

# The Aztec Mystery

A Thrilling Story of the Old West

BY MURRAY LEINSTER

## SYNOPSIS.

The stage running into Moleville is held up and robbed of a mine payroll by Sonny Holman, who has a habit of robbing the payrolls of the Aztec mine. He explains by saying he is the real owner of the mine. The stage prepares to proceed, bearing the two wounded guards, Tilford, manager of the mine, and a girl passenger who has openly accused Holman of being a murderer as well as a thief.

## CHAPTER II.

Jake lowered his hands, bit off a huge chew of tobacco, and climbed down into the road. He bent over the fallen man and felt his breast and then his head, and swore admiringly. "Hut much, Pete?" he asked of the other guard. "This here is the neatest crease yuh ever saw. Sonny is a shootin' son of a gun."

"Nope," grunted the second man, working with neckerchief and tustin to bandage his arm and stop the bleeding.

Jake doused the fallen man with water and went to the other's aid. A few minutes later he was muttering angrily as he tested the weight of the boulder in the road. "I wish that feller could hold folks up without gettin' so gay," he said bitterly. "This here's goin' to take work to get by."

Tilford was still motionless in the stagecoach. The girl, her hands clenched tightly, spoke with her voice enforcedly even. "You take this hold-up quite calmly," she observed. "It doesn't seem to bother you."

"We're kinder used to it, ma'am," said the guard. "Y' can't blame Sonny for pluggin' us. We tried right hard to drill him. But he's a pretty good feller, in his way. He don't aim to ruin nobody if he can help it."

The girl shivered. "He said he'd have killed Laurier."

"He's got right good reason to," observed Jake acidly. "Mistuh Tilford, I need yuh aid an' assistance in removin' this here boulder." He paused. "Mistuh Tilford?"

Tilford got out of the stage-coach. There was little or no light, which was perhaps as well for him. His face was a pasty gray. He shoved, at first weakly and then with more strength. The guard who had been creased by Sonny's bullet stirred and moved and managed to sit up, to stare blankly about him.

Together, Tilford and the stage driver toppled the boulder on its side. From that position it was comparatively easy to roll it to the edge of the road and send it tumbling down the mountain side.

The four men climbed into the sledge, the lately-creased man being helped in by Jake. With a crackling of the long whip, the stage took up its interrupted journey. Jake seemed inexplicably cheerful for one with his normally embittered temperament. Presently he observed: "Ma'am, I'm right sorry this here thing happened, but it coulda been a lot worse. Sonny's a irritatin' son of a gun, but he don't never steal for nobody, but the Aztec."

"Why doesn't he claim the mine through the courts?"

"He tried it, ma'am," said Jake. "He ain't got a legal leg to stand on. But though I'll plug him if I get a chance whilst he's holdin' me up, otherwise I'm for him."

"Even to murder?" demanded the girl.

Jake chewed and spat. "That snake Laurier, ma'am, yes," he said in sudden acidity. "Most folks agree with me."

The girl bit her lip. The stage-coach rolled on. It reached the level ground and picked up speed, traveling at a fast trot across the valley bottom on a road that was hock deep in alkali dust.

A little distance out they came upon a pair of cowboys weaving in their saddles on their way back to their ranches with the previous day's mail. Other riders, later and thirstier, were riding in. And suddenly there were lights to right and left and sombre-red Mexicans and cowponies in rows against hitching racks, and glaring lamps in saloons and stores and tiny music from the Roaring Zephyr and its saloon and dance-hall competitors.

Moleville was not a large town. It owed its existence first to the freak uncropping of quartz ore that placed the Aztec mine nearly in the centre of the Gila Valley, and second to the large and small ranches that were scattered through the main valley and the tributary canyons that wound into the mountains. Aside from these two sources of trade, it had no reason for existing.

Horsemen reined aside to give the stage roadway, and some waved to Jake Hornaby on the box. The injuries of the two guards were not so obvious as to be noticed from the street, especially since the only lighting came from the welcoming glows of saloons and dance-halls.

Jake spoke abruptly. "Ma'am," he said curtly, "there's goin' to be a lot of fuss when we pull up an' tell 'em that Sonny's held us up again. But you remember what I told yuh. That there Laurier feller that grabbed the Aztec an' druv Sonny on the road, he's a snake, ma'am, a snake! Yuh'll

be sympathizin' with Sonny an' cussin' out that Laurier yuhself when yuh know the whole story."

