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Ashes of Lightning

by Vincent Cornier

Author of "The Steel Dutchman," "The Flying Hat," Etc.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

GILES MORETON: Twenty-five, handsome but temperamental. Reputed to be a former R.A.F. pilot, invalided out. Now works as an inspector in the Lowood tank plant.

CAROL GILROY: Daughter of local solicitor, who has taken up war work as a viewster in the Lowood plant. She is interested in Moreton, who mystifies her.

HECTOR FLANAGAN: Works superintendent. Hostile to Moreton.

"RATTY" HELME: Progress clerk, who toadies to Flanagan.

MAJOR - GENERAL SIR ALBERT HARDISTY: General-Officer Commanding the district in which the Lowood works are situated.

CAPTAIN CALTHROP: Intelligence Officer on Hardisty's staff, specially interested in security questions.

for carolling extempore jingles, stepped up. He carried three dead and horribly singed rabbits, an exceedingly bald grouse, and a tail-less pheasant. "What-ho, m' bonny boy! Look what Hitler's given us, off rations!"

But Moreton was not interested in Fruity's giant humours. He looked beyond him—at the narrow and vicious face of Hector Flanagan.

And, beyond Flanagan—to a shambling, half-naked, and redly-blistered shape, which came out of the smoke and drew, menacingly near, to the machine-shop superintendent. Moreton recognised a Jewish refugee, a Czech called Banni—who rocked on agonised feet and slowly lifted an iron bar—to crush in the unsuspecting Flanagan's skull.

CHAPTER XI DEATH CLAIMS ONE

As he saw the iron bar raised above Flanagan's head, Morton was paralysed for a second, in a frightful clasp of fascination.

Ludwig Banni meant murder.

That iron bar had only to describe its arc, and the problem of the renegade Flanagan would be solved. Convinced of the superintendent's complicity in the sabotage work which had already taken place, Moreton was strangely inclined to the evil of compounding with this fearful thing. Of all the sins, he had so recently said to Calthrop, he held treachery to be the most abominable. Then, let this traitor die.

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There was an odd power in his personality which Calthrop found most difficult to analyse—a power which could resolve discordant complexities into strangely simple forms of harmony.

A light waved through a billow of smoke. Men clustered the road, waving and shouting.

"Hey! Pull up there," came one raucous shout. "You're running slap into a bomb crater!"

Calthrop pulled up. Getting out they saw a huge depression barricaded by hastily interlocked larch poles. A special constable, looking important, strode forward—an impressive effort.

"Why now, gentlemen, and where might you be bound for?"

"Oy!" roared a jovial voice, "it's our own little orphan, come back from the storm! Howdy, Giles!" Fruity Flintoff, the fat inspector with a penchant

for carrying extempore jingles, stepped up. He carried three dead and horribly singed rabbits, an exceedingly bald grouse, and a tail-less pheasant. "What-ho, m' bonny boy! Look what Hitler's given us, off rations!"

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herently neat and cleanly man, he had somehow contrived to keep his fairly presentable throughout his night's fire-fighting. Gently the giant lifted the little Jew and began to cover him.

Moreton noticed Flintoff's horror as he saw Banni's bare back. The flesh was corrugated by long purple marks, livid folds, time-healed.

"Gestapo rubber truncheons did that, long ago," Moreton made a bitter aside. "He was once in a concentration camp." Then Moreton turned again to the ill-cast special constable. "Before," he gritted, "I'd allow you to attempt to imitate their methods—I'd tell you! So bite on that!"

Moreton lowered him and covered his tired face.

"Well, and what's the matter here?" Superintendent Millwell pressed forward, but halted when he saw the stilly shape under Flintoff's linen coat. "Oh," he gasped, as he slowly saluted, "I—I didn't know. Who—is it?"

"Merely," said Moreton, in a hard, cracked voice, his eyes closed and his throat working, "another Jew who has died upon a hill!"

CHAPTER XII WITH A GENERAL FOR ESCORT

For a reason best known to his Machiavellian self, it pleased General Sir Albert Hardisty to go out of his way in cultivating Carol Gilroy's acquaintance. So soon as the raid was over he contrived, by some deft method, to leave his wife to her own occasions—while he gallantly escorted the girl to her home, in the Cathedral Close.

The thin smoke, from the moors' burning, was not unpleasant here. Indeed, it had an aromatic and heady essence in its moonlit veils. Those ghostly, golden vapours moved with a breath-taking beauty above the frettings and traceries of the great cathedral.

A lean cat crossed a lawn beneath a huge cedar. The five-fold west window of the fane reflected jewelled gleams, and a rain of most delicate white ash sifted from the gentle winds like the fall of midnight manna—on roses and clematis and cold yews.

