

The Ring

By
H. M. EGBERT

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"And you start for West Africa tomorrow?"

Bransome felt that the question was like an unwritten doom. He looked at Mary Starr in the moonlight as they stood outside Colonel Starr's conservatory.

Bransome had known Mary for five months. Colonel Starr, in whose regiment he was now a captain, had taken a liking to the young man when they were posted in Malta, and had invited him to his home in England. Now Bransome, with the acting rank of major, was to leave for West Africa to put down the rebellion of the Kru tribe in the recesses of the forests. And he loved Mary.

But he knew that she was engaged to Lionel Travis, the politician, agent among the Kru, who had made his escape to the coast after sanguinary fighting.

Yet they loved, and love was stronger than honor at that moment. They gravitated toward each other, and stood looking at each other, not daring to speak lest they betray themselves.

"If I meet Travis—" began Bransome at length.

"Yes?" Her word was like a caress.

"What shall I tell him?"

Mary took the solitaire from her finger. "Give him this," she said softly.

Bransome, incredulous, clasped her in his arms and their lips met. "You love me, dearest?" he murmured.

"I have loved you since we met. It is wrong, but it is better than a marriage that shall wrong Lionel and myself, too."

Before Bransome departed it was understood that they were engaged. And Lionel Travis' ring, reposed in Bransome's pocket to be handed to the agent if they met. Bransome would affect ignorance of the contents of the little box. It was a cruel mission, but there was no way of getting a letter to Travis, who might be in any part of the coast.

Bransome called the following day, and fifteen days later, arrived with his regiment at the coast town. All the interior was in a ferment. The regiment was sent up hastily to the base, where it halted while the pioneers cut roads through the forest. And it was there that Bransome met Travis.

He was to accompany the column as political delegate to the loyal tribes. The two men, who knew each other, greeted each other warmly, though Bransome naturally showed something of constraint. Travis lunched in the mess, and they smoked their cigars together afterward. When Travis rose to depart to his quarters Bransome spoke of Mary Starr for the first time.

"She asked me to give you this," he said, handing her the little box containing the ring.

"Thanks!" said Travis indifferently, and slipped it into his pocket.

The column started a day or two later, Travis accompanying it. Often the men exchanged words. Bransome would look curiously at Travis, but he could gather nothing from the agent's inscrutable countenance.

There was, however, little time for thinking. On the sixth day the enemy's stronghold was sighted. The messenger who went forward with a summons to surrender was met with defiant shouts from the negroes. Half an hour later the seven-pounders opened fire on the rebel stockade.

A fusillade from elephant guns followed, but few of the attacking party were hit. Presently the guns ceased; a breach had been made in the strong walls, built of hardwood logs and almost as resistant as cement and mortar.

The regiment spread out in line. Bransome ran before them, waving his sword. "Advance!" he shouted.

Then he saw Travis beside him in his civilian clothes. The agent's white solar helmet made a splendid mark for an enemy. "Go back, you fool!" Bransome shouted.

But Travis ran beside him, and Bransome had no time for argument. The whole line followed, with fixed bayonets, roaring behind him. The bullets chattered among the trees and cut splinters from the boughs. Showers of leaves came down.

The yelling, defiant Kru mauled the walls of the breached stockade. The assaulting party was compelled to form into column to mount the breach. And now the enemy displayed its secret resource, nothing less than an old brass ship's gun, which might have done good service in the sixties, and was none the less effective here, a roaring detonation, and grape shot

burst among the British troops. They fell in heaps, cut down by the well-directed charge.

But the gun was, of course, not a quick-firer, and had to be reloaded. The troops closed up. Bransome, who had by some miracle escaped unscathed, put himself at their head again. "Advance!" he shouted.

And again he was conscious of Travis in his white helmet, cool and smiling, beside him.

It was a mad rush toward the walls. Just as the foremost man set foot in the breach the cannon roared again. The files were swept away. And again Bransome found himself unharmed.

"Now, boys!" he shouted, amazed to find that he was still alive.

The attacking party, which had recoiled, heaped one man against his neighbor, and the dead all about, rushed forward, cheering. Like a cataract the khaki-clad column swept over the breach, driving the dogged negroes before them, pinioning them with the bayonet. In a moment the fort was carried.

