bossier parishes, paying therefor the sum of \$40,000, of which \$15,000 was paid by a promissory note of June 9, 1915, payable by May 1, 1916, with 8 per cent interest, the remainder of the price being paid by the issuance of 250 shares of capital stock, the certificates being issued to J. W. Atkins at a value of \$25,000 par value.

It is alleged that at the time of the sale and transfer to petitioners of the lease contracts, the defendants had already breached contracts with their respective lessors on the lands in Bossier, 1,665 acres, by failure to comply with certain contractual requirements, thus forfeiting the contracts, annulling title to the leases and creating a paramount outstanding title in the original lessors, amounting to an eviction of petitioners, who claim that at the time of their transaction with Messrs. Atkins they were not aware that defendant had neglected to comply with resolatory conditions. When petitioners learned this and tendered quarterly payments to the lessors of defendants, the lessors refused payments and denied petitioners the right to develop. Petitioners claim that the leases in Bossier are worth more than those of the other parishes combined, and had they known of the forfeiture of rights by Messrs. Atkins, they would not have contracted with defendants. Because of failure to title to the principal part of the consideration, petitioners claim to be entitled to have the sale and contract of May 4 rescinded, and to have returned to them the \$15,000 paid on the deal and also the 250 shares of stock, and, in default of a return of the stock, judgment for \$25,000, the par value of said stock.

STATE HAPPENINGS.

Judge R. E. Hingle of Pointe-a-La-Hache in open court decided the injunction suit instituted by J. C. Tanzmann, an orange grower of Baton Rouge. Citrus canker was discovered in his grove by the citrus canker inspector and his grove guaranteed. A number of trees were ordered destroyed. Tanzmann objected, claiming that the trees could be saved and took out an injunction in the Judicial District Court. Judge Hingle dissolved the injunction and the sheriff served the writ on him.

Indicating their stand for progress,

citizens of that portion of Acadia parish north of Crowley, being the Fourth ward and portions of the adjoining wards, by an election have just authorized a \$30,000 bond issue for drainage. This provides nearly all the parish with serviceable drainage, thus enhancing the value of the lands very much and placing the roads high and dry.

Orange growers of Point-a-La-Hache

report the best crop that their groves have produced in several years, and the fruit is remarkably large for the season. The hurricane of last September seemed to have killed all of the white flies and scale on the trees. But few cankerous trees were found by Professor Garrett in this parish.

Hope for constitutional amendments

being effected by a four-fifths vote of both branches of the legislature, instead of by popular vote of the people, died, when senate judiciary B committee, by a four to one vote recorded an unfavorable report on Senator Harper's bill providing for such change in amending the organic law.

Strong opposition having developed

to the bill of Senator Brown, of Jackson, to amend the senatorial district act, his measure will be withdrawn, the bill provided that Ouachita and Caldwell comprise one senatorial district and Jackson, Winn and Grant another. Ouachita and Winn are now in the same district.

Chas. A. Holcombe, of Baton Rouge,

candidate for Congress, gave out a written statement, in which he announced his withdrawal from the race for Congress from the Sixth district. This leaves two candidates, Amos L. Ponder, and ex-Gov. J. Y. Sanders.

W. D. Ector of Shreveport, brother-

in-law of Governor Pleasant and a prominent young man of the Quee City, will become first assistant in the state treasurer's office, under Henry Hunsicker.

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A Texas Case

Mrs. J. E. Ansley, 904 Taylor St., Waco, Texas, says: "I was miserable with kidney trouble and my back got so bad, I couldn't rest. Mornings, I felt unfit for any kind of household work. I also had headaches and dizzy spells and was very nervous. Nothing did me any good until I used Doan's Kidney Pills. They acted quickly and continued use cured me."

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