

# The Riddle of THE RIDERLESS HORSE

By Jean & Cyril Casalis

## CHAPTER XXIII A TRAP OR NOT

Malcolm glanced back. And even as he had seen the man ahead, so now he saw the shadow behind him, moving after him through the trees. If he had looked back sooner, if only he had known that he was being followed before they entered the trees, he might have managed to escape, slipping aside to hide against a boulder. Here, escape was impossible. The trees grew so close together, every inch of space between them was so closed up with saplings, that any attempt to escape through them would sound like the blundering of an elephant. He cursed his impulsiveness. They had caught him neatly, those two men. He had handed himself over to them by rushing off in pursuit, and now they were shepherding him away, awaiting only their own moment for disposing of him.

Then another thought surged through his mind. Supposing that it was not a trap at all, that they had not seen him before they left the cave, that they did not know that three men, not two, were walking through the trees? Then the man behind him must think he saw only his friend ahead, and he, if he heard any sound that Malcolm made, must attribute it to his companion. If they really did not know he was between them, then the danger was of another kind; and he walked on, less expectant of the rushing steps that would mean attack, though grimly aware that the man behind him could see him all the time. But if he could play out the game he was safe—unless the man in front stopped to wait for his friend to come up.

But the man in front was just disappearing round the bend where the path turned towards the small cave. Now, if his first impression was the right one, would come the moment for attack, one man waiting concealed beyond the turn, the other hurrying up from behind. Malcolm's steps did not slacken, but his finger was on the trigger of his revolver as he approached the bend. He came round it, but the path lay empty ahead. The man had disappeared.

Malcolm hurried on past the dark vault of the cave. When at last another curve in the path took him out of range of it, he found that the sweat was running down his face.

But the plantation was thin, trees giving place to scrub and boulders. He looked back as he reached them. The path was empty, and he turned quickly aside to a hiding place below an overhanging boulder from which he could watch the path. If he had missed the first man, he would at least secure the second; and with his revolver in one hand, his torch in the other he awaited his coming.

Five leaden minutes passed, and still he had not appeared, and Malcolm had just decided that it was useless to wait any longer, when a shadowy figure detached itself from the darkness beneath the trees and came swiftly towards him.

Malcolm rose noiselessly to his feet. He waited until the man was within a yard of him, then with a low fierce ejaculation of "Hands up!" he flashed his torch straight into his face. He had no more than a momentary glimpse of that face, for next moment his torch

was twisted out of his hand and the light switched off.

"Ssh, Baas," hissed the man; "Left-Hand him plenty near, Baas. Maraka him plenty frightened. Baas come to talk, Baas. Maraka him know good place plenty near, Baas."

And it was in that good place that ten minutes later, Malcolm heard the explanation, not only of the cook's presence in the kholts at that hour of the night, but of the mysterious disappearance of the men he had tried to shadow since his emergence from the tunnel he had discovered.

The story that Maraka unfolded dated to the night when the boy Sam had been killed. While Malcolm and Cornelle had been at the river, explained Maraka, he had taken the opportunity of searching for that safe hiding place which he knew Left-Hand must rely upon. His efforts had been successful as those of Malcolm. Indeed his journey of discovery had been remarkably similar to that of Malcolm. When he emerged from the tunnel's mouth, below the Campsie cave, he had been confronted by the two blanketed figures that Malcolm had followed that night.

"Then there were two of them?" interposed Malcolm. "But where were you tonight?"

"Maraka him come behind him man that come behind the Baas."

"Then both vanished near the little cave? Where did they go?"

"Oho, Baas, Maraka him got plenty hard, black head. Him plenty big fool, Baas. When him peoples go away—whit!—so plenty quick, just like plenty fine spook, Baas; Maraka him look, and look, and look in the kholts—all the night, Baas. But him find nothing, Baas. So Maraka know Baas Cornelle must have plenty fine picnic, Baas."

"So that was the reason for that picnic? But why?"

"For to see where him peoples go so quick, like spooks, Baas."

