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"SALADA" TEA

730

'Fresh from the gardens'

Jungle Breath

by Ben Lucien Burman

THIS HAS HAPPENED

Attempts have been made on the life of Elise Marbery, owning considerable property near the little town of Porto Verde, in west central Brazil. She has escaped harm due to the shrewdness of her cousin and protector, Vilak, who with his friend, Lincoln Nunnally, an elderly American chemist, is trying to learn the reason for the strange enmity for Elise.

Living near Porto Verde is one Gaylord Prentiss, a strange and forbidding character, who has evinced a hatred for Elise.

Tinky, Elise's two-year-old orphaned nephew, is kidnapped. A native reports Prentiss has been seen with the baby. The trail leads into the jungle.

Calamity overtakes the expedition Vilak organizes in pursuit. Native trackers are injured or desert. Treachery breaks out. Their white friends are fever victims and are left with a friendly tribe.

Elise, Vilak and Nunnally finally emerge from the jungle. Presently they come to the outskirts of a strange city, resembling the old Inca civilization. Here they are made prisoners. They discover they are in the power of Carlos D'Albentara, whom they had known as an engineer back in Porto Verde.

The ruler of the city decides to marry Elise and to put Vilak and Nunnally to death. They are to be tortured at the feast of Raymi, as are Elise's nephew and Prentiss who are prisoners also. A friendly Indian slips a dagger to Vilak, who cuts his bonds, then proceeds to awe the natives by walking through fire. D'Albentara is killed. Vilak starts to relate the strange story of Prentiss.

NOW BEGIN THE STORY

CHAPTER XLVII

"Merely this," Vilak answered. "The first quest for gold, and to my mind the much less important, was the attempt of Limey Potts, Pasquale Branza, and Detto Cicerone. Three rogues working together, they believed —with reason— that they could easily get many thousands of dollars from you by kidnapping Tinky. That was why Limey was in the tree waiting for you to drive by the day Tony Barbetta was killed. He was going to cause you to have an accident or something of the sort and try to kidnap Tinky then. His arrest somewhat disrupted the trio's plans, but didn't block them.

"When Tinky disappeared the first time, it was the Italians who had taken him, one of them riding the horse with the injured foot which had belonged to Prentiss and which I afterward learned they had stolen. They were on the road to Furness Caves when they were unfortunate enough to meet four mounted genderames who watch that place pretty closely just because it is such a haven for crooks and smugglers, and they had to run for it, being compelled at last to get rid of the child, which was crying in terror and otherwise embarassing their flight.

"Failing in this scheme, Limey, after the others had aided him to escape from jail, decided on a much bolder experiment, which, if successful, he believed would be far more lucrative: that was to kidnap you yourself and threaten you until you gave them any amount of money they chose to ask for."

"Was that the . . .er . . occasion," the old man murmured, "the soldiers . . . yes . . . soldiers . . .captured us on the way to Villapa?"

"Exactly. Of course, that experiment was a failure, too. Meanwhile the two Italians, who ne'er-do-wells themselves, were naturally on good terms with the ne'er-do-wells of the native population, had heard vague rumors about some of the Indians in D'Albentara's camp, and catching the poor drunken fellow we saved that night—you don't know about that incident, Elsie—tortured him to see what he knew, and found his information highly interesting.

"Then, discouraged by the lack of success in their schemes to get money from Elsie, they decided to abandon her in their plans, and follow up the information they had gained. Which brings us to the second and more important quest, the one which concerns Prentiss and D'Albentara."

The tom-toms began to sound monotonously. He listened keenly a moment, then continued. "I've told Nanny many times before that these people aren't Incas. Far from it. But they have been living in these Inca ruins for many generations and naturally have taken over any of the Inca possessions which remained.

"If you remember your histories, you'll recal that the thing they had most of was gold. Gold in such enormous quantities that the Spaniards who first saw their cities wouldn't credit their eyes. Walls of the nobles' houses literally covered with it, great vases, and even furniture made of it. Called it 'the tears of the sun.'"