"Young woman," sighed the General, "I wouldn't have missed this little walk for words! This—is peace."

Carol smuggled into her coat and looked at him. How very boyish were his eyes, just now.

The admirable Hannah had unscuttled her cat and had put aside her parasol-chopper. As though it were the most usual thing for a distinguished and highly decorated General to arrive at the house at one in the morning, escorting his daughter, she primly showed them into old John Gilroy's study. Everything was just as Carol had said it would be—there was the coddled Irish setter, and the book on Horatian discourses, opened on the table.

By now Calthrop had returned. He carried a box of first-aid appliances taken from the car. To Moreton's astonishment he noticed Calthrop was busy with a hypodermic syringe.

"It is all," Calthrop said solemnly, in answer to Moreton's stunted look of inquiry, "I can do for him. Didn't you know—I'm a doctor." He looked wry. "The Intelligence Corps' back-room."

"But—but he's not that—"

"I'm sorry, old man. He cannot last; too far gone," he sighed. "A shot of this will make it easier."

Banni's gaze caught the gleam of the syringe. He struggled upright and wildness went out of his face. He actually smiled. But he waved the needle away.

Hardisty laughed, and explained.

The men had met before, in their official capacities—for Gilroy, as senior city Alderman and deputy Lord Mayor, had never missed any hospitable function concerning the troops under Hardisty's command. Now they approved one another and settled down to the solid effort of making casual contact into real friendship.

Carol was somewhat alarmed. Her experiences with the General, up to this point, had taught her that he rarely wasted a word of action. And what she new of her father's legal gift for seeing as far through a brick wall as possible, made her wonder.

There was a distinct purpose in this midnight visit. It was also a purpose relevant to her own intimate affairs, and those of the still mysterious Giles Moreton—or Ponsomby-Moreton—or Karl Eidenhausen.

She comforted her mind with recollections of Giles's assurance that the General had known him since his childhood.

Yes, she had many reasons for her bewilderment. But, being a sensible and diplomatic young woman, she soon took herself and her speculations to bed.

When she had retired, John Gilroy made certain adroit and significant moves. He placed a rotund sycamore log on the fire, settled the tobacco jar and the whisky within easy reach, then meditatively filled his big cherrywood pipe.

The General gazed at a portrait, in Kit-Kat framing on the panelled wall obviously a judge of the 18th century, limned by Godfrey Kneller. These Gilroys ran true to breed—elimination of that big brown periwig would result in an astounding likeness to this prosperous solicitor sitting by the hearth-side, waiting—the same humorous square face, sparkling brown eyes, the same investment of patient dignity.

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Twenty Years Ago

(from the Porcupine Advance Eyes)

There was only a small attendance at the annual meeting of the Timmins Board of Trade twenty years ago, and more than once during the evening the old question was asked, "Why do the merchants and others interested show so little interest in the meetings of the Board of Trade, and especially the annual meeting?" No one had the answer to that one. T. F. King, president for 1924, was in the chair. W. S. Macpherson, secretary of the board, presented his report for the year. The total membership for the year was 68, he said. "Should be many times that number," was the comment. "The average attendance at meetings was 12," the report continued. That seemed beyond attempt at comment.

President King referred to the meeting of the Northern Ontario Associated Boards of Trade to be held in February at Timmins and urged that every effort be made to make the occasion a notable one. He said that smaller places like Cochrane, Englehart, Cobalt and other centres in the North had presented notable meetings of the Associated Boards and he hoped that Timmins would do as well the next month. Max Ryan mentioned the new rate on ties on the T. & N. O. Railway. This new freight rate added about 15 cents per tie to the cost of shipping to North Bay and he thought it would practically put the industry out of business in this part of the country. This brought on a general discussion of T. & N. O. freight rates and it was eventually decided to take the matter up again with the T. & N. O. F. King was nominated for president for 1925, but would not stand, saying that he had held the office for two successive years and felt that someone else should take it up for 1925. G. A. Macdonald, H. G. Laidlaw and F. M. Wallingford were then nominated for president, the two first named withdrawing in favour of F. M. Wallingford who was elected by acclamation as president for 1925. Mr. Laidlaw was elected vice-president by acclamation and the rest of the officers were left for another meeting to select.

The Advance twenty years ago mentioned that Mr. Chas. Pierce had returned from a visit to his pine limits in Sisk township, some fifty miles from North Bay. Mr. Pierce expressed himself as delighted with the limits and the pine thereon. He thought the pine the finest in the North. There were 26 square miles in the limits.

