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by
**GEORGE BARR
McCUTCHEON**

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RAY WALTERS

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CHAPTER I.

The Message From the Deep.

The two old men sat in the library eyeing the unresponsive blue envelope that lay on the end of the long table nearest the fireplace, where a morry but unnoticed bed of coals crackled fiercely in the vain effort to cry down the shrieks of the bleak December wind that whistled about the corners of the house.

There was something maddening in the fact that the envelope would have to remain unopened until young Frederick Brood came home for the night. They found themselves wondering if by any chance he would fail to come in at all. Their hour for retiring was ten o'clock, day in, day out.

Up to half-past nine they discussed the blue envelope with every inmate of the house, from Mrs. John Desmond, the housekeeper, down to the voiceless but eloquent decanter of port that stood between them, first on the arm of one chair, then the other. They were very old men; they could soliloquize without in the least disturbing each other. An observer would say, during these periods of abstraction, that their remarks were addressed to the decanter and that the poor decanter had something to say in return. But, for all that, their eyes seldom left the broad, blue envelope that had lain there since half-past eight.

They knew that it came directly or indirectly from the man to whom they owed their present condition of comfort and security after half a century of vicissitudes; from the man whose life they had saved more than once in those old, evil days when comforts were so few that they passed without recognition in the maelstrom of events. From midocean James Brood was speaking to his son.

Twenty years ago these two old cronies had met James Brood in one of the blackest holes of Calcutta, a derelict being swept to perdition with the swiftness and sureness of a tide that knows no pause. They found him when the dregs were at his lips, and the stupor of defeat in his brain. Without meaning to be considered Samaritans, good or bad, they dragged him from the depths and found that they had revived a man. Those were the days when James Brood's life meant nothing to him, days when he was tortured by the thought that it would be all too long for him to endure, yet he was not the kind to murder himself as men do who lack the courage to go on living.

Weeks after the rescue in Calcutta these two soldiers of fortune and another, John Desmond, learned from the lips of the man himself that he was not such as they, but rich in this world's goods, richer than the Solomon of their discreet imagination.

What Brood told them of his life brought the grim smile of appreciation to the lips of each. He had married a beautiful foreigner—an Austrian, they gathered—of excellent family, and had taken her to his home in New York city, to the house in lower Fifth avenue where his father and grandfather had lived before him—the house in which two of the wayfarers after twenty years, now sat in rueful contemplation of a blue envelope.

A baby boy came to the Broods in the second year of their wedded life, but before that there had come a man—a music master, dreamy-eyed, handsome, Latin; a man who played upon the harp as only the angels may play. In his delirious ravings Brood cursed this man and the wife he had stolen away from him; he reviled the baby boy, even denying him; he laughed with blood-curdling glee over the manner in which he had cast out the woman who had broken his heart and crushed his pride; he wailed in anguish over the mistake he had made in allowing the man to live that he might gloat and sneer in triumph. This much the three men who lifted him from hell were able to glean from lips that knew not what they said, and they were filled with pity. Later on, in a rational weakness, he told them more, and without curses. A deep, silent, steadfast bitterness succeeded the violent ravings. He became a wayfarer with them, quiet, dogged, fatal; where they went he also went; what they did, also did he. Soon he led, and they followed. Into the dark places of the world they plunged, for peril meant little to him, death even less. They no longer knew days of privation—he shared his wealth with them; but they knew no rest, no peace, no safety. Life had been a whirlwind before they came upon James Brood; it was a hurricane afterward.

Twice John Desmond, younger than Danbury Dawes and Joseph Riggs, saved the life of James Brood by acts of unparalleled heroism; once in a South African jungle when a lioness fought for her young, and again in upper India, when single-handed

he neared a horde of Hindus on days while his comrade lay wounded in a cavern. Dawes and Riggs, in the Himalayas, crept down the wall of a precipice, with five thousand feet between them and the bottom of the gorge, to drag him from a narrow ledge upon which he lay unconscious after a misstep in the night. More than once—aye, more than a dozen times—one or the other of these loyal friends stood between him and death, and times without numbers he, too, turned the grim reaper aside for them.

John Desmond, gay, handsome and still young as men of his kind go, met the fate that brooks no intervention. He was the first to drop out of the ranks. In Cairo, during a curious period of inactivity some ten months after the advent of James Brood, he met the woman who conquered his venturesome spirit—a slim, calm, pretty English governess in the employ of a British admiral's family. They were married inside of six months. He took her home to the little Maryland town that had not seen him in years.

Ten years passed before James Brood put his foot on the soil of his native land. Then he came back to the home of his fathers, to the home that had been desecrated, and with him came the two old men who now sat in his huge library before the crackling fire. He could go on with life, but they were no longer fit for its cruel hardships. His home became theirs. They were to die there when the time came.

Brood's son was fifteen years of age before he knew, even by sight, the man whom he called father. Up to the time of the death of his mother, in the home of her fathers, he had been kept in seclusion.

