

The Free Press Short Story

KNIGHT SPLENDOR

By Ruby I. Kingswood

"JUST a moment, Forsyth, I want to speak to you."

Blain Forsyth wheeled suddenly from the line of students as they cleared the lecture-room, and faced the professor with a "Yes, Sir?"

"There's a letter here from one of the largest mining construction companies on the continent wanting a man with practical, as well as scientific, experience. I think you would fill the bill. Here's the application. Look it over and let me know Monday, and I shall wire them."

Blain accepted the application and passed radiantly down the corridor. "Lucky dog!" was what he called himself. "Yes, a 'lucky, lucky dog!'"

At the door he hesitated for a moment contemplating his next move, then set off at a rapid pace across the campus to the dormitory. There he packed a few things in a club-bag and pocketing a foreign letter left for him in the hall, he rushed out and boarded a street car, arriving at the station in the nick of time to catch the south-bound train. He smiled happily. Home was the best place to effervesce over his good fortune, and then he wanted Helen to know.

Settled comfortably in the cushioned seat he took the long envelope from his pocket and went carefully over every detail of the application. It was after he had satisfied himself on all points that he remembered the other letter.

"The Chinese stamp was scribbled and with a puckered brow he tore open the envelope and turned to the back page for the signature, then proceeded to read: "Dear Blain:

"It's a long time since you've heard from me, but a missionary's life is a live one, I assure you. How is school coming along? I suppose you are on the last lap. I often wish I could transport one of you fellows here with me. Your scientific knowledge would be a boon to our district hauling coal, day in and day out, gets on a man's nerves till he wishes he had the power to shake the whole Christian world into protest. One of the leading men of the coal fields here has recently become a Christian, but is still ignorant of what should be. Blain, have you ever thought of giving your gifts to another country? China needs men like you. I know the money isn't much, but the satisfaction is mighty. . . ."

"You're an ever-Bob!" Blain folded the letter, then once more opened it and re-read the words. "I know the money isn't much, but the satisfaction is mighty. . . . Too bad, Bob, old boy, but you're too late." The letter went back into his pocket and he sat motionless staring blankly at the panorama of brown fields and gleaming sky that reeled past.

Spring was quick to waken the more southern townships into life, so that when Blain arrived at his destination it seemed as if a few weeks, instead of hours, had elapsed since morning. The soft, springy earth under his feet, the balmy air and bursting of foliage responded to the joy of his new-found success.

It was indeed good to be home. His mother would be in the kitchen helping Lisa prepare supper. A cross-cut through the front garden where tulips were struggling to the promise of resurrection, brought him to the kitchen door, almost into the arms of Lisa.

"Bliss me soul, honey chile! What you come from?" "Just decided to pop in over the week-end, Mammy Lisa, to let everybody know I've got an offer of a job. Where's Mother?" "You 'Maw hab gone a-visitin' with Missy Helen. 'Yo sho' am 'de lucky chile."

one here and there who seemed to reach above his fellows and catch the glory. He had always hoped to be like that tree—a greater strength above other strong men. Now the opportunity was at hand to prove his worth. A shrieking whistle with its faint line of smoke sent an eager thrill through him to be off and away to his new achievement. The one above his fellows to be chosen, chance for advancement—lucky dog!

A pair of soft, firm hands covering his face from behind made him suddenly jump. "Helen! I didn't hear you coming!"

With a rippling laugh the fingers released themselves and a pair of merry blue eyes faced him. "I knew I'd find you here," she said simply. "I thought you weren't coming home again till school closed?"

"I didn't intend to, but I've got great news, and I came home to effervesce. . . . Lisa told us, 'Dat chile had some good thing on his mind sho'. So come back to the horse and let's hear it. Your Mother and Dad are waiting for you.'"

"Hand in hand like children in the freedom of the out-of-doors, they raced back to the house, where eager hearts listened to the tale of good fortune that lay open to Blain, while Lisa pattered about the kitchen with prophetic utterances. "Use tell you," she said, "dat boy Blain will be electionated Governor some day, sho'!"

