

# The Aztec Mystery

A Thrilling Story of the Old West

BY MURRAY LEINSTER

The sun went down over the mountains as the stagecoach rattled over the pass toward Moleville. A sudden coolness descended immediately. Before the light had faded completely away the breaths of the horses were already showing misty in the chill. The girl in the stage shivered and drew her coat more closely about her and rearranged the laprobe her companion had somewhat officiously adjusted.

The driver turned his head and spat. "You fellows," he observed acerbically to a pair of lounging figures in the back of the stage, "y' might get that artillery of yours unlimbered. Make a show o' earnin' yuh pay, anyhow."

A match glowed as a cigarette was lighted. There was the creaking of leather as if hostlers were being eased into position. Inside the coach the girl stirred uneasily.

"Mr. Tilford, are those man guards?"

"Of course," said the man beside her, easily. "Just a precaution of course. There's no real danger."

The girl frowned. "But is the state of things really so bad?"

"Just a precaution," repeated Tilford easily. Then he added with belated gallantry. "The stage has a valuable cargo tonight."

"I know," said the girl, her frown persisting, "the mine pay-roll."

Tilford murmured in her ear. "I'll go into details later. It isn't wise to talk just now." Then in his natural voice, he added, "There's Moleville ahead. You can see the lights about the mine."

He pointed, and very far away and far below there were little glowing yellow pinpoints of light, with brighter ones of a different color bunched together.

"We're a good ten miles away or road."

The explanation was cut short. The leaders of the team abruptly shied, slowed and came to a stop.

"Dawgzgone!" said a plaintive voice from the box.

A boulder had dislodged from the hillside above and now effectively barred the way. The narrowness of the road and the drop to the left and the steepness of the hillside to the right ruled out any idea of a detour.

A soft voice came from the boulder strewn hill. "Put 'em up, Jake. It's me."

The driver jerked his arms skyward with a pained expression. "Dawgzgone yuh, Sonny! Yuh make me tired!"

"Who's with yuh?" asked the drawling voice from the boulders.

"Tilford, an' a lady, an' a couple fellers."

The stage lurched quietly as if a weight had been removed, as if someone had dropped noiselessly to the road. It lurched again. Inside, Tilford's teeth chattered suddenly. The girl bit her lip and searched the hillside with her eyes. Tumbled rocks showed vaguely in the deepening dusk, though the sky was bright with the clear, unilluminating light of the sunset afterglow.

There was a curious, deadly stillness. The drawing voice came once more. "I'm after the mine pay-roll; Tilford can chuck it out. Sorry 't discommode the lady!"

"BANG!" A heavy calibre pump gun went off beneath the stage. It went off again. Then there were two guns at work, pouring in a deadly, raking fire of .45-70 bullets at the clump of rocks from which the voice seemed to have come. The two repeaters set up a roaring that was deafening.

From the hillside there was no reply. No flash of flame. No shot. Not even a cry.

Below the stage the stabbing flashes of light spat out. The curious reek of burn powder drifted upward in strangling thickness. The roll of rifle fire rattled on and on when suddenly it slackened. One gun was empty. The rifles clattered in the stone road as they were dropped and six-guns took their places in the hands of the

guards. The cocking of the six-guns sounded strangely loud in the stillness that fell about the stage.

And yet there was silence. No sound or movement from the hill.

The stage driver sat like a statue with his hands held aloft. The girl in the stage bit her lip again. Tilford's teeth chattered on in the stillness for a moment and stopped.

Then the driver said in a peculiar bitterness. "It kinda looks like yuh got it: this time, Tilford."

Tilford stirred. He opened his mouth and swallowed, and courage returned with a rush. "You men go up and make sure," he ordered loudly. "If he stirs when you reach him, don't hesitate to shoot! To kill!"

There was another cautious pause. A movement below the stage. Then another. The two guards moved carefully forward. Their six-guns ready. They reached the first of the boulders—and two shots sounded as one. One of the guards spun half way around and dropped his six-gun. The other reeled and fell.

Silence again. The girl gasped in horror now, and the chattering of Tilford's teeth was pronounced. Then a voice said quietly. "Don't be scared, lady. Neither of 'em ain't dead. I got one in the shoulder an' creased the other. They was kinda outlined against the sky."

A figure materialized suddenly among the stones and came confidently down to the road. It was a young man, quite unmasked, in chaps and shirt of orthodox cowpuncher style.

"That there," he drawled, "it was a right good idea, Tilford, but yuh forgot I got brains, too, an' yuh forgot: there's some light still left. Pass out the pay-roll."