"And did the picnic tell you?"

"Oho, him picnic plenty fine, Baas. Him take the dust out of eyes of plenty big black fool, Baas. Maraka walk in the kholts like plenty fine gentleman. Him big trees near the cave, him got plenty fine polish, Baas. Him trees plenty easy for to climb, Baas. Him spook climb up him trees plenty easy, plenty quick, Baas; and when the Baas and Maraka him come along—whit! spooks all gone!"

"Well, I'm blowed! I never thought of that. Of course, they could get away quickly like that. Those trees grow right against the rock—they'd just have to climb up and slip on to the top of the cave. It's a regular secret stairway! But where do they go once they are on top? And who are they? Haven't you found out?"

"No, Baas, Maraka him not know. Maybe him go by the trees to Brandfontein road; maybe him back to kholts; maybe him plenty dead spook, him fly up into him sky. Maraka him not know, Baas. Maybe him bad native peoples work for kwenas—him big river snake. Maybe him catch other peoples for kwenas to eat. Maraka him not know, Baas. Him peoples hide plenty well in him blankets and big hats. But Maraka him know him must be plenty, plenty careful, Baas—him peoples plenty quick—him Left-Hand, Baas."

Left-Hand him catch Baas Merimer, him catch Baas Japie, him catch the Missie, Baas."

Maraka had spoken the last words with such vehemence, and so sudden and dramatic had been the twist in his narrative by which he had brought in Left-Hand, that Malcolm felt a shiver of apprehension. But Maraka had more to tell him. He explained that he had been keeping vigil over the cave with the object not only of identifying the people who came out of it, but of trying to find out where they hid and what they did, before they came out of the tunnel entrance, but just as he was about to warn him, he had heard the sound of movement in the cave below him.

"Oho, Baas," he said, "then Maraka him plenty frightened. But Maraka him plenty glad when him see the Baas jump so quickly into him hole, like him frightened meerkat. Him see the Baas go after him man, when him come out of the cave. But Maraka him know one more coming, so him wait and follow other man. Maraka him know the Baas him see one man, and Maraka him see other one. Plenty safe, Baas."

"Plenty I didn't know at the time how plenty safe it was," observed Malcolm drily. "However, we seem to be getting to grips with Left-Hand. We know his favourite haunt, and we know that he goes about with only one satellite. So our next move is obvious. We must wait on top of the little cave, and snaffle them when they come up."

"That's the thing to do, Maraka," Malcolm insisted.

"But what will Baas do when him catch him people?"

"Run them in, of course."

"But what will Baas him say him people him done?"

CHAPTER XXIV  
KWENA THE SNAKE

The weeks passed without incident, and Maraka made no sign. And once more it was the period of the change of the moon, when all the old Free State farmers look for the signs that hold promise of the precious summer rains. Cynthia had just returned and, as once before, Cornelle came to Malcolm before breakfast and asked him to accompany him to Campsie. They found Channing as well as Cynthia at the byres, and he carried off Malcolm to see his pigs. As they walked through the dew-drenched orchard they were passed by plough boys on their way to the lands, laden with their great plaits of reims slung over their blanketed shoulders, and carrying their long kambo whip sticks.

"Man, it's getting dry again," said Channing, "and I'm starting the ploughs later now, to give the oxen a chance to fill up."

Then he called to one of the boys and told him to tell his herd boy to take his cattle to graze on the "far built," that traditionally vague site on every Free State farm, on which native farm-laborers love to report the most sensational calamities.

After breakfast Malcolm, on his way to his rondavel to fill his pouch before setting out for the lands, found Maraka for once apparently quite idle, standing in the middle of the bare space which served as the Bon Espoir backyard, gazing vacantly into the far distance.

Already the heat haze was setting the horizon dancing in the west. The Bon Espoir cattle had long since left the milking byres, and the only signs of life in that sun-drenched country were the brilliant figures of native women hurrying along the bank of the river to cultivate their lands, Channing's cattle moving slowly towards their grazing ground on the low Campsie hill, and the little trails of dust where spans of oxen, leaning to their yokes, were ripping up the land slowly and inexorably as far as the eye could see.