From hut to hut the flying Kru were pursued. They fell in writhing heaps, their own gun turned against them. For perhaps half an hour the bloody struggle lasted. Then the British were in possession of the village.

Bransome stopped; he had forgotten everything in the excitement of the battle. His sword was bloody, and yet he could not remember having struck down a man. A trickle of blood was running down his face. He limped from a slug in his leg that he had never felt.

"Where's Travis?" he demanded of his surviving captain.

The agent could not be found. Yet it was Travis who represented the majesty of the British raj, and it was Travis who must interview the trembling old king, now a prisoner in his own mud hut, guarded by a sullen, defiant chief wife, and a younger one, who held the royal red parasol over him.

Bransome went back, searching among the fallen. Travis was not in the town; he was not anywhere within the fort. Bransome came upon him at last just outside the breach. He had been struck down by a dozen slugs from the brass cannon the second time the weapon was discharged. Travis lay under a pile of dead Kru, but he was alive. He recognized Bransome.

Bransome hailed the stretcher-bearers and had two men place him upon a stretcher and carry him into the town. They brought him to the king's hut, and Travis pronounced sentence. The king was to go in exile to the coast, to spend the last of his days there.

The surgeon came up, looked at the agent and shook his head. "There may be a chance for him," he said. "Get him out of here. Put him in a hut that hasn't been used. There's smallpox everywhere among the Kru."

Travis did not catch smallpox, but it became clear, after a week of delirium, that he was dying. His mind grew clear toward the end. He motioned to Bransome to open the little satchel he carried with the government papers.

Bransome did so and found in it the little box containing Mary's ring. He looked at Travis and saw that the agent's eyes were fixed upon it. He put it in Travis' hand.

With fingers that almost failed him Travis slowly pulled off the cover and held up the diamond ring. It was incongruous to see the gem sparkling in the dying man's wasted hand. Travis motioned to Bransome to bend down.

"The engagement ring I gave her," he whispered. "She is as true as gold, old man."

"Yes," agree Bransome.

"We were to have been married when this cursed business was over. Now we shall never marry. I want you to marry her, Bransome. You're about the only man that's fit for her."

Bransome winced and tried not to show the emotion on his features. But Travis was too far gone to see anything except the face of Mary Starr that floated before him.

"I wrote to her telling her how I longed for her in the silence of the brush," Travis whispered. "I said I had looked at her photograph and her mementos again and again. I wanted something else to bring her vividly before my eyes. And she—she sent me this. Nothing could have been a truer pledge of her love. A girl doesn't like to part with her engagement ring, Bransome."

"No," Bransome agreed.

And the irony of the situation struck into his soul. Travis had lived in the belief that his sweetheart was true to him, and he would die not knowing what the return of the ring meant.

They buried him the following dawn under a cairn of stones. And Bransome, having done his duty to the dead, allowed his thoughts to turn toward the living. The past seemed obliterated—at least it seemed to be symbolized in the gem that sparkled in the dead hand under the damp soil of Africa.

Ancient Fortification.
An ancient fortification, declared to be more remarkable from an engineering viewpoint than the pyramids of Egypt, has been discovered in the Andes, according to G. W. Monkell, a member of the Yale and Geographical society expeditions to Peru, who has just returned to this country. He said the archeologists had discovered apparent evidences of a pre-Aztec civilization, which flourished about the eighth century. Excavations made 45 miles from Cuzco, Peru, revealed the fortification. It is an enormous edifice, composed of stones weighing thirty and forty tons, which had been transferred from a quarry across a river and carried up a steep slope.

Somewhat Different.
Friend—Congratulations, old man. Author—Congratulations! What for?

Friend—Why, the paper, in referring to the initial performance of your new play, says there were numerous calls for the author.

Author—Yes, but it was a typographical error. The calls were for the police authorities.



WORKING AT THE SOLDERING BENCH



BLACKSMITHS AND FARM WORKERS

SUPPLIED with artificial limbs, thousands of maimed soldiers are learning new trades so they can make a living

GRIPPLED and wounded soldiers, after leaving the hospital, have to undergo a long and laborious process of training in order to again fit themselves for their former occupation, or, if necessary, to learn some other trade. This preparatory stage involves a number of national problems and representatives of the various industries have been working hand in hand with the medical profession in order to obtain the best possible results.

