Jungle Breath

by Ben Lucien Burman

THIS HAS HAPPENED:

Lincoln Nunnally, elderly American chemist, is summoned to Porto Verde, in Brazil, where he encounters an old friend, Vilak who has sent for him.

Vilak's cousin, Elise Marberry, an American girl, owns a coffee plantation near Porto Verde. The day Nunnally arrives Tony Barbetta, one of Elise's foremen has been hit on the head with a club in the hands of Limey Potts, another foreman. Vilak believes that it was something besides the blow of the club that killed Tony. He believes Gaylord Prentiss, a reticent and forbidding man, is involved in Tony's and other mysterious deaths. Vilak induces Nunnally to visit Prentiss' house that night. On the way to Prentiss' they sight a party of natives working on a railroad. Nearby is a fire, though the night is hot. Nunnally regards this as strange.

NOW BEGIN THE STORY.

CHAPTER IX.

Their presence had been noticed. One of the laborers, who appeared to be a sort of foreman, walked behind a dilapidated freight car on a siding. He reappeared in a moment, followed by an immaculately white-linened individual, whose bearing immediately marked him as the chief. His skin was dark, but it was the tan that comes from long exposure to the tropical sun; his face was well molded, the nose long and thin, the mouth sensitive and small. On his upper lip was a small, carefully trimmed mustache. He was obviously a white man, and judging by the blackness of his hair and the perfection of his intonation, a high caste Portuguese.

He bowed politely to the visitors. "You would wish something, cavalhieros?" he asked. His manner was unmistakably that of one who could be as much at ease at some stately reception in one of the European capitals as here with twenty-five section hands in the jungle of Porto Verde.

"Nothing, cavalhiero," Vilak replied with equal urbanity. "We merely ride, see the torches, and walk over to look. You come to protect the tracks from the rising river?"

"Yes, senhor. We come from Avilos." He pulled a leaf off a palm tree and began fanning himself. "At Avilos there is fear that the floods will be very bad. Many they think the great dam will burst. I hope it is not so. It is not pretty, a flood. Nor cheap. It costs us on the railroad much money. Many, many reis. And it is not a great railroad which runs only a few hundred kilometers to the coffee plantations and the Englishmen's mines in the mountains. Nor is it rich. Each year in the rainy season we come. Here I will raise a track, there I will make strong a bridge, here I will drive a pile. And perhaps shall I start to survey a new line, one which shall go from Porto Verde to Santo Crato. They talk of this, but yet I do not know."

"Do you think you will be here long?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "Two weeks, a month perhaps. I cannot say. There is much to do."

An altercation broke out between two of the laborers driving a stake. One of them jerked out a knife. The Portuguese hurried over. Coolly, quickly he snatched it away; the argument ended. "They are troublesome, my villains," he said, as he returned to the visitors. "No worse are there in all Brazil. But on the railroad we take what we can."

Vilak offered him a cigaret. The other took it. They chatted amiably a moment, then the two Americans left. They remounted their horses and rode up the narrow lane which led to the higher ground above the town and the parasol pine marking the fatal occurrence of the afternoon. Reaching the tree, they dismounted again and tied their horses.

All about them was a darkness almost Stygian, but though there was little light, the variety of sound was infinite. Here a swelling brook murmured and by its murmur repeated the story of a possible flood; there the pecova whispered as its great flat leaves rubbed against one another in the wind; there a screech owl called shrilly as it swooped through the dense woods ahead; there a fallen twig rustled under the weight of a coral snake stalking its nightly prey. As the chemist's eyes grew acustomed to the darkness, he could make out the opening in the thorn thicket which his companion had told him led to Prentiss' fazenda. "Are we . . er . . turning . . in here?" he whispered.

Vilak nodded. "We are. Button up that second button of your raincoat. And put on that glove as I told you. Keep it on."

Nunnally obeyed slowly. "I insist . . er . . insist. Why is it necessary? On a night like this . . stifling. Yes . . stifling."

"It's an ounce of prevention. Death's lurking everywhere about here in forms that I don't know. What I've asked you to do may help protect you."

They turned into the path. Towering trees rose as gloomy sentinels above the tangled jungle, while the mats of vines and creepers swinging from the topmost branches showed like gigantic spiderwebs against the sky. The path continued thus wooded for a quarter of a mile, then light showed ahead and they emerged on to the shore of a small lake. Directly before them the land fell rather sharply to a creek, then rose to an elevation on the other side where several similar expanses of water sparkled in the moonlight.

"These are a few of the lakes I was mentioning to you," Vilak whispered. "If it were daylight you could see the brickwork where some of them have been dammed up. This is the section that Prentiss' father developed and that the quarrel was all about. After old Prentiss died the place was deserted—for about ten years, I think. Until young Prentiss came back and occupied it. That's the house down there." He pointed to a shadowy structure below them on the other side of the creek.

They descended the embankment on which they stood, reached the creek, and crossed it, carefully picking their way over the wet stones. They saw two faint glimmerings of light which, as they moved forward, they perceived came from two small stone lamps burning smokily over the gate of a high stone wall. "Why has he the . . . lamps?" the old man asked. "And they're singular lamps. Yes . . er . . singular."