"Baas," said Maraka in a low voice as if merely communing with himself, "we go to river tonight."

He did not turn when he made the remark, and Malcolm stopped short.

"Speaking to me, Maraka?" he asked.

"The river tonight, Baas. Let the Baas not talk now, Baas."

And with that he walked quickly into the kitchen.

It was past eleven that night when two figures, swathed native-fashion in blankets, stole through the Bon Espoir orchard, slipped down into the Campsie Valley, and finally concealed themselves between big boulders on the river bank opposite the point where the boy Sam had been killed. Malcolm grinned at Maraka, who had insisted on the transformation when they met an hour earlier in Malcolm's rondavel; for although his glass had shown him that he made an excellent imitation of a native, he suspected that Maraka was not unaware of the humour of his disguise. But as they had agreed that the risk of conversation must be avoided, no word passed between them.

The sultry windless day had been followed by a hot close night, without

## Long Time Courtship



For 11 years Saah Tomlinson has been corresponding from Rhosnesnew, Wrexham, Wales, with J. Jones of Viking, Alberta. Now she's on her way across Canada to marry him.

a breath of air. And now, in the south, great masses of black cloud were piling up, with lightning flickering incessantly behind them still more impenetrable, and even more eerie, through the muttered roll of thunder which went echoing up the deep river banks.

Malcolm's thoughts wandered. Try as he would to concentrate vision and hearing on the object of their vigil, which Maraka had persistently refused to divulge, he was conscious of nothing but the approach of the storm. Then, in an instant, abstraction vanished. He was staring away upstream where six flashes of light had pierced the darkness in quick succession. And with the flashing of the signals his waning excitement flared up, and, tense and expectant, he stared into the darkness, alert for the first sign that would show that the signals had been seen by other expectant watchers, waiting there too, perhaps, unseen on the river bank.

Ages seemed to slip through the moments that ensued. Then, without warning, just below, so close that Malcolm flinched instinctively, the tense silence was snapped by a resounding clang and the rocket-like hiss of something hurtling through the air. There was a dull thud on the opposite bank, and then his straining ears were conscious that there, across the river, someone was moving.

Then, on the water below them, something took shape—a long black object, slipping out like a shadow from the deeper shadow of the bank. Malcolm clutched Maraka's arm and pointed, and in that moment he knew that what he and Cornelle had seen, a month earlier, had not been imagined, and that the agonizing cry which had sent them racing along the river bank had been the scream of a man in terror for his soul, rather than his life—a native who thought that what he saw was the dread kwena, the great mythical snake of the Caledon River.

## Again Appointed Electoral Officer for This District

Ottawa, Jan. 25.—Jules Castonguay, chief electoral officer, has announced the appointment of returning officers for 236 federal constituencies.

Special interest attaches to the appointments because of reports a general election will be held next Fall, but Mr. Castonguay said there was no special significance in announcement of the appointment at this time.

He explained the Electoral Act required that he publish the list of returning officers each January. The present appointees were all new because the new Electoral Act passed at the last session of Parliament wiped out previous appointments.

Those appointed in the Ottawa Valley and Northern Ontario follow: Carleton, John Hoey, Westboro; Cochrane, John S. Mackay, Cochrane; Frontenac-Addington, J. O. Ellerbeck, Westboro; Glengarry, John J. Morris, Alexandria; Grenville-Dundas, John A. Campbell, Kemptville.

Hastings South, W. R. Rierdon, Belleville; Kingston, D. G. Cunningham, Kingston; Lanark, James M. Shields, Smiths Falls; Leeds, Newton S. Cuthbertson, Brockville; Nipissing, J. Emile Bedard, North Bay; Ottawa East, J. A. Lemieux, Ottawa; Prescott, Conrad Dubois, L'Orignal.