Tilford's knees crooked automatically, but a small hand was laid on his arm. The girl made a quick movement. A tiny, toy-sized revolver bore more or less steadily upon the highwayman's breast. He was no more than three feet away.

"Now," said the girl crisply, "how you put your hands up!"

The highwayman did not obey. Instead, he looked straight in her eyes and smiled, and then deliberately placed his cupped hand over the muzzle of her weapon. "I ain't just certain, ma'am," he drawled pleasantly, "just how 't handle a situation like this. If yuh pull that there trigger, yuh goin' to mess me all up. But I hope yuh ain't got the nerve 't pull it."

He was making no move to wrest the revolver away. He was smiling at her as he pressed his hand against the muzzle. But the flare of triumph in the girl's eyes faded to a look of horror as she looked involuntarily at her own weapon. An explosion—

She gasped in horror at the thought of firing it, pressed close against his flesh. She jerked her hand away in a panic lest it go off. And the highwayman tossed the little weapon in the air and caught it.

"Thank you, ma'am," he said gravely. "I'd 'a' known how to handle a gun, but a gunlady is kinda new out thisaway." His voice changed.

"Tilford, hand me that there pay-roll."

Trembling, Tilford obeyed. The highwayman tucked the satchel under his arm. "I'm right sorry to've held yuh up like this, ma'am," he said apologetically. "I'll leave yuh gun on the boulder wonder. On 't kinda like to compliment yuh, ma'am, or tryin' to stick me up, if yuh wouldn't mind."

The girl had recovered from the horror that had made her drop the gun. Now she seemed angry at her own weakness. "You p-ssed it," she said angrily. "I'm sorry I was too startled!"

"I'm glad you was, ma'am," said the outlaw, with the beginning of a smile hovering about his lips. "That there was my gun hand."

"I've heard of it," the girl flared suddenly. "You're Sonny Holman, and you've killed enough men with that gun hand! You claim to own the Aztec mine. You rob its payrolls and its shipments of ore. You've nearly bankrupted it, all with your gun hand! I can see you'd miss it!"

The outlaw grinned deprecatingly. "Somethin' like that, ma'am, all but the killin's. I deny them right emphatic. But y'see I do own the mine an' this here is the only way I can collect what's due me."

The girl's fists clenched. "I'll hope to be present when you do collect what's due you!"

"Shucks," protested Sonny, "yuh wishin' a jinx on me, ma'am! But I'll promise yuh to reform, ma'am, just as soon as I'm settled with that son of a gun that claims 't own the Aztec."

"Laurier, of course!" said the girl scornfully.

"Yes'm," said Sonny politely. "J. H. Laurier, ma'am. From your tone, ma'am, I kinda gather yuh don't enjoy my society. I'm sorry to've bothered yuh. I didn't expect to see yuh, ma'am. I'd kinda hoped to find Laurier on board tonight. I rec'n that'll



Lillian Ellis, famous continental actress, born in Wales, whose features will beautify Barcelona's bonds. The Spaniards know how to pick them, don't you think?

have to be my excuse for upsetting yuh." He started to back away.

"I see," said the girl coldly, "you're not only out as a thief tonight, but as a murderer."

Sonny stopped. For an instant his jaw clenched. "If you was a man, ma'am," he began unsteadily.

Jake interrupted from the driver's seat. "Yuh're goin' to make me mad yet, Sonny," he said venomously. "Shut up an' git that stone outter the way. This is four times yuh held me up an' one day I'm goin' to get real freated an' blow hell outter yuh."

The highwayman seemed to be struggling to control his temper. He grinned suddenly and swept off his hat. "Ma'am," he drawled, "I pay yuh the compliment of sayin' yuh made me madder than any man I ever saw. But Laurier murdered my uncle when he stole the Aztec, even if he hired it done. An' I won't murder him if I get him. I'll give him a gun, ma'am, an' I'll give him a fair show, but I'll kill him as sure as Gawd made 'em green apples."

The girl shrank back. The outlaw turned on his heel and went to the boulder. He laid her little weapon down and rounded a curve in the road. A moment later a horse's hoofs were heard, clattering away along the rocky road. They dwindled in the distance and ceased.

(To be continued.)

## Against Clocks

By Amanda Benjamin Hall in "Troubadour."

Put not your trust in clocks, I say  
For clocks are faithless fellows,  
Begudging further stint of day  
Poor lads before the gallows!

Such tedious talkers, tick on tick,  
Their discourge is the bane  
Of persons lying parched and sick,  
For they inform the pain.