There had been deliberate purpose in the methods of James Brood in so far as this unhappy child was concerned. When he cast out the mother he set his hand heavily upon her future. Fearing—even feeling—the infernal certainty that this child was not his own, he planned with machiavellian instinct to hurt her to the limit of his powers and to the end of her days. He knew she would hunger for this baby boy of hers, that her heart could be broken through him, that her punishment could be made full and complete. He sequestered the child in a place where he could not be found, and went his own way, grimly certain that he was making her pay! She died when Frederick was eight years old, without having seen him again after that dreadful hour when, protest-



The Patient Butler, Jones, Had Made Four Visits to the Library.

ing her innocence, she had been turned out into the night and told to go whither she would but never to return to the house she had disgraced. James Brood heard of her death when in the heart of China, and he was a haggard wreck for months thereafter. He had worshipped this beautiful Viennese. He could not wreak vengeance upon a dead woman; he could not hate a dead woman. He had always loved her. A few years after his return to New York he brought her son back to the house in lower Fifth avenue and tried, with bitterness in his soul, to endure the word "father" as it fell from lips to which the term was almost strange.

The old men, they who sat by the fire on this wind-swept night and waited for the youth of twenty-two to whom the blue missive was addressed, knew the story of James Brood and his wife Matilde and they knew that the former had no love in his heart for the youth who bore his name. Their lips were sealed. Garrulous on all other subjects, they were as silent as the grave on this. They, too, were constrained to hate the lad. He made not the slightest pretense of appreciating their position in the household; to him they were pensioners, no more, no less; to him their deeds of valor were offset by the deeds of his father; there was nothing left over for a balance on that score. He was positively

considerate; he was even kindly disposed toward their vagaries and whims; he endured them because there was nothing else left for him to do. But, for all that, he desired them—justifiably so, no doubt. It one bears in mind the fact that they dignified more to James Brood than did his long-neglected son. The cold reserve that extended to the young man did not carry beyond him in relation to any other member

of the household so far as James Brood was concerned. The unhappy pensioner in their acquaintance, came to realize that there was little in common between him and the man he called father. After a while the eager light died out of his own eyes and he no longer strove to encourage the intimate relations he had counted upon as a part of the recompense for so many years of separation and loneliness. It required but little effort on his part to meet his father's indifference with a coldness quite as pronounced; he had never known the meaning of filial love; he had been taught by word of mouth to love the man he had never seen, and he had learned as one learns astronomy—by calculation. He hated the two old men because his father loved them.

The patient butler, Jones, had made no less than four visits to the library since ten o'clock to awaken them and peek them off to bed. Each time he had been ordered away, once with the joint admonition to 'mind his own business.'

"But it is nearly midnight," protested Jones irritably, with a glance at the almost empty decanter.

"Jewas," said Danbury Dawes, with great dignity and an eye that deceived him to such a degree that he could not for the life of him understand why Jones was attending them to bed. "Jones, you ought to be in bed, don't you—both of you. What you mean, sir, by coming in—hic—here this time o' night dis-disturb us—"

"You infernal ingrate," broke in Mr. Riggs fiercely, "don't you dare to touch that bottle, sir. Let it alone!"

"It's time you were in bed," pronounced Jones, taking Mr. Dawes by the arm. Mr. Dawes sagged heavily to his chair and grinned triumphantly. He was a short, very fat old man.

"Take him to bed, Jones," said Mr. Riggs firmly. "He's drunk and—and utterly useless at a time like this. Take him along."

"Who the dev—hic—il are you, sir?" demanded Mr. Dawes, regarding Mr. Riggs as if he had never seen him before.

"You are both drunk," said Jones, succinctly.

The heavy front door closed with a bang at that instant and the sound of footsteps came from the hall—a quick firm tread that had decision in it.

Jones cast a furtive, nervous glance over his shoulder.

"I'm sorry to have Mr. Frederic see you like this," he said, biting his lip. "He hates it so."

The two old men made a commendable effort to stand erect, but no effort to stand alone. They linked arms and stood shoulder to shoulder.

"Show him in," said Mr. Riggs, magnificently.

"Now we'll find out was in telegram off briny deep," said Mr. Dawes, spraddling his legs a little farther apart in order to declare a stance front.

"It's worth waiting up for," said Mr. Riggs.

"Absolutely," said his staunch friend, Frederic Brood, who appeared in the door, stopping short just inside the heavy curtains. There was a momentary picture, such as a stage director would have arranged. He was still wearing his silk hat and top coat, and one glove had been halted to the process of removal. Young Brood stared at the group of three, a fresh stare of amazement. A crooked smile came to his lips.

"Somewhat later than usual, I see," he said, and the glove came off with a jerk. "What's the matter, Jones? Is he bellion?"

"No, sir. It's the wireless, sir."

"Wireless?"

"Briny deep," said Mr. Dawes, vaguely pointing.