Their principal aim is that wherever possible men who have become partially disabled through service at the front be fitted to resume their former duties where they have acquired valuable practical knowledge and skill in their work and no efforts are spared in order to have the men return to activity as speedily as possible, before their limbs have become stiffened, thus making adaptation more difficult. The medical practitioner, as Herr Probst, director of a Dusseldorf factory, plainly put it in a recent lecture, "should to some extent become an engineer, while the works manager, under whose care the hospital is placed should acquaint himself with orthopedy."

This difficult task has been solved in an exemplary manner at the workshops conducted by Herr Probst, where an "intermediate hospital" has been founded, a sort of intermediary stage between the hospital and the factory, utilizing industrial labor as a curative agent for the treatment of patients, so that the latter, of their own accord, adapt themselves to normal factory work.

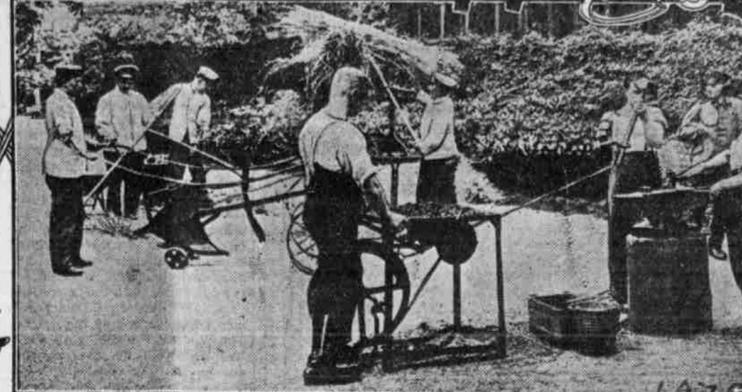
The patients received at this unique hospital are expected to submit to the regulations of the factory, where they are placed under the supervision of a sergeant. After ascertaining the kind of work formerly done by each patient, he is given his present task. The doctor has to fix the time when the man is to commence his duties, the daily work at first starting with a few hours each day, then a half a day and as his strength and proficiency increase to a full day.

For hygienical reasons patients at the hospital wear blue-white clothes, and on entering, their task is stimulated by a fortnightly pocket-money allowance, to be taken off the regular salary paid out on leaving the hospital. After each day's work the patients are examined by the doctor, and if necessary, spend some time in the medicinal

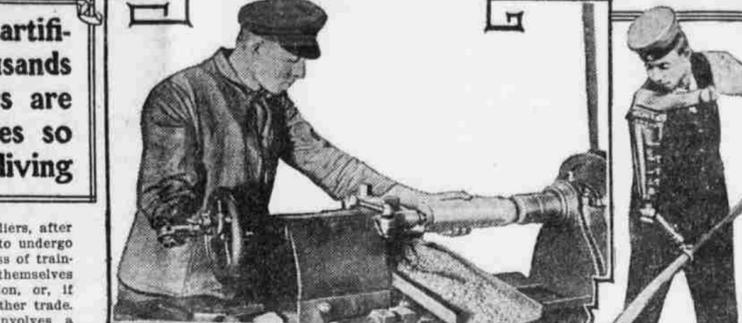
hall under the care and guidance of trained nurses and the sergeant.

Another establishment of the same kind, though operated on a more elaborate plan, is the society hospital "Flora," which has been

How Germany Helps Her War Cripples



BLACKSMITHS AND FARM WORKERS



RUNNING A TURNING LATHE



WAR CRIPPLE SHOVELING COAL

provided with extensive and well equipped workshops by a factory owner of the same city, Herr Emil Jagenberg, who is the inventor of an improved artificial arm, which not only increases the capacity and working efficiency of injured soldiers, but also very materially increases the output of artificial limbs. The construction of this artificial arm is of steel and weighs but one and three-quarter pounds.

