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TABLE TOP

by

Eden Phillpotts

You can start the story here and enjoy the following chapters in this interesting and unusual tale by a noted English author. Just read the synopsis given herewith of the previous chapters published.

SYNOPSIS

Tom Aylmer and Angus Maine are enjoying a holiday on the hills of Peru when Felice Pardo rides out to tell them of the death of Tom's father, who had bequeathed to him the Peruvian silver mines of which he was manager. Tom decides to sail for England at once with Angus. Before leaving Tom buys a parrot to give to his fiance, Jane Bradshaw. On the liner the bird engages the interest of Jacob Fernandez, a rich man of Lima, who has made a life study of birds. The parrot talks to Fernandez, using the words "Benny Boss." Fernandez says he knew Benny Boss, a man of mixed parentage who once worked for him. Benny had been engaged later in dredging on Lake Titicaca, and that he had dredged up jewels thrown into the lake at the time of the Spanish Conquest.

(Now read on:-)

AMBITIOUS ADVENTURE

"Now these waters were in some places nearly three hundred yards deep, and to probe their fastnesses had demanded machinery and man power which would need more capital than was forthcoming. But Benny had his own theories on the subject and they appeared quite sound.

"He told Garcias that it was unlikely the ancient people would have cast away their wealth—their insignia of office, crown jewels, golden statues, and all the rest of it—beyond the reach of recovery. Hope that their invaders might yet be conquered and driven out of Peru still remained.

"This argued comparatively shallow water, and for Benny the problem had been to judge where most probably among the wide margins and estuaries of the lake their hiding-places were to be discovered. Only a man of extraordinary courage and sanguine nature would have thought twice about any task so apparently hopeless, but the fact remains that Benny, aided perhaps by his reading of old authors, or simply served by good luck, arrived at some conclusions which justified further exploration. He might have laid the facts before business people and made arrangements of a proper character, but he did not, and I am afraid the reasons for his line of action will presently appear. A straightforward, commercial deal offered no charms for the explorer, and knowing the Garcias reasonably well, he took his story to them, though not before he could show them some material to justify it. When Benny vanished, the brothers told their tale, and it was as follows:—

"The old sailor had talked history to them and explained first, that any hope of success would certainly lie upon the western border of the lake, as being nearest to Cuzco. He had then shown them the results of his own industry in shape of some gold and silver ornaments dredged up by him in a secret locality. He then invited them to finance a more extensive inquiry, to be undertaken solely by himself, and declared that all he needed was a dredge-net or trawl with powerful hand gear and a stout boat. He impressed upon them the importance of secrecy, because, as he truly pointed out, if their enterprise came to be known, many others would start on a like quest.

"The Garcias were taken with the scheme, promised the profound secrecy on which their ally insisted and presently fitted him out with all the needful gear. Under pretence of fishing, Benny set to work—always by night—and it was not long before he began to report and reveal results.

"Thus far he had played the game Benny laboured industriously, and a week seldom passed without some additions to the hoard. He produced treasures of undoubted value, but these only reached his net fitfully, and much that he discovered of ancient pottery and broken shards while they interested him as greatly as the rest, awoke no enthusiasm in the Garcia brothers, for they felt these fragments might grace a museum, but possessed no intrinsic value to be measured in cash. Still they kept their own counsels and hoped for some great coup at any minute.

"It must have been about this time that the explorer brought me his great red stone set in gold. Then perhaps two years later, an unexpected incident confirmed growing suspicions and the brothers discovered themselves to be the victims of fraud. It transpired that one, Felice Pardo, worked as a foreman on the Garcia fruit farms, and seeking him about some matter of business, Juan Garcia spoke with his young wife. It chanced to be the day of a fista and the girl, attired in all her finery, was about to set out for Puno. She wore at her throat a remarkably brilliant yellow stone mounted in gold, and being by this time pretty well versed in the matter of gems, Juan recognized it for a topaz. Benny had dredged not a few lesser specimens but none to be contrasted with this very remarkable stone. Julia Pardo handed this treasure to her master, that he might examine it and—quite ignorant of what she was doing—explained that her father, Benjamin Boss who worked on Lake Titicaca, had found the jewel in the mud and given it to her as a birthday present. Like everybody else of course Julia was unaware of the truth and had no notion that Benny and the Garcias were operating together.

