

EBONY TORSO

By John C. Woodiwiss

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CHAPTER V Narrow Escape

Cool as Hopton was, it took an extreme effort of will power to prevent him betraying himself at that moment; but somehow he managed to replace the receiver with the nonchalant air of complete innocence.

"Ah, I didn't hear you come in, sir," he said good humouredly. "Pity you weren't here a minute sooner: I'm afraid the person who wanted you has run off."

"What a nuisance!" commented the padre in a sarcastic tone. "Won't you sit down, Inspector, and enjoy the fire?"

"Thanks," replied the detective. "I didn't quite know what to do when your phone started to ring. Your servant is so deaf, isn't he?"

"Yes, the poor fellow's very afflicted," agreed Galesbourne, sitting opposite his guest and fixing a pair of large brown eyes on his face in a most disconcerting manner; "still, deafness is sometimes an asset in a servant. That sounds unkind, but I hate people about me who listen to everything and carry on a sort of domestic espionage. But I'm forgetting; who was the caller just now?"

An anxious look had come into his eyes belying the calmness with which he asked the question.

"I'm afraid I can't tell you, sir," replied the Inspector truthfully. "It was a man speaking in a foreign language."

"In a foreign language? Now I wonder who that could have been?" pondered the vicar, lowering his chin and gazing pensively at the carpet.

"You couldn't tell me if he was speaking in French or German, by any chance?"

"No, sir," answered Hopton boldly. "It was no language I've ever heard. It sounded like a code of some sort."

"A code? How very odd, Inspector?"

The parson looked up sharply again as he spoke; but, after a pause he began to chuckle.

"I think I know who it was," he said. "One of my young men playing a practical joke, no doubt. Dear me, that's rather funny to think he got the wrong person," and he began to laugh in a dry, mirthless manner, which was an obvious pretence.

"As long as it was nothing important, I don't feel so guilty, sir," Hopton returned.

"Guilty? But why should you feel guilty, my dear sir? You did the only thing possible in the circumstances. We've nothing to hide here, I assure you."

The last sentence was said almost in the manner of a challenge but the wily detective was far too cunning to notice it.

"Ah, well, sir, 'an honest heart's worth a King's ransom,'" he quoted with a grin.

"That's true," agreed his host cordially. "And you couldn't understand a single word of this mumbo-jumbo, of course?"

"I think it would be a clever man who could," Hopton assured him. "I never heard such a lot of gibberish."

Galesbourne leant back and burst into a genuine peal of laughter, in which the detective imagined he could trace a note of intense relief.

"I hope you made Smith, my servant understand who you were without too much trouble, Inspector. The poor old chap doesn't mean to be difficult, of course, but his deafness makes him rather troublesome at times. I'm really very attached to the old boy, and put

up with him from motives of charity. He has an inveterate horror of spending the rest of his days in the work-house infirmary."

The show of kindness was a thought overdone, and quite failed to deceive Hopton's experienced knowledge of psychology, but he decided to play the padre at his own game.

"Very good of you, I'm sure, sir," he replied in a carefully camouflaged tone of commendation.

"The trouble with Smith is, that he will chatter if he gets half a chance," went on the vicar. "I hope he didn't attempt to—entertain you with a lot of his small talk?"

"The note of suspicion had crept back into his voice, and, instantly, Hopton was aware that the query meant far more to the questioner than he could have thought."

"Oh, no, sir," he replied with a smile. "On the contrary, I thought him a bit short. I couldn't get more than a dozen words out of him."

"I'm delighted to hear it," nodded the vicar approvingly. "Recently I was obliged to speak to him very forcibly on the subject—that is, as forcibly as one could speak to a man of his advanced age, you'll understand, Inspector; and I'm glad to hear my remarks have borne fruit."

"Galesbourne's Daring
"Well, you needn't worry about that, sir," the detective assured him, drawing a mental picture as he spoke of the black walls on the trembling wrists.