"Oh," said young Brood, crossing slowly to the table. He picked up the envelope and looked at the inscription. "Oh," said he again, in quite a different tone on seeing that it was addressed to him. "From father, I dare say," he went on, a fine line appearing between his eyebrows.

The old men leaned forward, fixing their blue eyes upon the missive.

"Let's hear the worst, Freddy," said Mr. Riggs.

The young man ran his finger under the flap and deliberately drew out the message. There ensued another picture. As he read his eyes widened and then contracted; his firm young jaw became set and rigid. Suddenly a short, bitter exclamation fell from his lips and the paper crumpled in his hand. Without another word, he strode to the fireplace and tossed it upon the coals. It flared for a second and was wafted up the chimney, a charred, feathery thing.

Without deigning to notice the two old men who had sat up half the night to learn the contents of that wonderful thing from the sea, he whirled on his heel and left the room. One might have noticed that his lips were drawn in a mirthless, sardonic smile, and that his eyes were angry.

"Oh, Lord!" sighed Danbury Dawes, blinking, and was on the point of sitting down abruptly. The arm of Jones prevented.

"I never was so insulted in my—" began Joseph Riggs, feebly.

"Steady, gentlemen," said Jones, "Lean on me, please."

Continued next week

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson XII.—Second Quarter, For
June 18, 1916.

THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Text of the Lesson, Acts xvi, 19-34.
Memory Verses, 33, 34—Golden Text,
Acts xvi, 31—Commentary Prepared
by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

In verses 16-18 of our lesson chapter we read of an evil spirit possessing a woman who, as she followed Paul and his friends, cried out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation." She continued to do this many days, but Paul, being grieved by even so good and true a testimony from such a source and knowing her to be controlled by an evil spirit, commanded the spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus Christ, and he did. It was certainly strange to hear such a testimony from such a source, but an evil spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum one day when Jesus was present cried out, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God!" And Jesus commanded the spirit to come out of the man (Mark i, 23-26).

Truth may be talked without being known in the heart, but the Lord reads the heart and does not want testimony from His enemies. Knowing the truth about the Lord Jesus does not save any one, yet it may be that many think they are saved because they believe that Jesus lived and died and rose again and that He is the Son of God. But it is he that hath the Son of God that hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. Only such as receive Him become children of God (I John v, 12; John i, 12).

When those who employed this woman and made money by her saw that this source of income was taken from them they incited a riot against Paul and Sias and had them beaten and cast into prison, and the jailer, having received a charge to keep them safely, put them in the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks (verses 19-24). There are some things right on the surface of this record, and one is that people are apt to grow very angry if they are making money wrongfully and their business is interfered with. Compare the riot of the silversmiths at Ephesus in chapter xix, and then think of the opposition of the liquor dealers and all who dishonor Jesus Christ to the work and teaching of Rev. William Sunday and all true evangelists; also the opposition of those who profit by graft to those who desire righteousness.

Then notice that if you won't let the devil help you he will take pains to show you how he can hate you and persecute you. Compare in Ezra iv, 1-5, the decided opposition of those who were not permitted to help in the work. There are still those who are ready to help in many a good work if they may belong to the devil while they do it. But if asked to renounce the devil and to receive the Lord Jesus and put their trust in His great sacrifice as the Son of God, then one is apt to witness the enmity of the carnal mind against God.

How grand was the victory of faith in these men of God, who, with sore and bleeding backs and feet in the stocks, could praise the God whose they were and whom they served and talk with Him in heaven from their prison! Not only did the other prisoners hear them praising God, but they were heard in heaven, and suddenly the earth was shaken, and the prison, too; prison doors were opened and every one's bonds loosed (verses 25, 26). Oh, how great and wonderful is our God, the God of Israel, who only doest wonders! (Ps. lxxix, 18, 19.) As some one has said, these men had not influence enough on earth at Philippi to save them from this shameful treatment (I Thess. ii, 2) and from prison, but they had influence enough in heaven to shake the earth. It was midnight when they prayed and sang praises, but the God of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps; He watches over His people night and day (Ps cxxi, 4; Isa. xxvii, 3).

Not only was the prison shaken, but the keeper was so shaken when he saw the prison doors open that he would have killed himself if Paul had not cried out, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here!" He was shaken deep down in his soul, too, for, falling down trembling before Paul and Sias, he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Then did Paul at this unexpected midnight service speak to him and to his house the word of the Lord, and they believed—that is, they received the Lord Jesus Christ—and, being saved, they confessed Christ in baptism and were all filled with rejoicing. The second saved household at Philippi (verses 14, 15, 27-34).

Reading of saved households, I always think of the Lord's word to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house," and I find great encouragement to believe that the Lord still loves to save households. It would seem that before the baptism those poor scarred backs were made more comfortable, and then what a love feast they must have had in the jailer's house, and what joy there was in heaven as well as on earth! Next morning those who had imprisoned the apostles wanted to let them go privately, but Paul insisted upon a public acquittal, which was granted them, and after a call upon Lydia they departed.

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