Juan then returned the broach to Signora Pardo and went his way; where upon two things happened— one to the man and one to the woman. It seemed fairly clear to the Garcias that Benny had not dealt justly with them, for if he could keep the find of the great topaz to himself and regard it of such little worth as to hand it to his daughter, what might not he have done with far more valuable treasure trove? They determined to take no step that would alarm Benny, but wait for his next appearance and then tackle him together.

Somebody else, however, took quite another line of action. Julia Pardo was not Benny's daughter for nothing, and her wits now came to her assistance. She had marked an air of surprise about Juan Garcia when he saw the jewel and, knowing her parent pretty well, guessed that Benny's story of finding it beside the lake was untrue. Her first care, therefore, was to seek him instantly, inform him of the incident and do precisely what the Garcias had designed not to do. Benny never missed a fiesta, and an hour or two later his daughter found him and told him what had happened. The news must have been little to his liking, but he took it calmly and concealed his purpose. He returned home to his wife, announced the fact that an offer of most important work had reached him and in a few hours departed, directing silence as to his movements until she should hear more.

"Benny vanished from the scene of action and months passed before his circle saw him again; but after he had been gone a week, there came a letter to Emilio Garcia stating that he had been offered a very lucrative task far up country, but might be expected back when his work was accomplished. He gave no direction, however, and no information as to what he was about. Inquiry at his home produced no results, for Signora Boss had heard nothing from her husband, neither had Julia Pardo. Police administration was rather primitive in those days and such inquiries as the Garcias directed to be made threw no light upon the missing man. His letter had come from Lima, but nothing further could be found and it was believed that he had probably taken ship from Callao for a destination unknown.

"Before a year was told. Benny returned and reported himself. He appeared much amazed to receive a chilly greeting and declared himself innocent of any disloyal deed. His only wish was to get back to work at the dredging. He was much concerned at his reception, and expressed utmost indignation to learn that the Garcias had abandoned their undertaking and never wanted to see him again. But when they demanded to know where he had worked upon the lake, that they might pursue their quest without him, he absolutely declined to furnish any information as to his hunting grounds. Soon after his final quarrel with the Garcias, Benny appears to have left the neighbourhood and come to live at Lima.

"Many years passed," concluded Mr. Fernandez, "and I had forgotten all about the man, when that happened to remind me of him and furnished me with the information I have given you. Emilio Garcia died and his brother set about selling their estate and leaving the district. He was a widower, but had a son in Cuba and, I think, joined him. It happened that my father, who was then still alive, though an old man knew the regions of Puno and already possessed considerable property in that State. He was familiar with the Garcia fruit farm and sent me to see the surviving brother, and survey the quality of the place. Thus I met Juan Garcia and learned from him something of Benny's adventures. He told me all he knew and felt very positive that our friend had swindled him and his brother in the past. Against this, however, in honesty he set the fact that the adventurer now dwelt at Lima in very modest conditions and did not suggest a man who had by any means come into a fortune. He had kept an eye upon Benny, in hope some day to bowl him out, but failed to do so. Garcia however, knew his direction to Lima and gave it to me.

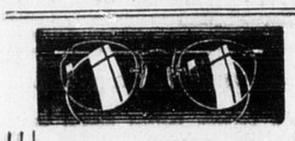
"We heard, six months later, that Juan had sold the place to local people and left the country. And then, turning out an old pocket-book, I found my note of Benny's direction in Lima and took occasion to visit him. But I was too late by a month. Signora Boss welcomed me and related that her husband had received another offer from the North and had accepted it. He was gone, so she said, in search of new guano islands, and proposed to be away some months. She had heard from Truxillo, to say that all was well with him, only a few days before I paid my visit.

"And that was the last ever heard of Benny Boss. He never came home again and his end, like his beginning, was wrapped in mystery. These things all happened half a century ago, you understand, and Benny must, too, most probably be long since dead. He would be more than a hundred years old if still alive. But his parrot is left to bridge the gulf apparently. It may have been still in his old house when I called there, but if so, I did not see it."

They thanked the old man for his story and Tom proposed another drink.

"Another small brandy, my boy, if you please," he answered. "My aged throat is dry. I have not talked so much these many days."