"Good!" chuckled the padre, taking down a box of Egyptian cigarettes from the mantelpiece. "You'll smoke, won't you, Inspector?"

"Pipe smoker if you don't mind, sir," answered Hopton, taking his pipe and tobacco pouch from his pocket. "I never like cigarettes, particularly Egyptians."

"Just as you please, my dear sir. Light up by all means. I'll tell you a secret: I really keep these Egyptian cigarettes for my young men, although I must admit that I enjoy smoking them myself now and again. Puts the boys at their ease if the vicar asks them to have a cigarette. I find, and stop 'em smoking on the sly. You'll excuse me if I put on my slippers, won't you? My boots are rather damp, and I catch a chill so easily."

"Certainly, sir," agreed the detective, lighting up while his host replaced the box and made a change in his footwear.

"There, that's better," he smiled, taking up his former position in front of the fire. "Smith's a long time making that coffee, isn't he?"

"Don't worry about that, sir," Hopton answered, puffing away contentedly. "I'm quite happy for the moment."

"In that case we'll give him a few minutes longer," said Father Galesbourne. "I'm so pleased you called, Inspector. I wanted to have a chat about this astonishing series of crimes. Do you think they're the work of a criminal or have you decided to admit the possibility of the supernatural?"

Hopton thought he detected an anxious note in his host's last question, and watched his reactions carefully.

"Quite frankly, I've not absolutely made up my mind on that point yet," he replied evasively. "At the moment I feel they're either the work of a madman, or of a very sane criminal trying to cover his tracks by giving the crimes a supernatural touch."

The vicar shook his head decidedly

several times.

"I don't altogether agree," he said. "During my work as parish priest I've come to have a wholesome respect for the supernatural."

"Oh, I'm not denying the possibility of such a thing," his guest assured him. "But I've never come across a genuine case yet."

"There's no doubt this unfortunate fellow Scout had been initiated into the mysteries of Black Magic, Inspector," the padre continued, without commenting on his guest's objection.

"He must have seen something very horrifying at the moment of dissolution, for though I've attended many death-beds, I never saw a face so tragically distorted."

"Yes, it was pretty grim," agreed Hopton shortly.

"Then, having decided on that point, are we in order to rule out the possible presence of evil occult forces?" questioned Galesbourne, leaning forward earnestly. "I've thought the matter over for hours, but can discover no other explanation to fit the facts."

"I rather think we shall end by finding a much more ordinary solution," the detective assured him decidedly. "Although I must repeat, I haven't definitely ruled out the occult theory yet."

The Rev. Galesbourne shrugged his shoulders doubtfully.

"Well, I'm thankful I'm more or less above suspicion, Inspector," he remarked after a short pause. "You know I've actually heard that certain evil-minded people in the parish have been good enough to accuse me of poor Scott's murder. I can assure you I shall take proceedings for criminal libel against such gossiping liars if I can prove their identity."

It was a daring shot, and Hopton recognized it at once as an artful attempt to discover which way the suspicions of the police were directed. He nodded without comment; his face was an impassive mask from which the padre could read nothing.

"It's really intolerable to have such horrible accusations levelled against one by a set of cowards who aren't come into the open and risk saying them to one's face," continued the padre bitterly. "It makes things so difficult for a public man, especially a priest."

"I quite appreciate that, sir," agreed the detective sympathetically. "Gossips are always very busy in a murder case. After all, no one with a spark of sense believes these wild rumours."

"I suppose not," sighed the vicar in a relieved voice. "Still, I must say it's quite bad enough to go through a dreadful experience of this sort, without the added annoyance of being pilloried as a murderer."

The sound of shuffling footsteps broke in upon the conversation and Smith entered with the coffee on a tray. The old servant trotted forward shooting quick, nervous little glances at the visitor all the time he was arranging the cups.

