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"SALADA" TEA

759

'Fresh from the gardens'

Jungle Breath

by Ben Lucien Burman

THIS HAS HAPPENED:

Lincoln Nunnally, elderly chemist, is summoned to the little town of Porto Verde, Brazil by his young friend, Vilak, who is concerned for the safety of his cousin, Elise Marberry, owner of a coffee plantation. Several mysterious deaths have occurred and Vilak believes Gaylord Prentiss, an enemy of Elise, to be involved in them. They visit Prentiss' house at night and are attacked by his huge dog. The next day Elise's two-year-old orphaned nephew is kidnapped. Vilak trails the kidnappers and finally comes upon the child being cared for by a gang of railroad workers, who have found it. Returning with the baby, Vilak gravely tells Elise he has bad news for her.

NOW BEGIN THE STORY

CHAPTER XVI.

"Bad news?" Anxiety was evident in Elise's voice. The old man, too, who had been bent over in his saddle so absorbed that to the passer-by he must have seemed asleep, looked up with a start.

"I hate to be a kill-joy just when you are so happy," said Vilak. "But if you want to keep on being happy you'll get Tinky away from here as quickly as you can. Take the boat that leaves here next week."

Her dark lips tightened. "What do you mean?"

"Persons don't steal babies merely for the fun of dropping them on the ground. I don't know just what happened this afternoon, but as I told you I have a theory. And that theory prompts me to the certain belief that Tinky will not be safe until he is far from Porto Verde."

She gazed directly into his keen blue eyes. "You're not telling me that merely to make me leave?"

"No."

She hesitated. 'Very well. I'll take him away. When the boat comes next Thursday. But as soon as I have put him somewhere where he'll be safe I'll come back. I personally will not stay away from Porto Verde. No matter what happens. I belong here."

"If a person happened to own an active volcano, he wouldn't necessarily be called upon to live inside its crater. I tell you again that your life is in danger every moment here and the dangers are increasing constantly. This affair of Tinky's may be just a development of that. I don't know. But I've given up arguing with you. My only regret is that there is no way of getting you out of here before Thursday."

It was dusk when they neared the fazenda and the two spreading castanho trees marking the entrance already had begun their medolious whispering in the evening breeze.

"I don't like those Indians. Er . . . Indians," the old man remarked suddenly, after half an hour's silence.

Vilak looked at him amusingly. "What Indians, Nanny?"

"Those half breed and Indian laborers who work for, er . . D'Albentara. Not nice faces, Vilak. Not nice. Er . . . ratty. And that foreman with the big nose is ugly as a . . . a . . . . er . . . he's ugly. How can a nice fellow like D'Albentara live with them? It would put my health completely out of order . . . yes, quite competely."

"You can't saw down a tree with a razor blade," Vilak responded. "Section hands aren't housemaids. D'Albentara takes what he can get."

"Which reminds me that I've got to do something for him to show my appreciation," Elise put in. "What'll I send him?"

"A little er . . . wine is always welcome," the old man answered.

"An excellent idea, Mr. Nunnally. "I'll send him over a case of my best champagne, that Pommerey 1912, and some other wine for the men. They'll be glad to get a change from the dreadful stuff they dring here all the time. Better for them, too. If Vilak will be good enough to take it over to them after dinner I'd be awfully grateful."

"I'll be delighted," Vilak responded. "I have a particular reason for wanting to go back anyway."

After dark the two men set out on their horses again. Behind them rode one of Elise's ebony-faed servants, driving a little cart which contained one of the heavy stone jars used to transport wine in the region and a wooden case from whose cracks peeped fragrant wisps of straw. They reached the camp and delivered the presents.

D'Albentara was highly pleased. Giving the jar of wine to his foreman to be distributed judicially among the men, he opened a bottle of the champagne and drank the health first of Elise, then of his guests. They chatted about engineering, chemistry, the competition of the Brazilian railroads with the steam boats and the question of which would eventually win out, the cruelty of the jungle and its weakening effect upon the white man, the value of the jungle land when an overpopulated world would have to reach out for new fields to supply its workers, the myriad motley subjects that any three men of scientific instincts would talk about with a jungle encircling them.

As they chatted, the Indian and halfbreed laborers who had ceased their work for the night also talked and sat around the crackling fire and noisily drank the heavy wine out of their battered tin cups. But the old man could not understand their loud, sometimes shouted conversation, for when it was not an Indian dialect it was usually some perverted Portuguese patois of which he knew nothing.

The conversation of the white men finally drifted to the repairs on which D'Albentara was engaged. Vilak inquired whether he might see how they were proceeding with the fill where the river had cut dangerously into the banks. The engineer gladly assented. Calling over his foreman of the enormous nose, whose breath now reeked strongly of wine, they walked toward the river's edge. Here the soil was wetter and marshier than elsewhere and the stones which occasionally appeared above it were covered with a thick slime which made walking very difficult.

They had gone only a few yards when Vilak, usually so agile, slipped on one of these stones and pitched forward. Grasping for support, he caught the hand of D'Albentara, who was on one side, and the arm of the foreman who was at the other. But the movement did not check his fall. Instead it brought the foreman sprawling to the ground as well. Vilak was the first to gain his feet. He aided the foreman to arise and began brushing off his clothes. "Terribly sorry," he murmured apologetically. "I don't know what the devil made me so awkward."

The halfbreed's shifting eyes glared angrily a moment. His dwarfed, knotted fingers seemed to start to the knife at his belt, then he smiled and gave an affable grunt.

"Tagos does not mind," D'Albentara murmured as Vilak still sought to repair the damage he had wrought. "It is nothing. All that goes up must also fall down. Is it not so? Once I heard an English sailor say this. And it is true."