He reined in. Mexican handlers came out for the horses. The girl in the stagecoach stood up and stepped out on Tilford's arm. "It's hardly likely," she said coldly to the stage driver. Her face was very pale. "I came to Moleville on account of this particular outlaw. He has practically ruined the Aztec mine. And I happen to be the Laurier, the snake that owns it!"

Jake's jaw dropped. He stared. "Lordy!" he said weakly. "Lordy!" He scratched his head and grinned sheepishly. "Lordy, ma'am," he said at last, "there is sure goin' to be some scrap between yuh an' him, ma'am, an' it's goin' to be kinda divertin' to watch!"

Jake Hornaby was not alone in considering that it would be diverting to watch the scrap between Sonny Holman and Janet Laurier over the Aztec mine. All of Moleville chuckled at the prospect. Opinion in the town was nearly evenly divided about Sonny, anyhow. Most admitted that he had a moral right to the mine, but not everybody approved of his method of asserting it.

His uncle had been in partnership with another desert rat when they came upon the outcropping of ore that was now the Aztec. They filed upon it in due and proper form. One of the oldesters went to Denver to raise capital. He carried a power of attorney from his partner so he could sign any necessary papers.

But, in those old days, he did not return with good news. Instead, strangers came to the valley to take over the claim. They produced what seemed to be an authentic transfer of the mine to one Laurier, which was certainly signed by the partner of the older Holman. Legally, the document was airtight. But the other desert rat returned breathing fire and slaughter, claimed that his signature had been obtained by fraud and while he was drunk, and in maintaining his claim got shot by a member of the usurping party. He died in the arms of Sonny Holman's uncle, fiercely declaring that he hadn't meant to sell the mine, and left his share to his partner.

The partner, Sonny's uncle, was killed in turn while grimly camped on what he still considered his property. A deputy marshal had been assigned to evict him, but the old prospector's body was found with a .38 rifle bullet in the back, whereas the deputy marshal had fired a .45 revolver from the front; and it had taken a certain amount of effort to smooth over the discrepancy. That had been done. Now the mine was a steady producer. Its levels went down twelve hundred feet. Its own mill concentrated the ore and its own wagons hauled that ore to the railroad twenty miles away. It had become the centre and indeed the reason for the existence of Moleville. And Sonny Holman, as the only heir of old Pete Holman, desert rat and hardrock man, claimed it for his own and set out grimly to wrest it from its legal owners.

There was where the opinion of Moleville abruptly divided into two parts. It was agreed that Sonny had first tried the courts, and had failed ignominiously to make out a case. The original deed transferring the mine was valid on its face, and it was now impossible to prove that it had been signed by a man who did not know what he was doing. Sonny's suit was thrown out of court. And Sonny, instead of instituting other suits and expensive legal processes for which he had no money, strolled out of the court when his case was dismissed, forked a pony, and rode sixty miles before the next daybreak. Then he walked into the office of the mine with a six-gun in each hand and went out again with the month's payroll under his arm.

He had done so. For three years he had collected approximately the net profits of the mine, though by six-gun instead of law. On the whole, Moleville did not consider him unjustified as far as that went. But public opinion split widely and definitely on the subject of ore stealing.

Those who considered that he only robbed payrolls and bullion shipments were more or less in sympathy with him. Those who believed him an ore thief to boot looked on him as no better than any other bandit. And the arrival of Janet Laurier on the whole tended to swing public opinion against him.

The story of her encounter with Sonny lost nothing in the telling. Moleville chuckled; or if Mexican, swore admiringly by variegated saints. And Moleville, too, did some calculating and figured accurately that though she might be the Laurier who owned the mine, she was not the Laurier who had given the two old prospectors a dirty deal fifteen years before. She had been a mere child when that took place.

(To be continued.)

## Five Winners



They set a new girls' world mark for 500-yard relay swim at Long Beach, Calif. They're Josephine McKim, Marjorie Lowe, Jennie Cramer, Olive Hatch and Norene Forbes.