"Well, Smith, you've taken long enough time to get that coffee," said the Father, in a tone that was meant to be facetious, but in which Hopton sensed a note of subtle menace.

"Pardon, sir?" asked the deaf man cupping his palm behind his ear.

"I said you'd been a very long time!" bawled the padre.

"I'm very sorry, sir, mumbled Smith in abject apology, "but the kettle took so long to boil."

(To be continued)

Annual Meeting of Presbyterian W.M.S.

All District Represented at Gathering at Timmins.

The annual meeting of Cochrane Presbytery of the Woman's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada was held in Timmins United Church on Friday. Delegates were present from Hearst, Cochrane, Matheson, Monteth, Schumacher and Timmins. The sessions opened at 9:30 in the morning and continued throughout the day. The President, Mrs. Geo. McNece of Hearst presided. Lunch and dinner were served in the church basement by the Timmins ladies.

The opening worship service was taken by Miss Margaret Hargrave, B. Sc., R.N. of Hearst. Afternoon worship service by Mrs. Cox and Miss Taylor of Matheson.

Greetings from Timmins were conveyed by Mrs. A. A. Ramsay, president of the local W.M.S. Auxiliary. Greetings were also received from North Bay Presbytery, Mrs. C. W. Sharpe, president.

Committees were as follows:
Nomination—Mrs. Anderson, Cochrane; Mrs. C. S. Simley, Matheson; Mrs. Johnson, Hearst; Mrs. W. M. Mustard, Timmins.

Resolution—Mrs. Cox, Matheson; Miss Grainger, Hearst; Mrs. A. A. Ramsay, Timmins.

Registration—Miss Jean Taylor, Matheson.

Courtesy—Mrs. Eady, Matheson, Mrs. A. E. Wicks, Cochrane.

Minutes were read by Miss Jean Taylor, of Matheson, who acted as secretary in the absence of Miss M. J. Mustard, of Hearst.

Treasurer's report, showing a most encouraging financial year was presented by the Presbyterial treasurer, Mrs. George Laidlaw, of Cochrane.

Matheson's invitation to hold next year's Presbyterial there was accepted as was Cochrane's for the fall executive meeting.

Delegates to Conference Branch meeting in Toronto will this year be from Timmins and Hearst while Matheson will be represented at the School for Leaders in the United Church Training School, Toronto, Sept. 19th to 23rd, 1938.

Reports were heard from the secretaries of the various departments.

Community Friendship—Mrs. Tolby, of Cochrane, for Mrs. J. P. Carter.

Temperance and Christian Citizenship—Mrs. Wicks, of Cochrane, for Mrs. A. L. Bamford.

Social Service and Supplies—Mrs. P. H. Carson, Timmins.

Associate Helpers—Miss Grainger, of Hearst, for Mrs. C. Holler.

Christian Stewardship and Finance—Mrs. A. Jackson, Timmins.

Affiliated C.G.I.T.—Miss Jean Taylor, Matheson.

Mission and Baby Bands—Mrs. Susie Smyth, Timmins.

Missionary Monthly—Mrs. J. Lothian, Monteth.

Literature—Mrs. W. G. Teck, Schumacher.

Press—Mrs. Archie Gillies, Timmins. Hearst Auxiliary report was read by Mrs. Banks; Matheson auxiliary by Mrs. Eady; Schumacher, by Mrs. Teck, and Timmins by Mrs. H. L. Graver.

Matheson reported an interesting experiment which is working very successfully, the amalgamation of the W.M.S. and the Women's Auxiliary. Cochrane has a new mission circle which completes the church missionary family—a group for every age. A new mission band has been organized by Miss Smyth in Matheson. Special mention was made of "World Friends," the only missionary magazine for children published in Canada. It is published monthly under the authority of the W.M.S.

The new mission study books for bands is "Good Neighbors." A planned questionnaire brought forth interesting discussions at the conclusion of each secretary's report.