(To be Continued)



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TAKE NOTICE THAT:

1. The Council of the Corporation of the Town of Timmins intends to construct as a local improvement the following Concrete Sidewalks within the Corporation, namely:

STREET	FROM	TO	SIDE
Patricia Blvd.	Toke	105' 8" S. of Leone Ave.	East
Balsam St. South	Kimberley	75' N. of Tisdale Ave.	East
Maple St. South	Kimberley	75' N. of Tisdale Ave.	West
Elm Street North	Seventh	Eighth	East
Elm Street South	Kimberley	Montgomery	West
Mountjoy Street	Kent	Way	West
Kimberley	Pine	Cedar	South
Wende Avenue	Mountjoy	Wilcox	South
Way Avenue	Mountjoy	Wilcox	South
Windsor Avenue	Preston	Rea	North
Murdock Avenue	Cherry	Hemlock	North
Murdock Avenue	Hart	Cherry	North

and intends to specially assess a part of the cost upon the land abutting directly on the work.

2. The estimated cost of the work is $6,838.94 of which $3,252.63 is to be paid by the Corporation. The estimated cost per foot frontage per annum is $1.176. The special assessment is to be paid in ten equal annual instalments and the estimated annual rate per foot frontage is $0.1176.

3. Application will be made by the Corporation to the Ontario Municipal Board for its approval of the undertaking of the said work and any owner may within twenty-one (21) days after the first publication of this Notice, file with the Board his objection to the said work being undertaken.

4. The said Board may approve of the said work being undertaken but before doing so, it may appoint a time and place that any objections to the said work will be considered.

DATED at Timmins, Ontario, this 26th day of May, A.D. 1939.

P. H. MURPHY, Clerk.

42-44

Sacred Cantata To Be Given at United Church, S. Porcupine

Other Items from South Porcupine and the Dome.

South Porcupine, May 29—(Special to The Advance)—A sacred cantata entitled, "Promises of Jesus" is to be given in the United Church on Thursday, June 1st, at 7.30 p.m. by the choir under the direction of Mr. Geo. Hale, Mus.Bac., with Miss Mary McIntosh, A.T.C.M., accompanying. Solos and instrumental selections will also be given.

Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Wilson spent the week-end at their summer cottage at Sesekinika Lake returning on Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. L. S. Snelgrove with Mr. J. Lynn and Mr. A. Wadge returned on Thursday from a motor trip to Toronto.

Mrs. W. Christie is away for a week or two on a motor trip to Toronto and London. On her return she will be accompanied by her son, Jack, who is a student at Western University.

Miss Josephine Cecconi from St Joseph's College, Toronto, is home for the summer.

Miss Vieno Kautto is home for the summer holidays from the University of Toronto.

Miss Murial Olton, of St. Catharines, is visiting her mother, Mrs. Wm. Olton, who is quite ill, at Pottsville.

About thirty members of the Masonic Order left today for Iroquois Falls to be present at the Lodge of Instruction to be held tonight in the town hall. Among others were: Mr. Lloyd Hunkin, who will sing; Mr. W. H. Johns, Mr. J Mason and Mrs. Ron Mansfield.

The Porcupine Women's Association held a lovely tea at the home of Mrs. Maki in Pottsville on Friday afternoon This association works in the interests of Porcupine United Church. A few ladies with the Rev. J. A. Lyttle from South Porcupine attended the tea. Mrs. Mason, president, was assisting, and Mrs. King, along with other ladies. Today in spite of the rain, a number of young ladies who were tagging in the interests of the National Institute for the Blind. Mrs. J. Armstrong, convener of the Committee, would like to thank, not only the taggers but the other ladies of the Committee—Mesdames Bessette, Laforest, Wilson, Farrell and Blood for their co-operation and assistance in the good cause. Mrs. Johns in charge at the Dome Mines had three Girl Guides tagging, Margaret Burton, Betty Curboy and Elaine Leiterman, who tagged every house at Dome and Dome Ex. and who deserve much commendation for their worthy endeavours in the rain. They collected $23.40. Marjorie Ewing, Hazel Steeves, Norma McCaw, Valerie Bessette, Isobel Rapsey, Teresa Miner, Lily Boyko, Mamie Richards, and Mrs. T. Farrell tagged in South Porcupine.

Miss Lilyan Huot's pupils hold a recital on Monday night in the Masonic Hall. All will be welcome and are assured of a pleasant and entertaining evening. Forty-six pupils are taking part and besides pianoforte solos, there will be a short play by three boys, singing and tap dancing.

Mr. Charlie Armstrong spent the week-end in Toronto, visiting Mr. R. J. Smythe en route at Stroud.

Mrs. Gordon Brown is visiting in Englehart.