Immediately below the stump is a ball-joint of steel arranged so that it can be clamped and adjusted in any desired position. Another ball-joint similarly arranged is at the wrist. The lower fitting is so short as to allow considerable force to be brought to bear on the work, while its mobility and adjustability enable the attachment to be used for an endless variety of purposes, even in case the whole arm up to the shoulder should be amputated, the patient will still be able to perform a great range of operations. After the day's task is completed this "working arm" is detached and replaced by a regular pleasure "Sunday arm."

The patients at these hospitals are not long in recovering their self-confidence and their working capacity increases daily. No patients are discharged until a suitable position has been obtained for them where they will be able to perform their duties in a satisfactory and proficient manner, which greatly increases the assurance of the patients and makes them self-supporting.

AN EXPERT MACHINIST

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terialistic view found support in the fact that practically none of our memories is ever lost, but all can be removed under suitable conditions and by proper means. Our memory is potentially almost perfect.

We should all strive to improve the memory as much as possible, for upon it our very personality depends. If we had no memory we could have no feeling of "self"—no feeling that we are the same self we were yesterday. And if we did not have this feeling we should be "lower than the animals." We may improve the memory by paying strict attention to what is being said or done, and by trying to associate it with as many other things as possible which have interest for us, for it has been said that "association is nine-tenths of memory." The more we forget the more we tend to forget, and the more we train the memory the better it becomes. Like all else, it improves with practice and habit.

Forgetting is at times very awkward; it leads us into all sorts of social inconveniences. We forget a name, an address, a word when we wish most to remember it. These acts of forgetfulness seem at first perfectly erratic and spontaneous; they seem to follow no law and are subject to no fixed rule.

So, then, when we forget a name or thing—or by some error of speech or writing give another word for the right one—we can nearly always find out why this should be so and uncover the actual process involved by a careful analysis of the previous trains of thought and action. We forget because we wish to forget. It is a well-known fact that we tend to forget unpleasant events more readily than we do pleasant ones. That is because of this fact—because, in one case, the memory is repressed, and in the other it is not.

WISDOM OF PAW.
Little Lemuel—Say, paw, what is the street-cleaning department?

Paw—It's the place where they explain to the dissatisfaction of taxpayers why the streets are not cleaned, son.

Some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and the rest try to thrust themselves upon it.

For National Park Service

A bill is under consideration in congress to establish a national park service. The federal government owns fourteen national parks, with a total area of nearly five million acres, all under the jurisdiction of the department of the interior. It also owns thirty-one national monuments, of which nineteen are in the department of the interior, ten in the department of agriculture and two in the war department. Under existing arrangements the administration of these splendid recreational possessions. Each of the fourteen national parks is now under separate management. It is very desirable that these parks be administered through a general bureau at the seat of government in Washington.

There is a constantly increasing volume of travel to the national parks, and it is necessary that there should be one central organization which may furnish reliable information attractively prepared for the benefit of tourists to the parks. Under the existing order of things very little systematic work in this direction has been possible. With a national park service, equipped with facilities and a competent corps of workers, there might be developed a fine bureau of information, supplying to the general public the things it wants to know about its parks and monuments. It is to be noted in this connection that Canada, through its department of parks, has so thoroughly exploited its several national parks that during the season of 1915, when there was such a large volume of travel through the West, the Canadian parks attracted in the aggregate more visitors than the parks of the United States, thus affording a fine illustration of what the government in exploitation of its recreational areas can do.

How to Keep a City Clean.
To make a city cleaner and neater and to substitute beauty for ugliness is to enhance the value of both public and private property. As to public property, this work can be easily controlled. But the city authorities can be expected to act only on the insistence of the general public. Unfortunately, however, no matter how careful a city may be about structures erected on public property, the general effect of street and open places may be spoiled by ugliness in surrounding structures and private property. Billboards, signs, ugly, garish or unkempt buildings, buildings out of repair, untidy yards and vacant lots—all may counteract whatever the city may do to make public property attractive. The only way to keep the city neat and to make it look as though it were really self-respecting is for all citizens to co-operate in insisting on private as well as public neatness and attention to good design.

From the Report of the City Plan Commission, Newark, N. J.

An Observation.
"Are you going to take boarders next summer?" asked the postmaster. "I dunno," replied Farmer Cornatose. "I know some folks who would like a nice quiet place." "Yes. But all most of them people want with a nice quiet place is to jump in an 'fill it chock-full of their own particular brand of noise."