And so the small envelope with its queer Chinese post-mark, lay forgotten in an inner pocket, and might have stayed there for days to come, had not late insisted that it make its appearance with the long envelope and flap persistently at Helen's feet as she and Blain sat on the rustic bench at the edge of the cedars next day.

Helen stooped to pick it up. "China!" she remarked.

"Yes, I'd almost forgotten. It's from Bob Gordon. Strange to say, he too, made me an offer. Well, the old fellow's too late now. There, read it for yourself."

As Helen read, tears sprang to her eyes in quick sympathy. "Think of the poor little creatures," she said. "It must be terrible, Blain."

"It's their life; they're used to it, it's the missionary, I think, would feel it most."

"Yes, of course it must mean a lot to go away out there, but then again Doctor Gordon was always different, and it's just like him to want to shake the whole world into protest. He reminds me of Knight Splendor. Do you remember him at that last college game? The fellows had lost their nerve, but immediately he entered the field, there radiated a new courage and vigor which led to their great victory. I've often heard folk say that the only thing Bob Gordon despised was a coward."

The toe of Blain's boot dug itself incessantly into the ground, flipping bits of earth about. Somehow, he wasn't in the humor to discuss Bob Gordon's courage. "Come," he said, decisively, "dinner will be about ready. This afternoon I'm going to handle the plow for a time."

That afternoon, the deep furrows sent out a pungent odor of mechanically tilled earth was tossed and cut. As Blain guided the plow his face was a study. In the excitement of the hour he had refused to think that Bob Gordon's letter was also a challenge to the greatest in life. The thought of giving of his gifts to another country had never crossed his mind before. If he never had struck him that God might ever want such gifts as his for the bringing about of His Kingdom on earth. "The money wasn't much, but the satisfaction was mighty,"—well, perhaps. "The only thing Bob Gordon despised was a coward." Was he one? No. But everybody wasn't cut out to be a missionary.

greatness was by the way of a cross. A loud cackle came from the yard, a soft snoring. Blain, fully aroused, opened his eyes and looked about the room. It was but a dream. Then drawing back the curtains as if to assure himself of its certainty, he drank in the whole landscape before him.

The trees of the cedar grove were silhouetted against a silver background, the high tip of Knight Splendor, backed by the darker sky-line, hung like a huge cross. Yes, Bob Gordon was like Knight Splendor, he was lifting the cross high above his fellows—and he despised cowards.

Blain dressed and quietly left the house. He tramped doggedly toward the cedars. Bird life was astray. A little grey squirrel scampered buoyantly up an old trunk, with eyes suspiciously alert. Skirting the edge of the grove, Blain followed an old trail down into a small valley along the creek for a mile or so. There the trail ended in a swamp, so he turned abruptly and tramped his way back. Once more he was at the cedar grove. A scarlet object suddenly caught his attention. It was Helen, her hands in the pockets of her red sweater, standing in deep thought at the foot of Knight Splendor. A pair of tear-stained eyes were turned in startled surprise at Blain approached, and were quick to notice the muddy boots, the wind-tossed hair, and a something in his face which she had never seen there before.

"Helen!" he exclaimed, "what brought you here at this hour of the morning. What's the matter?" His tones were tense and sharp.

"Don't think I'm foolish, Blain, but those little yellow faces of the coal fields have haunted me all night, and then I had such a queer, vivid dream I just had to steal out and away to see if it were true. It was all so plain. I thought that from the trunk of Knight Splendor had suddenly grown a huge verdant branch like a finger point toward the East. I was just standing here wondering, Blain," here her tones became deep and measured, "if I—if I mean, would ever be brave enough to follow such a finger-point were God to call me as he did Bob Gordon."

The haggard lines fell from Blain's face as he clasped her hands firmly. "Helen," he said, "it was not Bob Gordon's challenge I feared but such as the thought of perhaps losing you. The only way up seems to be the way of a cross, and it's surely plain to be seen that our cross points East."

