

GYPSY GIRL

THE STORY OF AN IMPASSIONED ROMANCE

McDONALD FEADER



He drew a small sketch of her in black, a veil about her head, her clothes of sombre hue, her body hidden. Only a bare throat and a pale face with eyes cast down were visible. So had she looked to him when the gypsies made the betrothal circle. But when he had finished the picture he could not bear the sadness he had drawn, so he burned it.

His heart was heavy with bitterness. The blood throbbed in his temples, and he cursed his dead lips. If he could talk, if he could hear, Consuelo would be his. But what right had he to fight for her, a half dead man as he was. Oh, God, why hadn't he been born blind that he might never have seen her loveliness, could never have dreamed of her, never have desired her until life itself was not worth while without her.

Then he cursed himself for a fool and beat his hands against his breast. "If there is a God in the heaven, let Him forgive me—" and he fell to his knees and gave thanks that he was not blind. And the artist soul of him gave thanks for her beauty, but it did not heal his sore heart.

He went back to the camp and joined with the others. Because his eyes were dark and forbidding, the gypsies did not joke with him because he had not won the girl. He drank beer with them, but it did not lift the cloud of his sorrow.

One of the men showed a batik kerchief he had made for Consuelo. The Dummy had given her nothing; had been so concerned with himself that he had not thought of it. Now the time was growing short, only this afternoon and to-morrow left. Then she would be a bride. He must have a gift for her. Something beautiful—something beautiful...

He left the group and hastened into the town. It took him an hour to buy a piece of white silk. He ran back to the camp, the sweat rolling down his body. Feverishly he unwrapped the paints and brushes and stretched the silk on a board. The heat of the afternoon sun poured down upon him, but he worked like one possessed. The oils took shape. He forgot the merrymakers; forgot the bitter hurt within him. Creation was pulsing through his fingers to take form.

The sun seemed to fly on wheels of flaming gold toward the hills, but still he worked. The call came for dinner. He was not missed. The purple shades of twilight came down to the hills. He worked on. The light did not matter now. He could have closed his eyes and kept on working, so well did his mind portray the picture he was putting upon the white silk.

Now the last sweep of the brush. Darkness settled down, the hushed expectancy of darkness before the moon. Only the shadowy figures in the distance showed against the glow from the campfire. The oils on the crude palette began to run and blend together. The moon rose and touched upon the square of silk, lacing it with shadows from the leaves of the tree above it.

Exhausted, the Dummy fell into a deep sleep. He was sitting in a great forest and the girl beside him. He was talking to her, telling her of his love, and his voice was sweet and good. She answered him and he heard. He held her close to him and buried his lips in the shroud of her raven hair. He whispered all the things that had been in his heart so long. Finally she lay in sleep, her head upon his arm and the painted silk a covering for her.

The moon had gone down when he awoke. He was cold. The grass was covered with dew. The leaves of the tree bent above him. With aching muscles he rose to his feet. The silk was wet from the dew. For a long time he stared down at the thing which he had created as if now he was seeing it for the first time, and it was beautiful. A shawl for this girl he loved.

He crept beside the bonfire, putting fuel upon it, and warmed his chilled body. The camp was very silent except for the snores of the men. His eyes travelled to the van where Consuelo slept. The curtains were pulled aside. He went close and for an instant he looked down upon her face, the black hair in tangled curls around her shoulders. Many times he had seen her in sleep, but never had she looked so beautiful to him. His dream, the girl asleep against his shoulder. He went back to the fire and sat down. He bent his head wearily and tears, unemotional, rolled down his cheeks and he was not ashamed of them.

Shortly before noon the Dummy gave the shawl to the girl, his lips smiling. The gypsies crowded round, hushed at the thing they saw, staring at the beauty of it and then arose the babble of sound, exclamations of delight, of envy.

Consuelo let him put the shawl about her shoulders. She did not speak, but her eyes thanked him. In the confusion of the wedding preparations no one noticed that the girl had not spoken these many days, but had been sullen and brooding, surely no way for a promised one to act.

For a long moment the Dummy stared into her eyes, then he turned and left her. He had done the thing he wanted. She had no lovelier gift. His outer sense was satisfied, but the inner part of his being was more lonely than ever.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Chesley Enterprise:—The spellbinder is getting in his big digs at garden parties these days. One of them in the course of his speech called out: "Please keep quiet, I can hardly hear myself speak;" to which a heckler replied: "You're not missing much!"

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Roadwork Better than Direct Relief

Four Million Dollars a Month Would Build a Lot of Roadway. Private Enterprise Contrasted with Public Hesitation.