Sad Results.
"The doctor says James has water on the brain." "There! I told him this prohibition fight would set his crazy."

FROM FAR AND NEAR

Next to the Australians, the Americans are the greatest meat eaters. The United Kingdom is the wool grower and the United States is the wool consumer.

Over 500,000 people die of communicable disease each year in the United States, and over 5,000,000 are sick as a result of infection.

A Frenchman has perfected a horizontal windmill with the vanes so shaped that nine-tenths of them utilize the force of the wind no matter in what direction it is blowing.

India annually exports about 1,000,000 pounds of fish maws and shark fins for edible purposes, mainly to other oriental lands.

In the British army a battalion of 1,016 men requires for its daily rations 635 two-pound loaves, 127 pounds of bacon, more than 21 pounds of salt and nearly 13 pounds of pepper, to mention only a few of the items.

In order to release for military service many of the men now engaged in the electrical industry, the Electric Contractors' association of Liverpool, England, has decided to train a number of women in electrical work.

Sheepdogs are free from tax in the United Kingdom.

The average adult inhales about one gallon of air a minute.

The Australian commonwealth has the sweetest tooth of all the countries in the world, its annual per capita consumption of sugar being 103 pounds.

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HOME TOWN HELPS

FAULT IN CITY PLANNING

Standardization of Streets Can Be Carried to Excess, as California Journalist Points Out.

One of the greatest follies practiced in modern city-building, particularly where the topography is broken in character, lies in standardization of streets, more especially regarding the width, says the Los Angeles Times.

The writer lives on a "cross street," that is, one crossing at right angles a main thoroughfare—Avenue Sixty-four—that carries at least several hundred times as much traffic as the one first noted, yet the widths of the two are the same. The one is three blocks long, "blind" at each end, having no possibility of a direct outlet at either extremity. The other is the main highway from Los Angeles to Pasadena by way of Colorado street, and to Eagle Rock by the same "feeder."

There is no question but a greater width is needed on Avenue Sixty-four, as is the case with scores of streets similarly situated. It is equally certain that the crossing streets are twice as wide as need be. The miserable parkways are but 42 inches wide, an area so restricted that good street tree growth is impossible. Every property owner with whom the writer has talked on the subject would be pleased to have several feet on each side added to the parkway, yet majority does not rule, even in Los Angeles. No traffic is seen on such streets except the daily routine of the milkman, baker and vegetable peddler. Yet the width is the same as that of the one great highway running through the district.

The case cited is used merely because the writer has intimate personal acquaintance with it, having resided on this specific street for ten years. No personal grievance inspired this article, for the residents on the street have never sought to have it changed. All concede a widening of parkings, with a correspondingly narrower driveway, would make a more beautiful street, give it a more pleasant aspect, allow of fine parkway gardening, etc. But did they know that when the street is to be paved the cost of the useless strips of width in paving would pay for the change and new curbs, they might petition the proper officials to make such change. As all streets are of the same width, and all at right angles as well, the planning and platting of such districts may safely be turned over to our children. And some of the latter would be better than their parents.

Economy in Fireproof Qualities.

While fireproof qualities and permanence of materials are items apparently increasing the cost of the new house, the home-builder will find in the end that economy lies in these qualities; and applying the old adage of the chain, his house will be as lasting as its weakest part.

Hence the ratio between the life of different materials should be considered and permanence in the walls of a building should be duplicated in its foundations and roof. As for instance: a house of brick to be consistently permanent, requires concrete or stone foundation, and a slate roof.

The depreciation of a house of this type is said to be about 1 per cent a year, reckoning its life to be 100 years.

But the permanency of materials is not restricted to brick alone, and that frame houses can be constructed to last 100 years, though not immune of course from the accident of fire, is typified in the numerous frame houses of historical interest standing in a state of good preservation throughout the country.

Among these are the old Cushing house at Higham, Mass., built in the early part of the eighteenth century; the Wadsworth house in Cambridge, built in 1728, and the Fairbanks house in Dedham, probably the oldest house in America, built about 1636.

White pine was used extensively in these houses, which fact is testimony to the lasting qualities of that wood.

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