He gazed off toward the chief's palace silhouetted against the starlit sky. "I was in that building with Batalagos this afternoon. In a great stone basement of it is gold. A tremendous amount of gold. Ornamental armour, carved flowers, all that sort of thing. How much it's worth, I couldn't estimate. Besides this there are rich gold mines a few miles away where it originally came from. I'm half inclined not to take you to see either. It's done too much harm, this gold. Killed too many people."

The hideous painted priests began a droning chant. "You know Prentiss is an archeologist. He's always specialized in Inca archeology. Some years ago he got in that trouble with the museum, you remember, and resigned under a cloud of scandal. He told me about it to-day. Got foolish over some woman, and sold a lot of the museum property which he had discovered to gratify her taste for money. No need going into details.

"But the effect of it was that he was pretty swiftly dropped by most of his friends and acquaintances and, embittered, went off to South America again, intending never to return to the States. He soon resumed his explorations and researches and was working in the eastern parts of Peru when he heard vague reports that there were interesting old Inca ruins off in this direction. So after considerable wandering over the mountains and desert here in search of it, he finally arrived and found D'Albentara here.

"D'Albentara was one of those unusual persons you occasionally encounter," he went on. "A highly intelligent, cultured man who has gone completely wrong. He was quite suspicious of Prentiss at first, but when he learned that the other's mission was purely an archeological one, treated him very cordially and they became good friends. Seems he was the ne'er-do-well son of an excellent Portuguese family, and having gone to Brazil to escape arrest after committing a murder, had been a civil engineer and numerous other things until he got into trouble again and had to leave once more.

"In this manner, drifting from wilder spot to wilder spot, he came by accident upon this place which belongs to Batalagos. He was a clever fellow, was D'Albentara, very clever. And it didn't take him long to find out about all the gold Batalagos had here or to make himself the half-breed's chief adviser so that he could set about getting it. To do this, he began playing politics.

"As I've often said, a king or chief is nothing but a different variety of ward politican. Batalagos especially deserved that designation because he wasn't too secure on his his throne. He had plenty of enemies, particularly among those natives here who probably had considerable Inca blood in them and certainly came of good stock, naturally, they bitterly resented having a mongrel like Batalagos over them. So Batalagos began systematically wiping them out. And D'Albentara curried his favor by helping him.

"Well . . . I remarked before that D'Albentara, after he found that Prentiss wasn't gold hungry, became friendly. Probably quite glad to see another white man, particularly an intelligent one. He invited Prentiss to see one of his executions, which was a perversion of the old Inca practice of human sacrifice.

"Prentiss went. The victim whom the gods had supposedly selected for the occasion was a baby, the son of one of the lighter skinned Indian families who had been the chief's worst enemies. A child just about as old as Tinky was at the time.

"Prentiss was a scientist, who had steadfastly maintained that it was a bad plan for an archeologist to interfere in local politics. But despite his bitterness, he was at heart a very decent fellow in many ways, and when the execution was about to take place it was a little more than he could stomach. He darted forward, knocked one of the priests down—he was quite husky then— and seized the baby in his arms.

"Of course, they caught him immediately; he was condemned to be sacrificed at once, for his violent act had outraged every god they possessed. He was already on the sacrificial stone and the tattooers had just left him to begin work on the child, when fortunately for him Batalagos and some of the priests decided that the sacrilege had badly jolted the omens so that the time was no longer favorable. Consequenly he and the child were thrown into prison to await a more favorable moment.

"I won't bother you with the details of how he escaped through the aid of friends of the child and, taking the baby with him, after incredible hardships finally got to Diamanitino in western Brazil.