At the very beginning of the depression The Advance urged the building of roads to create employment and relieve those out of work. Work in preference to relief has been advocated by The Advance ever since. The majority of the unemployed have agreed with this view, though a minority have always opposed it—quietly at first, and more recently almost openly. They don't want work; they want relief. The people who have to pay the shot will have little sympathy for these chiselers. On the other hand all should have every sympathy and every desire to help the majority who want work, who are ready, anxious to work, and who hate the idea of charity or relief.

Years ago when roadwork was suggested to make employment, it was recognized that work was the only sure cure for employment. It would start a circle that would soon bring affairs back to better conditions. Against this idea of making public works to create employment there was the argument that it would entail a staggering cost. Well, direct relief has caused an expenditure that would have staggered anyone four or five years ago had they considered the amount possible. And the country has nothing good to show for all the direct relief.

The idea of needed road-building is dealt with in an able editorial in The Northern Tribune, of Kapuskasing, last week. Here is what The Northern Tribune says:— "Road building seems to be the ideal activity in Canada to absorb many of the unemployed during dull times. The governments possess the surveying, draughting and engineering personnel on their staffs, and much of the machinery, camp equipment and tools are already in their possession. By summing the workless to man road camps, a government is providing useful employment to take care of citizens in need, and directly investing in the future of this great country. Through highways are the preferable type, for they invite increased traffic, and every turn of an auto engine makes its tax contribution to the state. On the other hand, it is the sad truth that many thousands of dollars, if not millions of public money have been wasted building so-called colonization roads in the North in unwise locations, only to lie untraveled and revert to bush because the settlers along it did not stay. These abandoned roads are easy to discover, and they are a monument to governmental indiscretions.

"Our governments, we think, are unduly hesitant about going ahead with arterial road construction. The trans-Canada highway could easily have been completely built through Northern Ontario by now, during the depression years at lowest costs, and even embracing northern and southern forks to satisfy the needs of each district. Thousands of men would have had sustaining work, and tourist revenues would have been heavily swelled, benefiting all the business community. It would have been real statesmanship to do this; it was a low grade of politics that prevented its being done.

"Alternately, men have been kept in idleness on relief rolls until some have become unemployable and others have seriously lost morale or efficiency. Premier Hepburn came to the conclusion a few weeks ago that the burden of paying relief costs had become unportable to Ontario taxpayers, and he made drastic changes in the system. In the months of April, May, June and July (when outdoor work could be carried on) the relief bill cost Ontario the staggering total of \$12,530,602. Nor

did this amount include contributions from the municipalities, and they were incurred in summer months when relief costs are at their lowest levels. "Some people really do believe that highway construction costs are a deterrent. In war time, roads are built at enormous money cost and accompanied by human casualties, they are destroyed over-night and rebuilt again and again, to serve the desperate but temporary needs of an army. They may even be built in a foreign country (like the Canadians built roads in France and Belgium), when they are not worth a dollar to us after the war. Canadians do not want war, and they are spending very little on the military and naval arm. Why are they not willing to incur the logical and necessary costs of peace-time development of their country, such as building essential through roads?

"With only the incentive of profits to be made in the mining industry, private enterprise is showing that the right kind of road work pays. Practically the only chromium deposits in North America were lately discovered about 40 miles south of Collins, a C. P. R. station just west of the upper end of Lake Nipigon. The mining company went ahead and built a 40-mile tractor road to take out the ore for shipment to distant smelters, and they are already paying good dividends on that unusual investment. Apparently it was the only way they could get their ore to market.

"Now an even more ambitious private road-building venture is being started in Northern Quebec, to serve a new gold mine at Opemiska, which is 130 miles north of the C.N.R. line to Quebec city. The gold mine company is building the first 35 miles out from the mine location, and have let the rest of the work to Halleybury contractors. And all the road equipment will have to be taken in by air, to add greatly to the costs! Twenty bridges will be required on this virgin trail, one of them 800 feet long. Eventually, of course, this road may become a provincial road into a prosperous new mining community—but in the meantime it is private capital that is undertaking it.

"How does this private resourcefulness compare with governmental chancellery to build necessary bridges, and to extend our main highways? The road to Nakina and down to Fort William could have been carried westward from Hearst, surely, by the great province of Ontario ere this, when the Dominion government was associating itself in construction costs. Needless to say, it would be more than a hundred times more important than either the Collins or the Opemiska private roads (which will indirectly benefit the country just the same). It would have absorbed the unemployment, it would have increased the public revenues of Ontario and the private revenues of many business men

who pay taxes in proportion; it would have done much to bring eastern and western Canada closer together. In conjunction with the trans-Canada airway now well on toward completion, it would have been the finest investment in national defence that this country could make.