Renfrew North, Edward B. Lacey, Pembroke; Renfrew South, Herbert A. Jordan, Renfrew; Russell, P. E. Rochon, Clarence Creek; Stormont, Willis O. Sheets, Farran's Point; Temiskaming, Charles Byam, New Liskeard.

Argenteuil, Gaston Valois, Lachute; Chapleau, Trefle Bolduc, Amos; Hull, Louis Philippe Mercier, Hull; Labelle, Albert Boulais, Papineauville; Pontiac, Albert Filteau, Ville Marie; Wright, Rene Thérien, Aylmer.

## Official Handbook of Canada for 1939

Interesting and Valuable Little Volume of Information About Canada.

An advance copy of "Canada 1939" the official handbook of present conditions and recent progress in the Dominion has been received by The Advance and it appears fully up to the high standards of previous editions.

The announcement of the volume says that "Canada 1939" covers the present situation in the Dominion from Atlantic to Pacific, the weight of emphasis being placed on those aspects which are currently of most importance. All phases of the country's economic organization are dealt with and statistics are brought up to the latest possible moment. The text is accompanied by a wealth of illustrative matter which adds to the interest of the subjects treated. There are also two photographic inserts and four double-page plates.

The economic survey is covered in eighteen chapters dealing with population, production, internal and external trade, transportation, education, etc., and an Introduction which reviews succinctly the world situation and conditions in Canada up to the time of going to press.

The feature article this year is entitled: "The Unemployed Youth Problem—Steps Toward Its Solution"; in addition to outlining the problem and its effect on society generally, the article shows how the Provincial Governments and Dominion Government are co-operating to solve the problem in the many aspects it presents over the widely separated economic areas of Canada.

The price of the publication is 25 cents per copy, which charge covers merely the cost of paper and actual press work. A special price concession has been authorized in the case of teachers, bona fide students, and ministers of religion, since past experience has shown that considerable use has been made of this publication for educational purposes, and it is the policy of the Minister to encourage such use.

To such individuals, therefore, the price is set at 10 cents for one copy. Postage stamps are not acceptable, and applications must be accompanied by a postal note or by the appropriate coin enclosed between two squares of thin cardboard gummed together at the edges. Applications should be addressed to the King's Printer, Government Printing Bureau, Ottawa, Canada, and, since the supply is strictly limited for both the 25-cent and 10-cent classes, early application is suggested.

## Insurance Proves Asset to Community

Interesting Address by President of Canada Life.

Speaking of the financial statements at the annual meeting, A. N. Mitchell, president of the Canada Life Assurance Company, pointed out that the company has continued to observe the same conservative attitude as in the past. "This has produced very constructive results," he stated. "The maintenance of life interest rate despite the general lowering of such rates, the increase in income, the satisfying strengthening of the assets, the increase in surplus, the maintenance of production of new business, all speak for the stability of the Company's operations."

In discussing the board of life insurance, Mr. Mitchell said in part:—"These are the institutions of the average man. They are great co-operative groups built to prevent the need of public 'relief.' There is a social significance in their existence which is of great importance. Public 'relief' situations have a tendency to be largely financed by borrowing from the future, or, in other words, by imposing a burden upon our children. Life insurance, doing the same type of work, finds its source in past savings. It confirms the value of self-reliance and builds character. These institutions have the form of private enterprise but are in reality public assets."

"These great co-operative bodies gather the most of their funds in small amounts which would not otherwise be directed toward investment channels and in that way serve another public function. They not only protect their policyholders but help to develop productivity and employment and thus give a second advantage to their originators. "Necessity compels an investment policy by these co-operative bodies that must largely place them in a position of creditor rather than one of ownership. The attention of this great body of creditors should be instantly attracted to unfair attacks upon them."

"Many people on many occasions in the last few years have pointed out that the situation between debtor and creditor has been discussed and legislated on, in a very one-sided manner. The thought that the debtor is the only one to be considered has assumed the vogue of a fixed popular superstition. It cannot be too frequently stated that for every debtor there is a creditor and that under the present organization of society the creditors are more numerous than the debtors. Practically all public debts and all private debts of the mortgage type, are incurred by borrowing from the savings of large groups of ordinary citizens."