The Eastern sky was hastily chasing the night shadows, from the Western horizon and had turned it to mother-of-pearl, as the call of the breakfast bell rang out over the meadows, and the two thoughtfully retraced their steps. "Dat boy, Blain, is one perplexin' chile," murmured Mammy Lisa as Blain took his departure that afternoon. "First he comes skittlin' round like his pa's colt, then he goes moseyin' about like the oil man, and now he's gwynne take Miss Helen to whar dem unglorified heabens are."

The great carillon was pealing forth a triumphant strain as Blain arrived back in his college town that night. He listened attentively. Yes, it was the very hymn they had all sung around the piano just before leaving home: In the cross of Christ I glory, Towering o'er the wreck of time. All the light of sacred story. Gathers round its head sublime. Strangely the long envelope had lost its appeal. The professor might call him a fool, but what matter? He had his father's benediction, his mother's prayers and hadn't Helen with her laughing eyes promised to go with him?

WHAT'S IN A NAME? (D. R.)

It may be Mutch or Little, Large or Small, Love or Haight, White or Black, Young or Old, Rivers or Wells. Some names are ominous, and some are full of bright suggestion. Mr. Pours and Mr. Pickel may be as sweet in disposition as Mr. Hunnicksler and Mr. Cheu may not use tobacco in any form. Mr. Toadvine had no disposition to jump at conclusion; Mr. Moon had no appearance of having been made of green cheese, while Mr. Webb was in no way tangled. A Mr.-Cobb married a Miss Webb and he said he knew they were intended for each other as soon as he spied her. Two names bore the name of Hog, and one insisted is should be pronounced "Hoag, which was pig-cullar. At a wedding where a Mr. Day was marrying Miss Weeks, a friend handed the following impromptu lines:

A Week is lost, A Day is gained, But let us not complain; There'll soon be little Days enough To make a Week again.

A Mr. Lord married a Miss Helper, and the marriage notice read Lord-Helper, and another marriage heading read, Talk and Argue. But most people have good names and we have the highest authority for saying that such is rather to be chosen than great riches. "You know, Pat, it is said that a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches."

IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS

The following prices, taken from the Toronto Globe of June, 1892, are interesting as a comparison with present day quotations: Rice, 5c per lb. Lard, 18c per lb. Dates, 10c per lb. Tripe, 10c per lb. Cocoa, 25c per lb. Eggs, 20c per dozen. Honey, 29c per lb. Corn, 2 lb. tin, 25c. Coffee, 25c per lb. Prunes, 10c per lb. Cheese, 15c per lb. Raisins, 10c per lb. Peas, 2 lb. tin, 25c. Currants, 8c per lb. Haddock, 7c per lb. Huts, 5c per pack. Filberts, 15c per lb. Walnuts, 15c per lb. Mustard, 40c per lb. Beans, 75c per pack. Almonds, 20c per lb. Peas, 2 lb. tin, 25c. Salt pork, 14c per lb. Peaches, 2 lb. tin, 20c. Bees, \$3.00 per dozen. Forequarter lamb \$1. Turnips, 25c per pack. Carrots, 35c per pack. Ox tails, 60c per dozen. Parsley, 3c per bunch. Potatoes, 30c per peck. Brazil nuts, 20c per lb. Gerkins, 20c per quart. Peaches, 50c per dozen. Fluid beef, 20c per tin. Salmon, 15c to 25c tin. Beef kidneys, 12c each. Pork chops, 15c per lb. Tomatoes, 3 lb. tin, 15c. Sardines, 10c to 25c tin. Lamb's heads, 10c each. Lamb chops, 18c per lb. Peanut, 15c per quart. Halbut, 25c per pound. Figs, choice, 30c per lb. Maple sugar, 15c per lb. Dried apples, 8c per lb. Maple syrup, 30c per quart. Head cheese, 10c per lb. Mackarel, from 15c each. Pineapple, 2 lb. tin, 25c. Golden syrup, 23c per quart. Herrings, 40c per dozen. Mackerel, 15c to 20c tin. Smoked ham, 18c per lb. Asparagus, 5c per bunch. Halbut, 25c per pound. Pickled, 25c to 50c each. Baked beans, 25c per tin. Pork kidneys, 15c per dozen. Salmon trout, 25c to 40c. Cabbage, 10c to 15c each. Hindquarter lamb, \$1.50. Flour, xxx, \$3.25 per bag. Dried cherries, 40c per lb. Mushrooms, 20c per plate. Dried peaches, 40c per lb. Green Gages, 2 lb. tin, 25c. Gooseberries, 2 lb. tin, 25c. Bismark, 2 lb. tin, 25c. Pork sausages, 14c per lb. Dried apricots, 40c per lb. Suet, 10c to 12½c per lb. Peas, 50c to 60c per pack. Cranberries, 20c per quart. Cocoa nuts, 8c to 12c each. Lobsters, 12½c to 15c tin. Cauliflower, 20c per quart. Pinnan haddie, 10c per lb. Gooseberries, 2 lb. tin, 25c. Chow-chow, 20c per quart. Tomatoes, 10c to 15c per lb. Cucumbers, 5c to 10c each. Watercress, 50c per dozen. Bermuda onions, 7c per lb. Smoked salmon, 25c per lb. Ducks, 50c to 60c per pair. Blackberries, 2 lb. tin, 25c. Boneless bacon, 16c per lb. Beans, string, 2 lb tin, 20c. Pineapples, 15c to 30c each. Lake pickerel, two for 25c. Lemons, 25c to 30c per dozen. Turkey, 75c to \$1.05 each. Beans, mixed, 20 oz., 25c bottle. Lettuce, 4c to 5c per bunch. Lobsters, 25c and 50c each. White fish, 25c to 50c each. Onions, 2c to 3c per bunch. Flour, pastry, \$3.50 per bag. Spinach, 5c to 10c per pack. Bananas, 50c to 60c per dozen. Hickory nuts, 10c per quart. Corn starch, 8c per package. Codfish, salt, 6c to 8c per lb. Rhubarb, 3c to 5c per bunch. Apples, 60c to 75c per peck. Oranges, 40c to 50c per dozen. Radishes, 4c to 6c per bunch. Sugar, light brown, 9c per lb. Perch, choice, 50c per dozen. Pickles, mixed, 25c per quart. Chickens, 60c to 70c per pair. Butter, creamery, 19c per lb. Sugar, granulated, 10c per lb. Bologna sausage, 12½c per lb. Sugar, dark brown, 8½c per lb. Ox tongues, spiced, 25c per lb. Veal cutlets, 15c to 18c per lb. Butter, pound rolls, 21c per lb. Strloin steak, 18c to 20c per lb. Round steak, 14c to 15c per lb. Gerkins, 16 oz., 20c per bottle. Cauliflower, 10c and 15c each. Strawberries, 15c to 25c per box. Sugar, white lump, 12½c per lb. Bermuda potatoes, 80c per peck. Restigouche salmon, 30c per lb. Corned beef, 10c and 15c per lb. Orange marmalade, 25c per tin. Pickles, mixed, 20 oz., 25c bottle. Delectated cocoa, 22c per package. Porterhouse steak, 18c to 20c a lb. Chow-chow, 20 oz., 25c per bottle. Chow-chow, 16 oz., 20c per bottle. Cherries, red pitted, 2 lb. tin, 35c. Horse radish, 25c to 30c per bottle. Salt, fine table, 10c and 20c a bag. Cherries, white pitted, 2 lb. tin 30c. Pickles, mixed, 16 oz., 20c bottle. Strawberries, preserved, 2 lb. tin, 40c. Jams and jellies, five pound pails, \$1 each.

TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN

In addition to the Imperial Economic Conference which will open in Ottawa on July 21st there will be another event in Canada this summer which promises to attract universal attention. This will be the total eclipse of the sun on August 31. The eclipse will be visible from a zone running through the Province of Quebec and skirting the City of Montreal.