"Back in semi-civilization, he naturally thought he was safe, but he had only been there two weeks, trying to recuperate from a wretched fever he had contracted coming through the jungle, when he found that D'Albentara and his men were following him. Not that D'Albentara bore him any personal enmity. He didn't. But the child had become a symbol. If he didn't bring it back, and if Prentiss' act went unpunished, Batalagos' prestige would be enormously dimished, and likewise that of his chief adviser. While if D'Albentara did succeed in returning Prentiss and the child, the grateful chief would refuse him nothing. A fact which Batalagos may or may not have pointed out.

"To make a long story short . . . From Diamantino Prentiss came on east to Porte Verde and shut himself up on his father's old fazenda, letting no one know that he had the child with him. He hoped to throw D'Albentrara's men off the track.

"He failed of course. He tried to go back to the United States, much as he didn't wish to after his unfornate affair there. But he was crazy with illness and shattered nerves, and had got into some complicated mess about his passport and citizenship. The consular officials, to whom he told part of his story, thought he was completely mad, and wouldn't let him out of the country.

"That's why he treated you the way he did Elsie. Remembering the bitter quarrel between your family and his own over the ownership of his fazenda, in his half-deranged state your visits only made him more frantic, for he was certain, with that terrible fixedness of mind of a nervously overwrought person, that you were trying to drive him out of his last refuge.

(To be concluded)

"I was in that building with Batalagos this afternoon. In a great stone basement of it is gold."

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Coffee Cream Pie

One-third cup ground coffee, 3 cups milk, 2 eggs, 3 tablespoons sugar, 3 tablespoons cornstarch, pastry. Tie coffee in a small muslin bag, place in cold milk and let stand 20 minutes. Then cook for five minutes and remove bag. Beat eggs slightly, add to sugar and cornstarch. Add hot milk and cook in double boiler until thickened. Fill crust and bake in a moderately hot oven until firm. Time in oven 30 minutes. Serve six.

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The solid, steady, dependable progress of men is based on certain homely elements which are common to all. Among these are honesty, faith, ambition and courage. These four will be found at the bottom of every real success.

She: "Have you a poor memory for faces?" He: "Yes—poor faces."

Athletes recommend Minard's Liniment

Delicious Mints

Take one raw egg white and beat slightly with a silver fork, adding a teaspoon of cold water as you beat. Now add about 14 drops of essence of peppermint or less according to taste. Add enough confectioner's sugar to make a stiff paste. Now roll out to the thickness of about half an inch, then cut out in small pieces. Let it now stand and dry out, then it is ready to eat.

Troubles

When a man is in trouble any rumor is sufficient to complete his ruin. —W. G. Clinton.

"Any music that is so complicated that is has to be explained can't be enduring music."— Albert Coates.

"A dour expression does sometimes make an excellent disguise for lack of capacity."—James J. Walker.

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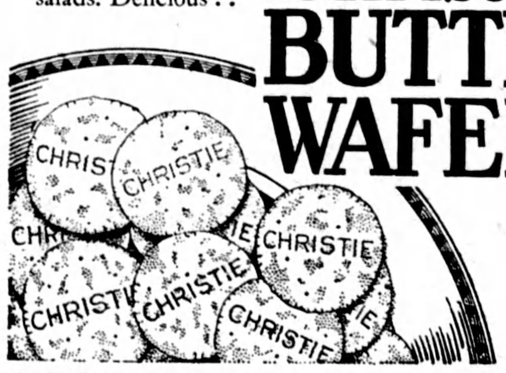

Minard's Liniment gives quick relief.

Ham and Corn Fritters

One cup minced cooked ham, 1 can corn, 1 cup flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1¼ teaspoons salt, ¼ teaspoon paprika, 2 eggs. Drain corn and add to dry ingredients, mixed and sifted. Then add ham and yokes of eggs, beaten until thick, and whites of eggs beaten stiff. Cook in frying pan in hot fat. Drain on paper.

"As causes for wars or insurances of peace, politics and statecraft are far less important than economics."— Edward A. Filene.

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