"Much of the legislation, however, which has been promulgated for the protection of debtors has not taken this into account. It is time that the ordinary citizens whose savings are being legislated against should actively assert their rights as citizens. "Your company has always been will-

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ing to consider sympathetically the necessities of each debtor who has suffered adversity through circumstances beyond his control. Our records are full of voluntary concessions and compromises arranged with such debtors. Debtor legislation and moratoria, however, have gone too far and you and other thrifty people of the country are being penalized by some borrowers taking advantage of the legislation to evade payments they are in a position to make."

In paying tribute to the improvement in the debt picture of Canadian municipalities, Mr. Mitchell indicated that during 1937 and 1938 co-operation between municipal debtors in Canada and their creditors resulted in adjustments and alleviations of the debt burdens applicable to over \$160 millions of municipal debts. However, he warned that the good work already done in this field should be enlarged, not curtailed. "It is important that in the future the recurrence of difficult situations in municipal finance should be prevented," he pointed out. "This is the road to the much needed reduction of municipal taxation. It is still true that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

Mr. Mitchell dealt in some detail with general business and agricultural conditions in Canada. In part, he stated "The Canadian situation, in view of the repercussions of the year just past is particularly interesting from an insurance investment standpoint. This country must consider itself most fortunate in that it has shown so few tangible adverse results from the external disturbances of the year. All exports indicate that, in fact, Canada has gained ground in the Fall months."

"A definite change in the basic economies of this country undoubtedly accounts for this. Canadian economy has today three major basis: Agriculture, mining and manufacturing."

"Outside Canada the general belief has been that Canada depends mainly on its agricultural situation. It is, of course, still true that agriculture 's one major factor in our economy. It is also true at the present time the agricultural situation leaves much to be desired. The trouble we hear most about is the wheat situation. There is, possibly, however, an undue amount of pessimism in this connection. While undoubtedly the next few years will require adjustments in a number of economic matters to give greater opportunity for profitable results to our wheat producers, I am one of those who believe that the workings of natural law will again increase the world consumption of Canadian wheat."

"We are proud of the fact that our liabilities in the British Isles and in the United States are fully covered by carefully selected securities payable in the same currencies. At the same time we believe our total investment portfolio is much strengthened by the well selected and well diversified list backed by the economy of a country which has

so ably withstood the stress of recent years as has this Canada of ours."

## Strange Effect of Frost on Trans-Canada Plane

Last week The Halleyburian had the following reference to an unusual sight as a big Trans-Canada plane passed on its way North:

"Local residents who happened to be out in the open on Monday afternoon witnessed an unusual sight when one of the big Trans-Canada planes passed on its way north. Behind the machine was a trail of what appeared to be either steam or light smoke, stretching for some miles and remaining stationary in the air after the plane had passed out of sight. The course being followed by the pilot was off the "beaten track" to some extent, being right up Lake Temiskaming instead of slightly west of the town, and thus the view of the peculiar "tail" of the machine was more clearly visible. Alex Mosher who has travelled by air over many sections of the country and has seen all kinds of aircraft in his prospecting operation, said that he had never witnessed anything of this kind before. Discussing the unusual occurrence with Pilot Edwards, who operates a plane for the McIntyre Mines between Halleybury and outlying points, The Halleyburian learned from him that the hard frost was responsible for the trail of steam that followed the big machine. He said that the moisture in the exhaust will sometimes cause a freezing as the gases are thrown off and that the exhaust steam will become visible. Asked why the plane was flying east of the usual route, he said that it was probably because another machine was due to pass on a southbound trip and the pilot was giving plenty of clearance. He would be well within the guiding "beam" even if he flew much farther to the east. The "beam" would be 10 miles wide, 100 miles from the station where it was being broadcast. Pilot Edwards said."

Globe and Mail: For speaking of Hitler as a "German misfortune" one of his fellow citizens has been sentenced to life imprisonment. The suggestion is that he was convicted of having revealed a state secret.

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