Mrs. P. T. Moisey thanked the ladies for their contribution toward the fire-place at Waskesieu Camp on Night Hawk Lake, and extended an invitation to call on visiting Sundays.

Mrs. Lothian and Mrs. Wicks, this year's delegates to Conference Branch at Toronto, gave interesting highlights from the three-day session which they attended.

The Presbyterial was privileged in having as its special guest, Mrs. A. D. Richard, president of the Alberta Conference Branch W.M.S., who is re-

New President



A. N. Mitchell, vice-president and general manager of the Canada Life Assurance Co., who has been elected president of the Canadian Life Insurance Officers' Association. This association comprises 45 life insurance companies whose business represents 99 1/2 per cent of the life insurance in force in Canada. More than 3,500,000 Canadians hold policies with these companies.

turning from Dominion Board to her home in Edmonton. Mrs. Richard is a very pleasing speaker and made a deep impression. In the afternoon she gave a concise account of board, its general setting, its working principles. She spoke of the wonderful fellowship of members, nurses, teachers, community workers, and told of the discussions of the various commissions. In the evening Mrs. Richard used the text, "The whole world for Jesus." "But ye shall all receive power after the Holy Ghost shall come upon you and ye shall be my witnesses unto all the parts of the earth." Many were particularly interested in hearing of the Western work. The story of the Battle River W.M.S. hospital in the Peace River district, 400 miles north of Edmonton and what it means to the people there, was of deep interest. Glimpses of the work in the Orient as presented by speakers at Branch were challenging. Dr. Liu, of Cheshio University, China, was one of these. In referring to the Japanese people he said the Chinese did not hate them. The Chinese realize that the militarists are to blame. He looked to Chinese victory by the wearing down of the Japanese forces when China will take her place among the other nations, standing for the best thing in civilization. Mrs. Richard delighted the young people present with her story of "The Lighted Lamp," and in the closing worship service emphasized the fact that the young people of today want a hard challenge—that it is vital to put before them the personality of God and His program for the future of the world.

Mrs. P. H. Carson sang a solo, "Jesus Saviour Pilot Me" and was pianist at the morning and afternoon sessions.

At the fellowship period following church greetings were presented from Presbytery by Dr. Fraser of South Porcupine; Ladies' Aid, Timmins United Church; Mrs. Consen; from the Timmins Church, Rev. W. M. Mustard.

The Presbyterial President, Mrs. Geo. McNece, of Cochrane, in her address made a plea for deep consecration and prayer in W.M.S. members, that as a force for good within the church it might be even more effective.

C.G.I.T. girls with Jean Macdonald and Sheila Harper as leaders, and Grace Ramsay at the piano built a unique worship service at the evening meeting, built around a slide of Holman Hunt's picture, "The Light of the World."

A Peace Dialogue, by 14 members of the Mission Band told in a splendid manner of the various ways people of many countries are helping to promote peace. The girls taking part were: Pat Jones, Catharine Jardine, Joy Webber, Mabel Wong, Bonita Wood, Christine Rose, Lois Southam, Patsy Jackson, Eva McLeod, Vida Beaumont, Hattie Dean, Catharine Chalmers, Marie Carver, Bernice Whaley.

Miss Susie Smyth, W.M.S. missionary-at-large in this district, in her report told of vacation Bible schools, of community work and pictured briefly the ideal church—what the church might and should be.

The newly elected officers who were impressively installed by Dr. Fraser are:

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Affiliated C.G.I.T.—Miss Grace Simpson, Timmins.
Mission and Baby Band—Miss Susie Smyth, Timmins.
Associate Helpers—Mrs. George Banks, Hearst.
Supply—Mrs. W. M. Mustard, Timmins.
Community friend ship—Mrs. J. P. Carter, Cochrane.
Literature—Mrs. W. G. Teck, Schumacher.
Missionary Monthly and World Friends—Mrs. C. H. Smile, Matheson.
Temperance—Mrs. G. O. Cox, Matheson.
Christian Stewardship and Finance—Mrs. A. Jackson, Timmins.
Press—Mrs. Bolton Falby, Cochrane.