The Baseball Club draw, which was to take place on May 24th (prize: a suit of clothes) has been postponed until the night of the opening game on June 2nd.

Next Thursday at 8 p.m. the Rev. Cuthbert Robinson, who has spent 19 years in Japan, and is the new rector of Geraldton, is going to lecture on Japan (with lantern slides) in St. Paul's Parish hall.

A meeting was held in the Township Chambers on Friday, at which Mr. V. H. Evans presided, of members of the Skating Rink Committee (of which Mr. Evans is president) at which several matters pertaining to the skating rink were discussed. The building, which must be removed from the present site owing to its encroaching upon necessary public school grounds, was the special subject under discussion; and it was agreed to call a general meeting for Wednesday, June 7th, of all the shareholders. At this meeting some most important propositions and decisions are to be put forward, and it is earnestly urged that all shareholders attend.

Mrs. Wm. Fairhurst, at a special ceremony on Sunday morning in St. Paul's Church will receive at the hands of Mrs. W. H. Johns a life membership in the Woman's Auxiliary, of which organization she has for some years been an officer. She has held the position of treasurer for the Diocese of Moosonee. The membership will be presented after the 8 a.m. Communion which is a special Corporate Communion of the W.A. before the Cochrane Convention.

A White Elephant sale, under the auspices of the Junior League of the United Church, was a successful enterprise on Friday. The White Elephants on sale were mostly novelties donated by different people for which they themselves had no use, but they found other homes quite quickly and realized a fair sum, which the Leaguers will donate to the Building Fund. Mrs. Knechtel to the Building Fund. Mrs. G. Oxby assisting; Miss Helen Spjuth in charge of the lunch bar with Miss N. Hancberry, and Mrs. C. M. Shields. The Young ladies hope to repeat this new idea at a future date.

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Timmins Man Wins Second Money In Firemen's Event

O. J. Clement, of Timmins, Gets Second Prize of $200, First Being Taken by Liskeard Man.

Swastika, May 27—Temiskaming Firemen's Association selected the honorary officers of the association for the year 1939 and 1940 at Culver Park on Wednesday night at midnight.

Honorary president will be W. N. Shaw, of New Liskeard, who will receive his salary cheque of $500 in advance. Vice-president will be O. J. Clement, Timmins, who will receive an emolument of $200. Second vice-president will be C. R. Hanson, Sylvanite Mines, who is to get $75. The secretary is B. Cummings, South Porcupine, who is to receive $50. The treasurer will be E. Van Rassel, 138 Duncan Ave., $25.

The fifteen directors who will each receive $10 for their services, will be Mrs. Rutherford, Swastika, L. Boisvert, Swastika, Ed. Davidson, Bidgood Mines, H. Montrose, South Porcupine, R. J. Brown, Virginiatown, R. Arcand, Malartic, F. Kallis, Kirkland Lake; Bill Feehley, Kirkland Lake; A. Coleman, Exeter, Ont.; P. Barker, Kirkland Lake; E. Tremblay, Rouyn; John Rye, Kirkland Lake; J. B. Marchand, Noranda, R. Monjeau, Amos, Que.; W. Milbury, Kirkland Lake.

The prize winners for the sports on Wednesday afternoon were: Girls, under 8 years, Laura Fiddler, Florence Vallier; boys, under 8 years, Bobby McCallum, George Wilde; girls, under 12 years, Helen Vigrass, Irene Valley; boys under 12 years, Billie Tripp, Bobby Pollock; girls over 12 years, Beatrice Groulx, Alice Long; boys over 12 years, James Lazaron, Ted Lindsay; three-legged race, Groulx and Doyon; Lindsay and Lazaron; married women's race, Mrs. Bruce. First prizes were $1 and second prizes 75 cents.

Although the failure of Kirkland Lake and other nearby municipalities to observe May 24 as a holiday in view of the celebration held throughout Canada on May 22, had an adverse affect on the attendance the affair was a successul one.

At the evening dance there was a good attendance swelled toward the late hour by those who were anxious to see who were selected or the honorary positions of the Temiskaming Firemen's Association.

Timmins Young Man Passes Sixth Year in Medicine

Results were announced last week-end by the Medical Faculty at Toronto University. Only one Timmins student was included in the results published, and there were none from Schumacher or South Porcupine taking the examinations referred to. The successful Timmins student was D. Horwitz who passed his sixth year in medicine at Toronto University.

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NOTICE

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