Though usually total eclipses of the sun occur almost every year, the Director of the Canadian Government Observatory points out their occurrence as total at or near any specified locality is a somewhat rare phenomenon. The last one to be visible as a total in Canada was on January 24, 1925, on which occasion the path of totality swept across eastern Ontario, crossing the Niagara River into the United States and passing into the Atlantic Ocean near New Haven, Connecticut. After the 1923 total eclipse the next one to be visible in Canada will be in 1954.

THE VISION OF THE CITY

We do not know, and we do not think anyone knows exactly, all that is meant by the wonderful picture given us in the Revelation of St. John of the New Jerusalem, but the abiding thought that stays with us is of a redeemed and a regenerated dwelling-place for man, wherein shall reign righteousness alone, and where sin and all its brood shall be forever shut out. And it comes to us that the only real business in life that we should have is to help in the building of that beautiful city, in so many ways, but always by the building up and the strengthening of the good, you and I are helping in the filling out of that wonderful "vision of the city of God."

ville, Quebec, some fifty miles east of Montreal, and passes across the international boundary a few miles east of Rock Island and Derby, Vermont, passing into the Atlantic Ocean in the vicinity of Portland, Maine. The width of the shadow zone in southern Quebec is approximately 100 miles; the western edge passes through Montreal and near Boston, Mass., the eastern edge will be about 25 miles to the east of Three Rivers, Quebec.

The duration of totality on the central line is about 100 seconds, diminishing to zero at the eastern and western limits. The shadow travels at an average speed of about half a mile per second, traversing the distance of roughly 700 miles from James Bay to the coast in a little over 20 minutes; it crosses the River St. Lawrence at 3:24 p. m., Eastern Standard Time, the international boundary at 3:27, and leaves the coast of Maine at 3:31. The direction of the sun at this time is about 20 degrees south of west and the altitude about 30 degrees.

Several parties of scientists from other countries are coming to observe the eclipse and Montreal will be one of the principal points where these parties will concentrate in order to take advantage of the facilities and co-operation of McGill University.

Here's a Game

For all the Family (or Your Guests) Some night, when the family is complete, or when you are giving a party, ask everybody to give answers to these questions.

- Question Fill in Answer Question Fill in Answer 1. What product would you use for gargling, to kill throat and mouth germs? 2. What brand of cheese is best known to you? 3. French women rarely allow water to touch their skin, but prefer cold cream for cleansing. What cold cream is said to be the purest and best for skin-cleansing? 4. It is said that Canadian women are using more white soap for all cleaning and dish-washing. What white soap was named? 5. If you wished to color your finger nails to match the color of your gown, what preparation is available for such a purpose? 6. There's a certain floor wax giving a surface which neither pounding feet nor scraping chairs can mar. What is its name? 7. What toothpaste bases its appeal for use on its declared ability to remove the film which forms on teeth? 8. "No matter how much housework you have to do; you can easily avoid the embarrassment of Domestic Hands"—so say the half-century-old makers of a skin cream. What cream is it? 9. A certain advertiser says that when you are constantly tired and overworked, Fatigue Poisons accumulate in our system. He makes a drinking cereal which fights fatigue poisons. What is the name of this beverage? 10. After 30 years of experience, in ham-curing, a meat packer says that "Four great improvements came dramatically from a new method of smoking the hams"—improvements in (1) flavor, (2) tender quality, (3) pinkness of color, and (4) firmness. The new way is called "Ovenized." What hams are ovenized? Question Fill in Answer

You can make your own questions—by studying the advertisements in this and other newspapers. Write out the questions, and pin the sheet of paper on the wall. Offer a small prize to the one who gives the most correct answers inside 30 minutes. Or ask each member of the family, or each guest, to provide a question, for inclusion on the "examination paper." You'll have an evening with lots of merriment—and some useful instruction—in it.

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