Vilak did not answer. He was interestedly looking between the heavy iron bars which formed the massive gate to the dwelling a few hundred feet beyond. They could see it clearly now, a long, low building, its flatness broken by three short squat towers. Even in the moonlight its dilapidated condition was apparent. A fourth tower near the front had fallen and, bringing down the surrounding walls, had left a gaping hole as though the structure had suffered an operation at the hands of an unskillful surgeon. Half the windows were broken and nailed up with boards. One wing was entirely in ruins, only a few broken boards remaining to mark its walls.

There were few signs of decay, however, about the wall through whose gates they were peering, a wall which, massive and lofty, apparently completely encircled the neglected residence. It was so old that in places it was almost obliterated by dense growth of vines. But there were no gaps, no bulges indicative of weakness in the ponderous stones which formed it; there were as securely fixed to one another as when they had first been set there by the mason years before.

The detail, however, which caught the chemist's attention, was the barbed wire fencing, which had been newly fastened to the top of the wall to a distance of three or four feet above it, meshed so closely that it would have barred the way to any creature larger than a squirrel. The bars of the spike-tipped gate, of the same height as the wall, were protected in like manner. Two heavy iron crossbars showed along the inside.

"It's a . . er . . fortress. A positive fortress," the old man murmured. "Has he all this merely to . . er . . . keep out . . er . . keep out visitors?"

"If you ask me another question in the next ten minutes I shall be put to the unpleasant necessity of sending you home, my dear Nanny," Vilak declared, as he began examining the gate. "If I knew the purpose back of the recent improvements on this wall, I wouldn't be here investigating. Incidentally, this is the place where the mastiff came out and attacked Elise. Be on your guard. I'll agree with you that this is an excellent wall. Old Prentiss put it up. He was an eccentric old devil. Like father, like son. Though in those days there was some need for a wall like this. Even wilder here than it is now and it was a very definite protection. Every house of consequence had something of the sort.

"Seems to me they still need walls as far as any improvement in the population goes. Old Prentiss in particular had to have something to keep out unwelcome visitors. He was always getting into trouble with the natives or his European neighbors, or even the government. Almost stood a siege here once, I've heard. The son had that new wire put on about two months ago, shortly after Elise's first visit to him. Had it sent up from Rio. Must have cost a good bit of money."

He bent over, ran a finger along the edge of the ponderous gate, and gave a grunt of satisfaction. "Thought I might find it. Two copper wires concealed here so that when the gate opens an electric circuit is broken, probably ringing an alarm bell in the house. Good job. Tremendous gate, this. He's spread the story that the barbed wire all about here is carrying a high voltage current. I might believe it, except for the fact that the only respectable dynamo in the neighborhood is on Elise's plantations and I know he's not getting power from that. Still he might have rigged up something. We'd better be careful."

He withdrew a small wire from his pocket and began to pick the massive lock. As he did so, the brush on the other sidem of the creek cracked loudly. Both men started.

(To be continued.)

He withdrew a small wire from his pocket and began to pick the massive lock.

Coat Frock Symbolizes Spirit Youth

Paris Endorses New Lightweight Woolens

By ANNETTE

All the smart young set are choosing the slim silhouete coat frock in wrapped treatment.

It combines tones of brown, yellow and white in lightweight tweed, important colors of Spring.

It's sportive and so absolutely wearable fo rstreet, office or travel.

It's quite modern and emphasized by plain woolen applied band trim at neckline and down surplice front. The border effect in pointed outline at upper edge is exceptionally smart.

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Style No. 172 comes in sizes 16, 18, 20 years, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust. In the medium size, it requires 2½ yards of 39-inch material with ¼ yard of 35-inch contrasting for trimming bands and belt.

It adapts itself splendidly to wool jersey, faille silk crepe, covert cloth, suede finished broadcloth and crepe satin.

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Write your name and address plainly, giving number and size of such patterns as you want. Enclose 20c in stamps or coin (coin preferred; wrap it carefully) for each number, and address your order to Wilson Pattern Service, 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto.

Famous General Is Active Chief

Lord Byng Asks Power to Raid London Night Clubs at Any Hour

London—Clubs in the "metropolitan district," especially night clubs, are proving an increasing source of worry to the metropolitan police. They have increased in number from 1,285, in 1921, to 1,823, in 1928. Before the licensing commission Norman Kendall Assistant Commissioner of the metropolitan police, outlined a plan formulated by Lord Byng, chief commissioner and head of Scotland Yard, which would strengthen the law by giving the police the right to enter any club at any hour.

Byng had suggested, according to Kendall, that when it was believed irregularities were occurring in any club, such as sale of liquors after hours, the police should be able to enter at any time and take the names and addresses of the persons, and also to arrest any person refusing such information, or any person who was believed to have given a false name and address. he police should also have power to seize the club's books and any liquor they found.

Kendall emphasized that such regulations would not interfere with the comfort and privacy of the legitimate club. "Well conducted clubs need have no fear they would be liable to capricious or offensive invasion," he assured the commission. He declared the police, unless granted these powers, must continue the practice of using "informers," a practice hated by the police and condemned by the public.