"Fire did much damage at the Dome Mine offices about 3 o'clock on Sunday morning, Jan. 6th," said The Advance twenty years ago. "The blaze started in one of the offices, the cause of the fire not being known. Before the fire was brought under control the lower part of the building was gutted and considerable damage done to the upper portion of the structure. The office of the geologist was the worst sufferer, but the general manager's office and that of the general superintendent were also injured by the flames. No maps or other records were spoiled except in the geologist's office, the other offices having put their materials in the vault for the night. The intense cold made fire-fighting very difficult, but the fire brigade did excellent work. It will be about three weeks before the necessary repairs can be completed."

The Advance noted twenty years ago that J. A. Lebris had been elected mayor of Halleybury for 1925 by a majority of 25 over Mr. Poppleton.

One of the big features of this week twenty years ago was the "Bachelors' Night" at the Timmins Caledonian Society. The programme, entertainment, arrangements and everything even to the refreshments, were in charge of bachelor members of the Society, though the bachelors are said to have kidnapped Andy Roberts for the evening and passed him off as a bachelor. However, the evening took the form of a social gathering of the occasion to refer to the expected Society, Mr. and Mrs. Hill, who were returning to Scotland. Mr. and Mrs. Hill were made life members of the Society and wished the best of good fortune and happiness wherever they might be.

A report of the work of the Cochrane District Children's Aid Society for the period from May, 1924, to Dec. 1924,

ly pulled the curtains aside. "But I want you to peep out here."

John Gilroy looked down into the moon-lit quadrangle. A grim shape in full battle-order, a gleaming bayonet protruding from his sloped rifle, guarded the tall Georgian house.

"Not because I am here," the General sombrely stated, "but because your daughter lies asleep in this house." He took a long and searching look at John Gilroy as he let the curtains fall again. "I have come to talk to you about a not insignificant affair of State security—and to warn you that your daughter, as well as Giles Ponsomby-Moreton, will go in some considerable danger for some time in the near future."

"And, General, can you give me a reason?"

"They know too much."

(To be Continued.)

The characters in this story are entirely imaginary. No reference is intended to any living person or to any public or private company.

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been publishing pictures of a new motor car that is said to be able to climb a set of stairs. Wonderful improvements have been made and are being made in automobiles. In a few years it is possible that there may be a motor car that will be able to travel on North Country roads even in the spring and fall.

Members elected to the Separate School Board for 1925 in Timmins were:—D. Laprairie, J. E. Newton and F. Kehoe. There was a very great amount of interest in the election, a very large percentage of the possible vote being polled.

Among the local and personal notes in The Advance ten years ago, there were the following:—Miss Millie Lehman, of Matheson, is reported ill with ptomaine poisoning, thought to be due to eating some canned fruit. "W. McKnight was re-elected mayor of New Liskeard for 1925 by acclamation." "At a children's party in town the other day a little boy was attempting to twist a little girl's arm. The little girl, a vigorous and determined young person, managed to struggle free, and as she did so, hurled at her tormentor, the indignant protest, "Herbert Johnson, I am not your wife." "Some days ago some party unknown threw a brick through the window of the house of the constable at Elk Lake, narrowly missing the constable's head." "Provincial Officer Fenwick, of Porquois Junction leaves this week for Toronto to undergo an operation for a peculiar condition of the jaw. Some months ago while making a search of a farm house in the C-Gnught area, he was struck over the neck and jaw by a broom wielded by the lady of the house. Since then he has been unable to remedy the injury. It is thought the blows from the broom must have injured a nerve. In any event he has been deprived of the proper use of his jaw, and the doctors have ordered an operation to remedy the trouble." "Mr. W. J. Post is the new reeve of Buckle township." "There are 292 students enrolled this year at North Bay Normal school." "Daily newspapers have

Prisoner-of-War Gives Thanks to the Red Cross

During the war there have been many references in The Advance to the wonderful work done by the Red Cross for prisoner-of-war. Early in the war, Mr. Frank McDowell, of Timmins, who was a prisoner-of-war in the last war, told of the fact that he felt that he owed his very life to the Red Cross, as he would have been starved to death as a prisoner-of-war if it had not been for the parcels sent by the Red Cross then. Since that time similar expressions have come from prisoners-of-war in the present war. A Cochrane soldier, Sergeant Lloyd McCauley, puts the matter in a way that is a comfort to those at home, as well as a word of praise for the Red Cross. He says in a recent letter home from a German prison camp that his neck and shoulder wounds are now healed and that he is able to play ball. He adds that he is both comfortable and contented, and has plenty of food, for which he gives great praise to the Canadian Red Cross.

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