



# A FOUL VILLA'S MEN

by Capt. George B. Rodney

SYNOPSIS.

Automobile of Miss Dorothy Upton and friend, Mrs. Fane, breaks down at New Mexico border patrol camp, commanded by Lieutenant Kynaston. The two women are on way to mine of Miss Upton's father, located a few miles across the Mexican border. Kynaston leaves women at his camp while he goes with a detail to investigate report of Villa gang runners. Villa troops drive small force of Carranza across border line and they surrender to Kynaston. Dorothy and Mrs. Fane sit at camp when Kynaston returns with prisoners. Blind Mexican priest appears in camp and claims interred Mexicans have in the spoils brought across the line a wonderful emerald bell stolen from a shrine by Zapata and taken from him by Carranza troops. Priest is searching for the emerald in order to return it to the shrine. Kynaston finds jewel and reports to department headquarters.

Cupid is almost sure to have his way when a brave and handsome army officer comes to the aid of beauty in distress. In this story, with its bizarre setting and unusual characters and situations, love unfolds rapidly and hotly. Lieutenant Kynaston and Mrs. Fane and Dorothy are engaged in a little emotional whirlwind.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

"I shall have to notify department headquarters about it and send it up there. I have no authority to give it to anyone and I'm sorry to say I can't keep it.

"Padre," he went on to the old priest, who was standing with outstretched neck listening to such words as he could understand. "I think we have recovered your bell, but I shall have to hold it for you until I receive orders from my superiors telling me what to do with it. In a matter of such importance I do not consider myself justified in acting without orders—Hello! There comes another automobile up the road."

Dorothy stared up the road, presently she sprang upon a great bowlder and waved her veil at the oncoming machine.

"It's father!" she called back excitedly over her shoulder. "It's father! We shouldn't have to wait after all for the chauffeur to get back."

Kynaston laughed frankly at her look of dismay as she realized how what she had said must sound to the young cavalryman.

"I'm sorry you're so anxious to get away so soon," Miss Upton. I'll go and give your father a hand with his machine."

Mr. Upton needed no help. He ran his machine up to the bottom of the slope and swinging out came forward with outstretched hand.

"Breakdown, eh? I'm glad it happened where you could help them. Kynaston. You never met my daughter before, did you? You girls will know enough to take my advice next time. I'll take you on now, and the machine can wait till the man gets back.

"If you ever get a chance, Kynaston, come over to the Santa Cruz mine. We'll be glad to see you. What are you going to do with all your plunder that I see here?"

Kynaston told him that he would have to send a messenger that night to the nearest telegraph station with a dispatch asking what to do with the valuables that he had captured.

"In the meantime," he added, "I suppose I'll have to sit on the bell here, if it is as valuable as the padre says."

"What bell?" Kynaston and Dorothy explained together.

"Let's see it!" cried Mr. Upton excitedly.

So Kynaston for the second time that morning unwrapped the mass of dirty rags and displayed to the wondering eyes of the miner the green glories of that wonderful bell. Upton drew his breath hard.

"I've heard of it all my life down here in Mexico, but I never believed it. I wonder if it can be bought from the shrine?"

He asked the question of the priest. The old man shook his head emphatically.

"There be many things, son, that money cannot buy and this bell is one of them. It was the price of a life—Montezuma's life, that was afterward taken by his own subjects, so it is said, at the time the Spaniards held the city of Tenochtitlan. Money cannot buy it, son. I trust to the well-known honor of the American to restore it to the shrine."

"You shall wait here with me, padre," said Kynaston sympathetically. "I'll hear from headquarters, and then I will set you on your way—What? Going?"

For Upton was holding out his hand, and Mrs. Fane and Dorothy were waiting to say farewell.

He watched the whirl of the red dust down the road, reflecting sadly on the fact that all the pleasant things

of life are transitory. And through his thoughts there glinted the shimmering gold of Dorothy Upton's hair. Suddenly breaking off his reverie, he turned to the first sergeant.

"Send a man to the nearest telegraph station," he ordered. "I've got a message for headquarters."

Within a few minutes the man was rapidly trotting off on his twenty-mile errand. Kynaston spent the next two hours in chat with the old priest, who was a golden talker. So the moments passed quickly till the rapid drumming of hoofs on the trail told of the return of the messenger.