The commission is considering the suggestion. Since taking office as chief of the metropolitan police in 1928, Lord Byng has made an especial drive upon night clubs guilty of infractions of law..

RUMOR

Rumor is a spark at first, then a fire, then a conflagration, and then ashes; it is like a swarm of bees, the more you fight them the less you get rid of them.—H. W. Shaw.

Minard's—The Great White Liniment

England's Anxiety

The permanent unemployment of more than one million people is the most ominous problem England faces to-day. So declares "Augur" in the Fortnightly Review (London). For a few years the country clung to the illusion that the danger was a temporary one, he points out. But now everybody knows it is permanent. While foreign affairs have ostensibly filled the foreground, he goes on to say, in reality England's chief anxiety has been unemployment. The standard of living in England, we are advised, is menaced by unemployment. In this connection the greatest danger of all is said to be the fact that "there are already hundreds of thousands of men and women, out of work for years, who are content to take the official dole as the supreme end of their ambition." This slipping back into a state comparable with that of cattle going to the trough, this writer alleges, is more dangerous to the race than if unemployment had bred revolution. Revolutionaries, it is argued, at least have red blood in their veins, not sterilized water.

A DAY'S THOUGHT

If, invisible ourselves, we could follow a single human being through a day of his life, and know all his secret thoughts and hopes and anxieties, his prayers and tears and good resolves, his passionate delights and struggles against temptation, we should have poetry enough to fill a volume.—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

A RULE

There is a rule which we think would make all men constant, whatever their natural bias; and that is, in trifling services, as in great things, never willingly to disappoint a just and reasonable expectation.

How violently do rumors blow the sails of popular judgments. How few there be that can discern between truth and truth-likeness, between shows and substances!—Sir P. Sidney.

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'Fresh from the gardens'

Lignite Analysis Looks Encouraging

Department Report Hopeful of Possibilities for Exploitation

In a report on the non-metallic mineral resources of Ontario issued by the provincial department of mines, the result of analysis of lignite coal from Blacksmith Rapids gives an encouraging view of the possibilities of exploiting the 600,000,000 tons of lignite in this area.

"The deposit at Blacksmith Rapids is the only coal deposit in Ontario so far located which gives promise of becoming commercially important. "Lignite is found on the Mattagami river, but no seam of economic size or purity has been located. Ontario is and always has been dependent on imported fuel or on coke, part of which is imported and the remainder manufactured in the province from imported bituminous coal.

"The results of analyses and tests in the samples submitted show that the possibilities for its use, either as mined, as partially dried material, or after carbonization and briquetting treatment, are good," read the report. "Tests on a larger scale than those yet available are necessary before a definite opinion can be expressed as to its relative economic value. Other requirements of more importance, however, are a knowledge concerning the extent of the deposits and the comparative cost of mining, and whether or not there is a ready market close at hand.

T. and N.O. Extension

Premier Ferguson's announcement of the decision to extend the T. & N. O. railway from Coral Rapids to Blacksmith Falls makes the result of the analysis of Blacksmith Falls lignite coal of immediate importance, in the opinion of Queen's Park officials.

"In color the coal in question is not unlike that of air-dried peat," continues the report in a summary. "The moisture content of the material, which closely approached 40 per cent. is high in comparison with other Canadian solid fuels on the market."

The report on the nonmetallic mineral resources of the province is a new departure for the mines department since it brings together under one cover all the new information concerning non-metallics, including clay products and other structural materials, in addition to non-metallic minerals.

The introduction of the report has the following to say regarding some of the non-metallic products of the north: "The deposits of fire clay, lignite and gypsum in the Moose river basin have recently been investigated and have very interesting possibilities, but owing to their present inaccessibility there is not likely to be any production until railway facilities are provided.

"The 'railway facilities' will be provided before the ned of 1930 as the reult of the government's decision to extend the T. &. N. O. to Blacksmith Falls. The extension of steel will be laid so as to take in the gypsum and other deposits in the river basin.

How to Handle a Gun

A gun is always a deadly weapon, so be careful how you handle it.

Whether a gun is loaded or not, never point it toward yourself or toward any other person.

In carrying a gun through under brush, be sure that the muzzle is pointed toward the ground, and always protect the hammers and trigger from whipping twigs, with your hand.

When hunting, never fire a gun at anything unless you know positively what it is. Many a hunter has shot a companion by mistake.

When shooting at game be sure that you are not shooting towards some domestic animal or some other person.

Never crawl through a fence or hedge while the hammers on your gun are up.

When riding in any vehicle always remove the shells from your gun.

Never draw a gun toward you by the barrels or with the barrels pointing at you, or at anybody else.

Be particularly careful with a gun while riding in a boat. Better remove the shells, but if you expect to use it any second, be sure it points over the side of the boat and not toward any companion or yourself.

Never lean a loaded gun against a tree or post.

Never keep a loaded gun around the house.

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Read the proven directions for checking colds, easing a sore throat; relieving headaches and the pains of neuralgia, neuritis, rheumatism, etc.

You can always count on its quick comfort. But if pain is of frequent recurrence see a doctor as to its cause.

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