How long it's pulse, how long 'twill  
run  
Before it finds surcease  
At last. When fevered nights are  
done,  
When there is light and peace.

They set a swift, impatient pace  
With a beguiling chime,  
I've known one wear the straightest  
face  
And tell the falsest time.

Once on a hill-top wreathed with  
flower,  
In thyme and sun-sweet clover,  
A clock's face, leaning from a tower,  
Espied me and my lover:

Two, having neither dials nor charts  
To count the minutes by,  
With but the beating of their hearts  
To gauge eternity.

Affronted, then it told the town,  
It drove its engines hard  
And fast—it would not throble  
down  
Their fury, nor retard

Their haste. When love lay like a  
seed  
Sown deeply, silently,  
It still ticked on—nor seemed to  
heed  
That time had stopped for me.

Roman Treasures  
Found in Algeria

Algiers, Algeria.—Important discoveries have been made in the ruins of a former Roman town near Sank-Ahras, south of Bona in the Department of Constantine, Algeria.

It is evident that the excavated area was the necropolis of the ancient town, for a large vault has been unearthed containing several niches for lamps, and gold and silver ornaments. Hidden in a deep well that has not yet been sounded were three marble statues. One probably represents the Roman god Silvanus, similar to a statue in the Louvre.

Cut Flowers  
Amid the clangour of the city's street,  
The busy plying of industry's loom,  
There is a spot where noise and nature  
meet.

A spot whence comes the soft sweet  
scent of bloom,  
Fresh as the morn, the fragrant flowers  
lend  
A touch of colour to the drab and  
grey;

And heavy-laden toilers as they wend  
Look on them, and are spirit-borne  
away

To some far, lonely garden, where  
the sun  
Is shadowed by the tree-tops all  
day long.

Where harmony and happiness are  
one,  
And naught is heard save all the  
birds' sweet sound.

—Ruddick Millar.

Wish of Content  
Who would not be covetous, and  
with reason, if health could be  
purchased with gold? Who not ambitious,  
if it were at the command of power,  
or restored by honor? But alas! a  
white staff will not help gouty feet to  
walk better than a common cane; nor  
a blue riband bind up a wound so well  
as a flannel; the glitter of gold or of  
diamonds will but hurt sore eyes,  
instead of curing them; and an aching  
head will be no more eased by wearing  
a crown instead of a common night-  
cap.—Sir W. Temple.

Happiness  
Every attempt to make others happy,  
every sin left behind, every temptation  
trampled under foot, every step  
forward in the cause of what is good,  
is a step nearer the cause of Christ.—  
Dean Stanley.

SAVED IMPORTED DRESS  
"After a little wearing, a lovely green voile—an imported dress—lost colors so completely that it was not wearable. A friend who had admired it asked me why I wasn't wearing it any more. On hearing the reason, she advised buying it and recommended Diamond Dyes. To make a long story short, it turned out beautifully. I have a lovely new dress that really cost just 15 cents—the price of one package of Diamond Dyes.

"I have since used Diamond Dyes for both tinting and dyeing. They do either equally well. I am not an expert dyer but I never have a failure with Diamond Dyes. They seem to be made so they always go on smoothly and evenly. They never spot, streak or run; and friends never know the things I dye with Diamond Dyes are dyed at all!"

—Mrs. R. F., Quebec.

## The Household Word For Tea

# "SALADA" TEA

"Fresh from the Gardens"

## Soviet To Stage Own Fashion Revue This Spring

Moscow.—The Soviet capital will witness its first "fashion show." It will be so different from similar shows in the outside world that it scarcely deserves the name.

An exhibition of sartorial models submitted by designers, artists, scientists and ordinary mortals is being organized, with prizes for those judged most suitable for Soviet conditions. Practical and sanitary considerations, it is pointed out here, rather than "fashion" or "style," will determine the winners.

The exhibition, under the auspices of the clothing trust, raises an interesting question about the future of Soviet clothes. Will the new Russia follow the dictates of Paris and other foreign style centers? Or will it develop styles of its own? As yet the question is somewhat academic. There are not enough clothes to go around and no margin to spare for style.

Women in Moscow, Leningrad and other large cities, who are interested in clothes, do not think twice in answering the question. They definitely want to follow European styles. They watch carefully foreign motion pictures, the few foreign fashion magazines that are smuggled into the country and the dress of foreign visitors for guidance.