"But it was not done. It can still be done, and it ought to be done, and we can raise a common voice in saying that it must be done, instead of concentrating all Ontario's current contribution to the national highway to an almost uninhabited stretch of rocky country from Schreiber to White River. This latter "contractors' paradise" cannot begin to absorb Ontario's clamorous unemployed. There is not one good reason why the highway from Hearst to Nakina, Long Lac and Nipigon river should not be undertaken and finished at the same time as the other fork from Schreiber to White River."

Excellent Work by New Liskeard Kiwanis Club

The New Liskeard Kiwanis Club last week says:—"The New Liskeard Kiwanis Club is carrying on a most praiseworthy work with the children of New Liskeard which is appreciated by the parents of these children, if not by some other members of the community. In this work the club also has the support of certain citizens, and we are sure the members of the club appreciate all the assistance given them in carrying on the schemes of the summer camp.

For some time past there have been alternate weeks during which Miss Nora Craven has charge of a bunch of girls—last week's group numbering 21—while Gordie Durrell has been in charge of groups of boys for the following weeks. That the children are enjoying themselves is most clearly demonstrated by the remarks to be heard from the lips of those who have been attending

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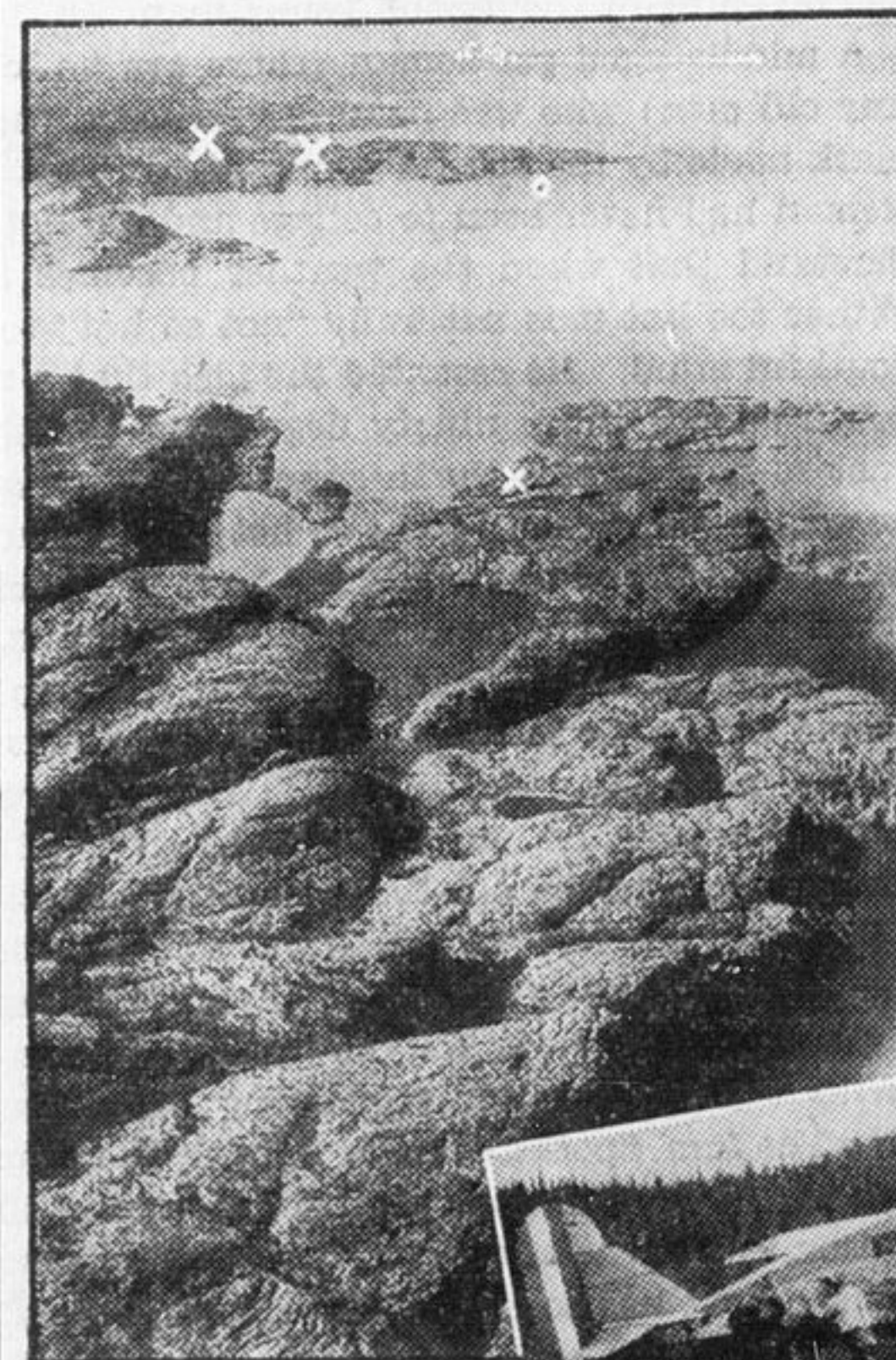
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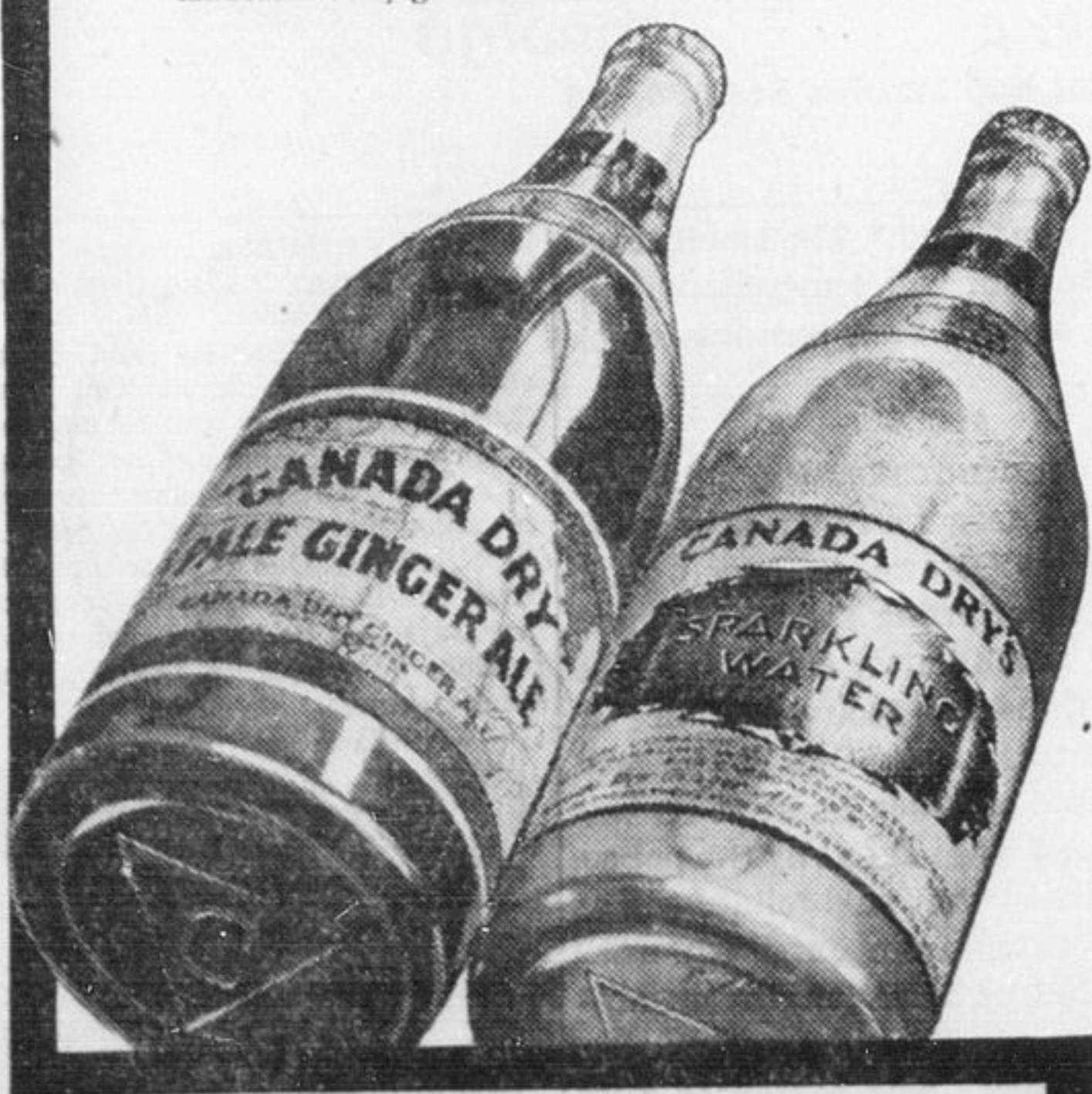
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