Says North Should Have Better Roads

"Even if Southern Ontario has to Wait for Some of its Speedways"

The Orillia Packet is one of the Ontario newspapers that has given special proof of its interest in the North after the recent visit of the Ontario-Quebec Division of the Canadian Weekly Newspapers Association to this country. Elsewhere in this issue will be found an editorial reference from The Packet and Times in regard to the unemployment situation. Herewith is given some thoughts from The Packet and Times on the matter of roads in the North. It will be read with special attention by people of the North, particularly the opening suggestion that in one matter the North has failed to progress since a previous visit in 1913, that one matter being the condition of the roads. The last sentence of the extract also makes a decided hit— "And in the second place the North is entitled to better roads, even if Southern Ontario has to wait for some of its speedways."

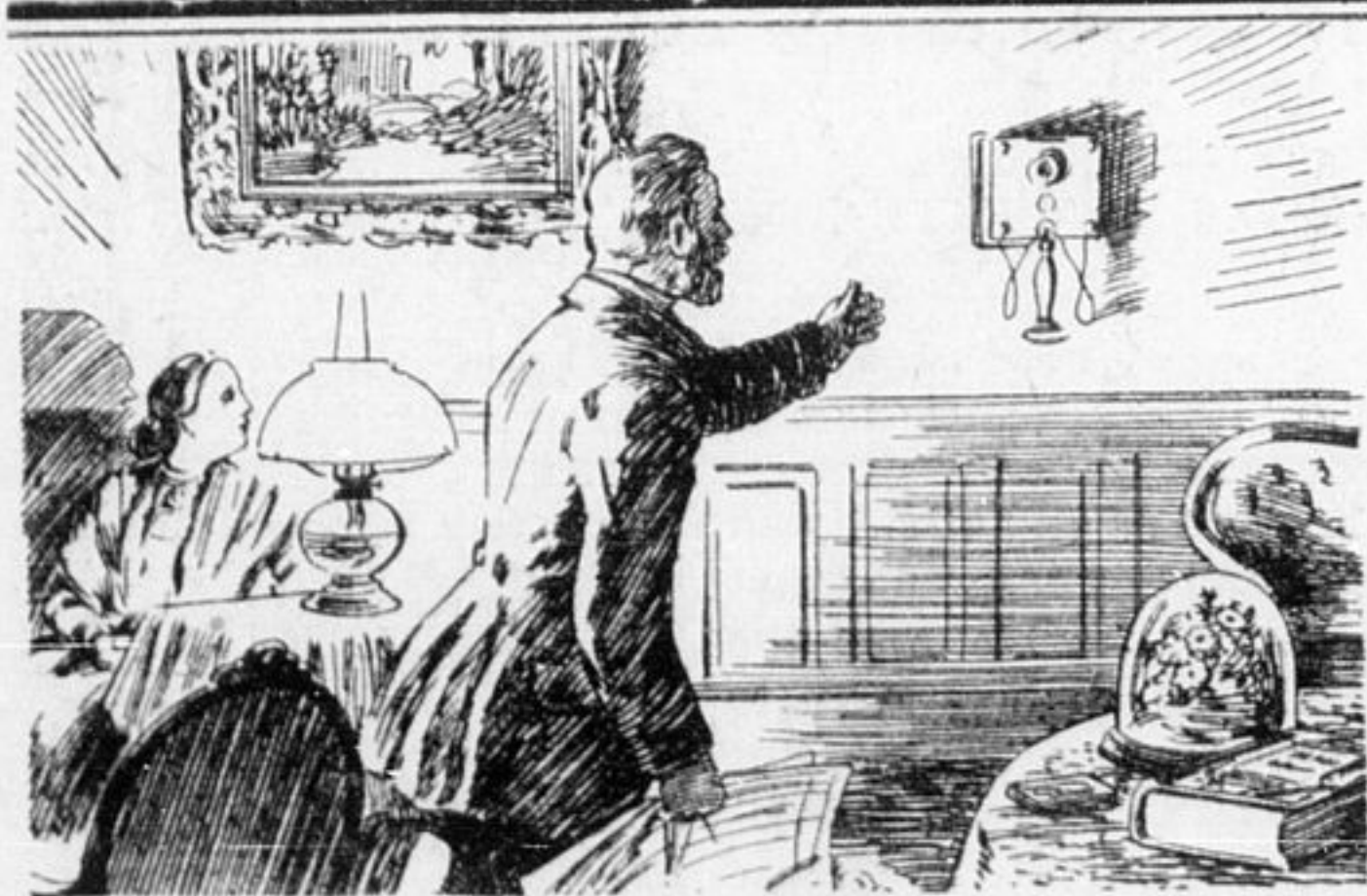
Last week The Orillia Packet and Times devoted all its editorial page to the newspaper convention and the visit to the North—chiefly to the visit to the North.