## Cancer of Breast Easily Preventable

### Early Attention to Slightest Irritation Prevents Future Trouble

Cancer of the breast which begins in an irritation of the nipple, first described by Sir James Paget in England seventy years ago, is rapidly becoming a preventable disease. When first described by Paget and until recently, it was a hopeless form of cancer, because women paid no attention in the beginning to the little itching of the nipple, to its irritation until the nipple had become an ulcer and the cancer cells had invaded the breast and been carried throughout the body, making the disease hopeless. The studies of Paget's disease of the nipple during these seventy years have brought together convincing evidence that cancer may be made a preventable disease by giving people proper instruction how to deal with its simple beginnings. It is a very remarkable tribute to the intelligent foresight of this great surgical pathologist who wrote more than seventy years ago, that if women could be taught and influenced to pay more attention to the beginning of this irritation of the nipple, they could be protected by simpler means than the complete operative removal of the breast. Paget did not live long enough to learn that the disease of the nipple described by him need not be hopeless.

The modern woman under the care of the trained nurse or midwife and the specially trained doctor, knows that any neglected irritation of the nipple is followed by a "caking," painful mastitis of the breast which often ends in abscess. We know now that the incidence of abscess of the breast in women nursing children is less than one per cent, while formerly it was more than twenty per cent. Now women are learning that the neglect of any irritation of the nipple when they are not nursing a child may lead to a cancer of the nipple which can only be cured by a radical operation, or to an involvement of the breast which as yet has never been cured by operation or irradiation.

What a woman should know about the care of her nipples is simple: During the bath the nipples should be washed and dried in the same manner as the skin on any part of the body. But when any tingling or burning is observed, or a redness, or scaling, or weeping or discharge, the nipple or nipples should be immediately specially cleansed with warm water and soap, using cotton, then with alcohol, then covered with vaseline and a piece of gauze fixed in place with adhesive straps. If there is not immediate disappearance of the irritation, the patient should consult her family physician. When the irritation does not disappear in three weeks under the doctor's direction, the family physician should refer the patient to a surgeon specially trained in the recognition and treatment of the earliest stages of cancer and the conditions that precede cancer. It is important that every woman know that in spite of treatment this irritation may not be relieved by this simple treatment. Then the patient will have to go to the hospital and the surgeon, under local anesthesia will remove the nipple with a little bit of surrounding skin and some of the breast beneath. Right in the operating room frozen sections will be made from the nipple and the breast beneath. When no evidence of cancer is found in this microscopic section, the breast is saved. Should there be any evidence or suspicion of cancer, the complete operation must be performed in order to obtain the best assurance of a cure.

Therefore, cancer of the nipple, like cancer of the skin anywhere is fast becoming a preventable disease.

## Swimmer

Bright water and bright blue wave  
Burling around my cheek,  
Moist lip to my lip,  
Wave, I hear you speak;  
And your words with subtlety slide  
Like a strong deep-moving tide.

You tell me that water is sweeter—  
More delicate tissue than flesh,  
That water is freer and purer  
Than blood in the vein's troubled  
mesh;  
And I turn on my back to rest,  
To lie on your fluid breast.

Bright water and bright blue wave,  
I fear your salty kiss—  
And I break your dangerous words  
With strokes like this—like this—  
Till my feet grate on the sand  
And I clutch it tight in my hand.  
—Ruth Langland Holberg, in "Voices"

## French Women Collect Writings of Own Sex

Paris—"The women of France may not yet have achieved the right to vote, but high achievement lies to their credit in other directions." This statement is backed by two Parisian women—Mme. Marguerite Durand and Mme. Marie Louise Bougle—both of whom have collected a mass of literary evidence of the doings of their fellow countrywomen since the earliest days of history.

Mme. Durand has lately placed her collection in the hands of the city of Paris, and the books—historical, political, legal, with some unique volumes of great value—are now lodged in the Town Hall of the Fifth Arrondissement in a library which bears her name.

## Hill and Vale

Day by day the man in the vale  
Enjoyed his neighbor's hill above,  
Day by day the man on the hill  
Looked down his neighbor's vale  
with love.

If either one would see how fair  
Was his own home, at any hour,  
He, walking up the hill or down,  
Enjoyed it from his neighbor's  
door.

One man to see his own green hill,  
These neighbors travelled, to and  
fro;  
One man to see his own green hill,  
And one to see his vale below.  
—From "The Collected Poems" of  
W. H. Davies.