He handed Kynaston a letter. "I got the adjutant general himself, sir, and he answered right away."

Kynaston tore open the envelope and read:

Kynaston, Cavalry—Keep possession of valuables till officer arrives to receipt to you for it. He will come tomorrow. Jophson, Adjutant General.

"Thank goodness, that will take the responsibility off my shoulders," he commented as he swung a couple of the heavy Navajo blankets over the extra cot to make a resting place for the old priest, who sank heavily to rest.

Kynaston passed out of the tent to see to his horses.

CHAPTER III.

Gone!

A little later Kynaston sent a corporal with two men and a led horse to the railroad, ten miles away, with instructions that after the officer came they should wait till moonrise before starting back. After seeing the little party start he took refuge in his hammock. Pipe in mouth, he lay watching the night drop down over the purpling hills.

The old padre felt his way painfully out of the tent that Kynaston had assigned for his use, and very laboriously made his way to the tree, guided by the purring of Kynaston's pipe.

"When dost thou expect thy visitor to arrive, my son?"

"Should be here an hour after the moonrise, padre," said Kynaston.

"But, son, moonrise means nothing to a blind man who never sees it."

"Well, padre, it means that in about four or five hours the officer who has been sent to receive the stolen articles will arrive. When he does come it will be 'up to him,' as we American say, about giving back to you the bell that you have traveled so far to get. Won't you be seated?—and we'll talk till he shows up."

With a word of thanks the old man sank into the reclining chair which the officer pushed forward.

In the course of that long talk, punctuated by the purr of his pipe and the heavy breathing of the over-baked earth, Kynaston learned much, for he was an apt pupil.

He learned of heavy-footed wanderings over hot plains and well-nigh trackless mountains; of nights spent in the waterless desert, with only the yelping of the tireless coyotes for company.

"I beg the lieutenant's pardon, sir, but there's horses comin' up the trail."

It was the observant trumpeter who spoke. Kynaston, obedient to the summons, laid down his pipe and walked down upon the flat. He now plainly heard the horses come quickly up the rocky trail. Within a moment or two they pulled up before the camp, and he went forward to greet an officer who dismounted swiftly and introduced himself.

"I am Major Updyke, Mr. Kynaston. The general sent me down here to relieve you of part of your embarrassment. He also requested me to take a look over your camp and your location. He is under the im-



Peered at Him With the Intent Look of the Blind.

pression that with an affair of this importance happening here you should have a larger force.

"He is reluctant to send an entire troop of cavalry here because that will make it necessary to send a captain in command, and he has been so favorably impressed with the way you have handled the situation since you have been here that he does not wish to supersede you if it can be avoided. I may add that he suggested to me that I should drop you a hint to the effect that he wanted you to know that he appreciates the manner in which you have conducted affairs during the past six months."

Kynaston flushed warmly. Words of appreciation are rare in military life, where the efficient performance of duty is assumed. Neglect or dereliction is a rarity. But the present department commander believed that just as a commanding officer should be quick to reprimand, so also he should not be chary of appreciation. The result was that his subordinates were more than willing to work themselves to a shadow to carry out his faintest hint.

"You see, Kynaston," went on the staff officer, "we have had several hints to the effect that attempts were being made to smuggle money across the line, so when your telegram came the general sent me off hot foot. How many of these prisoners are there?"

Kynaston told him. "And three pack-mules. Where did they come from?"

Kynaston answered briefly, and followed his report with an account of the priest's arrival and the discovery of the valuable emerald that had set two continents agog three hundred years before.

"So you see, sir," he concluded, "I couldn't properly turn the thing over to the priest, though I believe his claim is correct and just."

"Ever hear of him before?" asked Major Updyke sharply.

"Never, sir. Why?" "Nothing. It just occurred to me that in order to obtain possession of a jewel like that almost anyone would or could tell an interesting yarn. Have you ever been in Trocanto—didn't you say that's the name of the place the man says he came from?"

"Trocanto, yes—no, I've never been there. And I've never heard of it either. How about you?"

"Same." "Of course," Kynaston hesitated, "that actually proves nothing."