The following is the reference to roads in the North:

"In one respect, there has been little or no improvement in conditions in the North. That is in the matter of roads. The official programme warned us the roads round Timmins were 'awful.' It will give a better idea of their condition if we call them dastardly. As one bumps over them, one is reminded of conditions on the back concessions for a few years after the advent of the automobile. Back in 1910, Mr. Arthur W. Roebuck, then editor of the Cobalt Speaker, made a speech at a banquet in New Liskeard in which he declared that the grievances of the North were greater than those that, in times past, had provoked "our fathers to shoulder their muskets." Of these grievances the chief was that the mining country was paying heavy taxes but wasn't getting the roads it needed. It is the same song today, only that the speakers on this occasion evidently believed that more was to be gained by an appeal for fair play than by strong language and threats. We were told that of the \$13,-000,000 paid by the mines in taxes, over 75 per cent. goes to the Federal Government, less than 15 per cent. to the provincial treasury and less than 10 per cent. to the municipalities that have to meet all the local requirements created by the mines themselves. The Hon. Paul Leduc, Minister of Mines, who accompanied the Press party, expressed sympathy with the call for better roads, and promised that, if the Federal Government could be induced to disgorge, or forego, a larger share of the mining taxes the situation would be remedied. . . . And in the second place, the North is entitled to better roads, even if Southern Ontario has to wait for some of its speedways."

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Another Old Mine May be Operated in Cobalt Camp

The Haileyburyian says:—"The old Right of Way Mine in Cobalt may be reopened, if an examination to be made by Cobalt Properties Limited shows that it can be operated successfully, according to a report from the silvertown this week. The company will pump out the workings which are situated close to the LaRose overhead bridge, in order that a thorough examination may be made. The property was operated in the early days of the silver boom, but for a considerable period there has been no activity there. The shaft is some 400 feet deep and the workings extend under the T. & N. O. Railway. Cobalt Properties operates several of the former mines in a smaller way and at present some ore is being shipped to the O'Brien mill at Mileage 104."

Should Discourage Men Coming North for Jobs

(From Huntingdon Gleaner)
We all look to the northern sections of Ontario and Quebec as the land of plenty and where the youths are welcomed if they wish to make a fortune. According to the Board of Trade President Langdon, he said Timmins had presently reached its saturation point and that newcomers should be discouraged entering the Porcupine Camp unless they had previously arranged employment. At the present moment, Timmins has 2,000 men unemployed. In the past 18 years the town has increased its population from 4,000 to over 24,000 today. Although Timmins was a bush in 1911 and is a city today that does not mean we can give employment to all comers.

Toronto Telegram: A boost in taxes is reported from Egypt. Will that be the last straw on the camel's back?

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