A small girl was entertaining her mother's visitor. "How is your little girl?" she asked. "I am sorry to say, my dear, that I haven't a little girl." "How is your little boy?" "I haven't a little boy, either." "Then what are yours?"

## "THESE HARD TIMES"

"The hard times and scarcity of money makes it more important than ever to economize. One way I save on clothes is by renewing the color of faded or out-of-style dresses, coats, stockings, and underwear. For dyeing, or tinting, I always use Diamond Dyes. They are the most economical ones by far because they never fail to produce results that make you proud. Why, things look better than new when redyed with Diamond Dyes. They never spot, streak, or run. They go on smoothly and evenly, when in the hands of even a ten-year-old child." Another thing, Diamond Dyes never take the life out of cloth or leave it limp as some dyes do. They deserve to be called "the world's finest dyes!"

S. E. B., Quebec.

## ORANGE PEKOE BLEND

# "SALADA" TEA

"Fresh from the Gardens"

## Silver Lining

Vancouver Board of Trade Report, Mar. 8. . . . Building done during 1931 amounted to \$14,481.86.

Tonnage of shipments increased by 400,000 tons over 1930.

Exports of shingles increased by 8½ million bundles.

Bar metal by 52,000 tons.

Apples by 33,000 boxes.

New business reported by 215 mills to the West Coast Lumbermen's Assn. for week ending January 16 showed sales 21% over production, it being the 12th successive week in which orders exceeded production—a record since 1924.

Vancouver Merchants' Exchange report increases of export trade from the port of Vancouver as follows: Grain shipments gained 7 million bushels.

Pulp exports showed a gain of 12,000 tons.

Exports of foreign cargoes increased by 10,000 tons.

B. C. Electric Railway Co. is erecting an \$850,000 gas plant in Vancouver.

Western Canada Weaving Mills, employing 140 persons are enjoying splendid business.

B.C.—The Crysdale Ry. Report on resources of British Columbia reveals: Cultivable lands, 2,240,800 acres.

Good coal, easily mined, semi-anthracite, over 480 square miles in Peace River unit.

Commercial timber, 18,000,000,000 feet.

Construction of two more ferry boats at a cost of \$100,000 is seriously considered by City of North Vancouver.

Above information supplied by C. H. Annett, Industrial Secretary, Vancouver Board of Trade.

Algoma.—The Employment outlook brightens in and around Sault Ste. Marie. By the opening of the 100 pound rail mill last Monday, it is expected that the peak of jobless days is past.

Export.—Dominion Bureau of Statistics claim that exports show a surplus over imports, leaving a favorable

balance of trade amounting to \$1,432,170. This balance now amounts to \$25,491,000 after 11 months.

Banking deposits in savings banks in New York State reached a high record at the close of last month with a total of \$5,216,910,632.

Mills of the Carpenter Hixon Co. will open in April at Blind River.

The McFadden mill at Sprague is quite likely to be busy soon.

The Crane Lumber Co. will be operating their camps back of Glendale on the A.C.R.



"But I can't stand that hall room."  
"What's the trouble, sir?"  
"Why, every morning I actually have to crack the ice in the water pitcher."

"Oh, don't let that worry you. After this I will send the maid up to crack it for you."

## Copenhagen Loan Is Oversubscribed

Copenhagen — The Copenhagen municipality has just issued a "Citizen Loan" of 30,000,000 crowns (\$5,000,000) at 6 per cent, offered to the public at 97 per cent. and to be redeemed in two years at par.

The loan means an actual interest of 7½ per cent, and with such sound security nearly 52,000,000 crowns (\$13,000,000) was subscribed for at once. Subj. to the Government's sanction the municipal authorities will accept the whole of the subscribed sum.

## Garden Chats

### First Sown Things

In some parts of the country the first plantings can now be made. In the vegetable garden it is advisable to run the rows north and south so that there will be an even distribution of light. In the case of small vegetables such as carrots, lettuce and spinach, rows twelve inches apart will do, and about eighteen inches for taller stuff like melons and cucumbers. It is good economy to alternate rows of early and late vegetables. Spinach and lettuce are planted between beans, carrots, corn and the later things, which do not require full room until the first named are out of the way. The leafy vegetables such as spinach and lettuce, as well as the radish and the early peas, go in first. These are followed by the second planting of the first named and also the first of the beets, carrots, the main planting of peas and, possibly, some beans and corn ten days to a fortnight later. An application of some quickly available fertilizer, a scant handful to about every fifteen feet of row at the time of planting, is advisable. This is best applied dissolved in a gallon of water, and in any case commercial fertilizer should not be allowed to come into contact with the seed but should be placed an inch or two below or to one side of it. Among the flowers those which usually seed themselves, such as Cosmos and Caledulas, can be planted just as soon as the ground is ready, and this is also the proper time to get in Sweet Peas indeed, to be satisfactory, Sweet Peas must be planted early and they do best in deep, open soil containing plenty of rotted vegetable material into which they send down their roots deeply in order to remain cool during the warm weather.