The staff officer laughed. "All the same," he cried, "I'm glad I came down here, if you were really so worked on by the old fellow that you thought about giving the stone to him. You'd have found yourself in a pretty pickle if you'd let him have it, and then a claim had been made by your prisoners that you'd taken the stone. It would have cost you your commission, or at least—"

"Like to see the stone, sir?"

"Of course I should, but I'd like even better to have a drink and something to eat."

Kynaston produced his last bottle, and, bidding his "striker" improvise a supper, sat chatting with his visitor till the meal was ready. When Major Updyke was through and had rolled a cigarette, the youngster sent a trumpeter to give his compliments to the priest and to ask him to come to the tent.

The old padre, hearing the summons, came slowly from his hot little tent and picked his way painfully across the stones of the trail.

"I heard thee asking for me, my son. I am here."

"This is the priest I was telling you of, sir."

Major Updyke shook hands with the old man, who peered at him from under bent brows with the peculiarly intent look of the blind. The padre seated himself for a moment upon a great rock, clasping his hands loosely across his knees.

Presently, in answer to a question, the old man began to talk, and for an hour the staff officer sat, an interested listener, while the old man made his appeal for the restoration to his shrine of the priceless jewel that Kynaston had taken the day before.

"But the proof, man, the proof! Thou must understand, padre, that American law, upon whose justice we pride ourselves, requires proof. How canst thou prove that this stone is indeed the stone that thou hast described? What is that, Kynaston? It sounds like firing breaking out in the south-east."

It did sound like rifle firing. The low, thunderous, reverberating crackle that they knew so well brought every man out of the encampment as a stick in the tea-hole of a hive brings out the bees. Kynaston and Major Updyke ran to the top of the low hill back of the camp; here they had a good general view of the land.

"It must be another party, sir, in trouble again. Wait till I get my glasses; we can see more with them." So for a long half hour they sat and watched. The sound of the firing grew fainter and fainter, and finally died away, only to break out again and again as the two officers were about to leave the hill.

Men make their little plans and talk about will-power making a way—and then destiny, or fate, or luck, comes along and scrambles the situation beyond recognition. An untoward movement, a heedless step, and a man's career is wrecked. What do you make of the distant rifle firing?

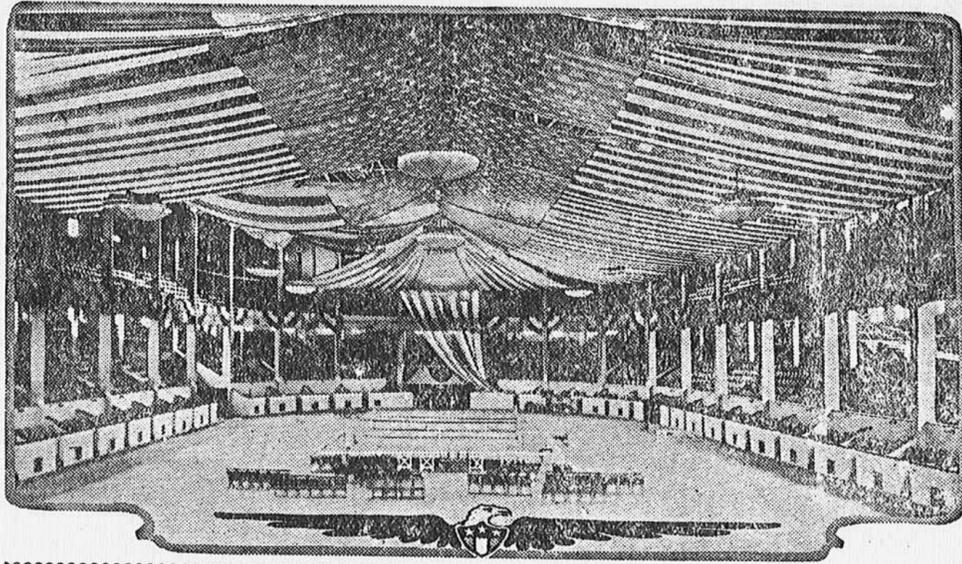
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Men of sense sometimes make cents out of nonsense.

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William F. McCombs is chairman of the Democratic national committee.

MARTIN H. GLYNN



Martin H. Glynn, former governor of New York, is temporary chairman of the Democratic convention.

PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON



Sure Sign of Age.

A sure sign of advancing age is that the circus elephant isn't nearly as big as he used to be.