The incident forgotten, they strode on to the tracks where the engineer explained in detail how the piles were driven, a retaining wall built of rocks and earth piled into the vacant spaces between. Half an hour later the two visitors made ready to leave. The Indians and halfbreeds still sat around the fire drinking and shouting more lustily than ever.

"One or two of them look as if they might be getting a tiny bit tipsy," Vilak declared to the engineer, as they shook hands. "I hope Senhorita Marberry's wine isn't going to have any bad effects."

D'Albentara laughed. "Have no fear of that, amigos. The stomachs of my men are as iron. Good night."

They walked toward the road. "I feel proud. Quite er . . . proud," the old man declared, as they plodded through the marshy turf. "You fell and I er . . . didn't."

Vilak chuckled. "Sorry to put a pin in the bubble of your self flattery, Nanny, but it happens that I slipped purposely in order to pull our Indian friend, the foreman, down with me."

The old man looked bewildered. "But why should you want to do . . . such a thing? You almost ruined your suit."

"Look at this," Vilak responded. He withdrew a small object from his pocket and flashed his light upon it so that the other might see. It was a ring, consisting of a thin gold band, set with a large black stone. The stone was carved in the fashion of so much of the jewelry seen in the remoter parts of the globe, jewelry crudely wrought but nevertheless masterpieces of craftsmanship, now depicting some mythical personage or animal, now a stiff conventionalized tree. In this instance the design consisted of what appeared to be a bird-like or perhaps fishlike figure with a single claw or fin. "Make anything of it?"

"Er . . . nothing. Where did you get it?"

"From the finger of the Indian foreman. I saw it and wanted to study it at my leisure. I pulled him down and fell sharply on his arm so that the pain I was causing him would allow me to wrench the ring away without being noticed."

The old man brushed a mosquito from his scanty fringe of beard. "It looks to me quite like, er . . . quite like the other native rings I've seen here. Do you know what it is?"

"No, amigos. But I intend finding out. What are you getting so desperate about that little mosquito for? Are you afraid that he'll destroy that feeble trace of a beard you're so proud of? Now I'm going to town for a few minutes, and then to come back to Elise's to spend the night, again. Events are approaching a climax, I feel sure, and I want to be there every minute I can."

(To be continued.)

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ISSUE No. 11—'30

Wisdom in Small Doses

The evil men do is soon forgotten—by themselves.

Experience is the only sure cure for inexperience.

Many a woman wants wrinkles on how to remove them.

A man isn't necessarily well bred because he has the dough.

The average woman is given to small talk in large quantities.

Instalments make the months seem shorter and the years seem longer.

Mind your own business—unless you get paid for minding other people's.

When a man begins to spout hot air it is time to give him the cold shoulder.

The younger generation quickly loses all interest, and gets rid of the capital as well.

It is said that time will tell—yet some people are always asking you what time it is.

The young man who embraces his sweetheart shows his love for her in a roundabout way.

Tuberculosis Lurks In Careless Kiss

Too Many Children Expossed to Risk, Says Doctor

PREVENTION NEEDED

The inveterate habit by which some people insist on kissing children is very injurious, and is one of the chief ways of communicating tuberculosis, Dr. J. H. Elliott, president of the Canadian Tuberculosis Association, said Sunday night in addressing the meeting under the auspices of the Social Hygiene Council at Hygeia Hall, Toronto.

The habit prevalent in some countries of removing footwear on entering the house, held considerable wisdom, he said. The child during the first few years of his life was a floor animal and filth carried in on the shoes from the streets was likely to contain germs of disease which might result in his illness. This was one of the most reasonable explanations of the development of colds, and yet mothers wondered how their children caught so many colds when they could not have got the infections from the children with whom they were playing.

Most children became infected with tuberculosis in childhood, Dr. Elliott said. Therefore, it was advisable for children to avoid the sick room or contact with the patient. The disease could not be inherited, Dr. Elliott stressed.

Cattle Precautions

Of the human and bovine tuberculosis, only the human could be communicated to adults, but the bovine bacillus claimed many victims among babies and adults. Consequently, the Dominion Government was insisting that farmers eradicate tuberculosis from their herds. Already, 130,000 infected cattle had been slaughtered, and there had been a marked lessening in the numbers of cattle with the disease.

Although there had been a distinct reduction in the mortality rate among those under 15 and those over 30 years of age, there was little change during the years between them. Many young people felt that after a day's work in the office, it was necessary to indulge in athletic activities, and many more who worked all day long spent their evenings in attending dances, both of which caused overstrain. Any physical or mental excessive strain was conducive to a weakened condition, a lack of resistance and consequent susceptibility to disease.

A cure for tuberculosis could not be effected by either medicine or a change in climate. A sensible, cheerful patient was far more apt to recover than an ill-natured, erratic one, Dr. Elliott stated, and a patient who spent some time at a sanitorium was more likely to have a chance of recovery. The great mistake in the treatment of the disease was that too few people understood the value of rest.

Many Indigent Patients

There was a crying need for accommodation in the province. At the present time there was need for 1,500 sanatorium or public beds. North and east of Toronto there was but one sanatorium, and that in Ottawa. Ontario's 12 sanatoriums, he stated, were not nearly enough. There had been as many as 78 patients in Toronto at one time during the Winter awaiting admittance because of a lack of beds.

Disease would remain, he said, so long as patients had to be cared for in the home. It was impossible for many patients to pay $10.50 weekly for care and of the patients in sanatoriums at present more than 68 per cent. were indigent.

The disease could not be wiped out entirely, but only by preventive measures, he said. It was mistaken economy to withold funds from the health department. Dr. Elliott estimated that the cost of caring for the patients who died from tuberculosis in Toronto in 1928 was $237,000. That sum spent in preventive measures would go very far, he thought.

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