### A Big Help

Gardeners will find the current seed catalogue indispensable in their operations. It is decidedly more than a mere sales sheet and will be found useful not only in planning and ordering seeds but just as much so in planting, general care, and in the harvest of the vegetables. The height of the flowers, times of blooming, whether they are suitable for such special purposes as edging, screening, cutting and fragrance are all mentioned and are indispensable facts in laying out a satisfactory garden. In the vegetable line the catalogue continues this useful service by listing different varieties under the heading of Early, Late and Medium so that one can have a succession of vegetables right through the season. With unusual sorts, special directions are given in regard to care and preparation for the table.

### Shrubbery Directions

The majority of people appreciate the beauty of shrubbery, writes D. C. Shuman, of the Dominion Experimental Farms, but for various reasons many fail to do any planting. It is never wise to attempt to do a great deal in any one year. A little planting done each season and done well will bring surprising results in a short time. The cost of many beautiful flowering shrubs is small; and everyone can afford to buy at least one or two at a time. Do not plant shrubs too close to the foundation of the house, but try to picture them as they will be from five to ten years after planting, and allow plenty of room to develop the proper nature shape. If the earth is poor, as is very often the case around new buildings dig a hole about three feet in diameter and about twenty inches deep and fill with good garden soil, working in some well rotted manure. Then plant the shrub in the centre, being careful not to have manure coming in direct contact with the roots. Cultivate the surface occasionally for at least the first two or three years or till the shrub is firmly established and has made considerable growth. When the shrubs are planted in a shady position be careful to choose species that do well in the shade. Order the shrubbery rose bushes "with trees and similar things early and if the ground is not ready to plant on arrival, "heel in," that is, spread roots out in a shallow trench and cover with moist earth. If the upper woody part appears dry and shrivelled, cover that also. The main thing to remember is not to let the roots be exposed to the air even for a few minutes. Get them into permanent position as soon as possible and water well for the first few days. With larger shrubs and trees it may also be advisable to provide supports against the wind in the way of stakes which hold the plants rigid, preventing the roots becoming loosened. Prune back, and remove all broken or injured branches before planting.

### Memories

After many years they met again, the old tragedian and the woman who had been a lovely Rosalind, and, since they had been sweethearts once, he embraced her. Then he started back. "Woman!" he cried, "what's that noise you are making?"

"The tablets stamped Bayer won't fail you, and can't harm you. They don't depress the heart. They don't upset the stomach. So take them whenever you need them, and take enough to end the pain. Aspirin is made in Canada.

"Heavens!" he murmured, "I thought you were hissing me."

"What is the name of that selection your daughter played?" asked the guest. "That wasn't a selection," replied Mr. Jackson. "It was forced on us."

## A REAL TREAT

EDWARDSBURG  
**CROWN BRAND**  
CORN SYRUP

Children love it with Bread or with Pancakes

The CANADA STARCH CO., Limited, MONTREAL



## "SICK HEADACHE?"

It is not necessary to give-in to headaches. It is just a bit old-fashioned! The modern woman who feels a headache coming on at any time, takes some tablets of Aspirin and heads it off.

Keep Aspirin handy, and keep your engagements. Headaches, systemic pains, come at inconvenient times. So do colds. You can end them before they're fairly started if you'll only remember this handy, harmless form of relief. Carry it in your purse and insure your comfort while shopping; your evening's pleasure at the theatre. Those little nagging aches that bring a case of "nerves" by day are ended in a jiffy. Pains that once kept people home are forgotten half an hour after taking Aspirin! You'll find these tablets always help. In every



package of Aspirin tablets are proven directions which cover colds, headaches, sore throat, toothache, neuralgia, neuritis, sciatica, and even rheumatism.