The clothing trust, however, is not so sure about this issue. Its officials talk about the "socialistic aims" of their industry rather than its fashion side. A spokesman of the trust said that capitalistic countries spent millions of dollars in producing new styles and discarding old ones. This was a form of waste, he said, which the Soviets would avoid.

The "fashion show" is one of the methods for interesting the public in this undertaking. Every one has been invited to submit sartorial ideas. The prize-winning models will become standards for mass production.

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## Newspapers in the School of Future?

Schoolbooks and newspapers may become as inseparable as the three R's if parents heed the advice of Prof. Walter B. Pitkin of Columbia University. Professor Pitkin advises that children be drawn into the family circle of news discussion—this to serve as an important supplement to their school work and arouse their interest in world affairs.

The suggestion is an excellent one. But to carry it out with benefit to the children, parents and "big" sisters and brothers will have to assume a responsibility sometimes overlooked when news is discussed at home. They will have to make a habit of thinking and speaking on constructive subjects and avoiding the printed gossip they sometimes repeat to their own and their children's detriment.

The suggestion that newspapers be used to aid in educating their children therefore implies that only the best publications of this class can be used. In selecting a paper for this purpose parents should ask themselves what sort of thinking they would have their children do. Would they have them develop outlooks through which they might view world affairs with some understanding? Would they have them finding out how mankind is advancing economically, politically, religiously? Or would they have taken exercise their curiosity in finding out in how many ways a crime may be committed? By their answers to these questions they may guide themselves in the purchase of their newspapers and in their discussion of affairs with their children.

No doubt parents will acknowledge that by following Professor Pitkin's advice they will gain as much as their children. For they know that to answer the direct questions of a child requires a clear knowledge of the subject under discussion. The discipline thus put upon their thinking would result in a more alert mentality and in something of that simplicity for which sages have admired children.

Another noteworthy aspect of Professor Pitkin's suggestion is that it would place upon newspapers a responsibility that too many of them deny—the responsibility of molding thought. The newspaper already has taken an important place in education, whether or not it cares to accept that fact. And no amount of side-stepping can release it from the duty of occupying that place to the benefit of the newspaper reader.—The Christian Science Monitor.

Worm infestation is frequently the cause of pigs not doing well. A few worms in the intestines or in the lungs of a pig may not cause any noticeable symptoms, but many worms will bring on all the evidence of unthrift.

The young pig from a few days old on up to four months old, is more seriously injured by worms than the older pig. So we say protect the young pig. Both Round Worms and Lung Worms cause pigs to cough. This symptom should be regarded with suspicion, as indicating the presence of worms if the pigs are unthrifty and not making satisfactory gains. Oil of Wormseed is one of the most satisfactory drugs to use in removing Round Worms. Pigs must be very hungry to take Oil of Wormseed, which may be given in the feed. See Ontario Bulletin 340 "Parasites to Swine." Pens should be thoroughly cleaned up and then kept as clean and dry as possible. Sanitary conditions will prevent in a large measure re-infestation, which takes place when the pig swallows the infective worm egg. As a matter of interest I mention that 't large Round Worm of Swine is capable of producing 20,000 eggs a day, each of which will develop into a worm should it find its way into the intestine of a pig. To destroy the worms, maintain sanitary conditions and scald the pen floors. This is important, no eggs or worms. Hot water is a cheap disinfectant and the best worm destroyer. Apply it freely to the pen's floors.

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Unthrifty Pigs

Worm infestation is frequently the cause of pigs not doing well. A few worms in the intestines or in the lungs of a pig may not cause any noticeable symptoms, but many worms will bring on all the evidence of unthrift.

The young pig from a few days old on up to four months old, is more seriously injured by worms than the older pig. So we say protect the young pig. Both Round Worms and Lung Worms cause pigs to cough. This symptom should be regarded with suspicion, as indicating the presence of worms if the pigs are unthrifty and not making satisfactory gains. Oil of Wormseed is one of the most satisfactory drugs to use in removing Round Worms. Pigs must be very hungry to take Oil of Wormseed, which may be given in the feed. See Ontario Bulletin 340 "Parasites to Swine." Pens should be thoroughly cleaned up and then kept as clean and dry as possible. Sanitary conditions will prevent in a large measure re-infestation, which takes place when the pig swallows the infective worm egg. As a matter of interest I mention that 't large Round Worm of Swine is capable of producing 20,000 eggs a day, each of which will develop into a worm should it find its way into the intestine of a pig. To destroy the worms, maintain sanitary conditions and scald the pen floors. This is important, no eggs or worms. Hot water is a cheap disinfectant and the best worm destroyer.