# The Lamp in the Valley

BY ARTHUR STRINGER

W. N. U. Service

THE STORY SO FAR

Carol Coburn is Alaska born, the daughter of Klondike Coburn, a "bush rat," who died with an unestablihsed mining claim.

Carol is returning north to teach in an Indian school.

Aboard ship, she is annoyed by Eric (the Red) Ericson, an agitator. She is rescued by a young engineer.

They talk of the changes that had come to the north, and of course a good deal about themselves. It is a dark night on the deck of a ship and they chat quite freely.

There is no doubt that a touch of romance enraptures the pair.

Carol tells of working her way through a university and of a trip to Europe as companion of a rich man's daughter. "That was a break," he says.

*INSTALLMENT II*

"It was," I agreed. "It was all rather wonderful. But it made me feel like a deserter. And it was too good to last. Just when I was telling myself I had about everything one could ask for, I got a letter from Alaska, nearly seven months old."

"Telling you what?" prompted the voice at my side.

"Telling me my father had been found dead on the open trail," I answered, doing my best to be casual about it. "He'd been found there, frozen to death, between his Chakitana claim and Trail-End Camp. His grub bag was empty. Two of his dogs had died and the others must have left him in the night. I can't help thinking of that lonely grave between the hills when you talk about the uselessness of the sourdough."

"I'm sorry," said my companion, with a quick note of contrition. He stood beside me, for a full minute of silence. "Where was your father's claim on the Chakitana?"

"That's what I've got to find out," I told him. "But it seems to be somewhere along the Three-Finger Range between the Cranberry and Blackwater Pass. Father, you see, was just an old-fashioned sourdough. He was always brooding about some final strike that was going to make him a millionaire. And he always felt there was a fortune in that mine of his, once it was opened up. It was his secret. And he hugged it tight, even from me."

"But the important point is, did he establish his claim?"

"I'm afraid not," I had to admit. "That's one of the things I've got to find out."

He leaned closer, as though trying to decipher my face in the starlight.

I found myself moving away a little. Lonely ladies, after midnight on starlit nights at sea, needed the feel of something solid under their feet.

"It was kind of you," I said as I drew my polo coat closer about me, "to help me as you did."

But he disregarded that valedictory note.

"I don't even know your name," he reminded me.

Names, on a night like that, didn't seem to mean much. We were up between the stars, I wanted to tell him, where time and titles didn't count.

"Who are you?" I found myself asking, foolishly glad because of his nearness.

He didn't answer me at once. And in that moment of silence I summoned up courage to reach for the forgotten flashlight. Then I pressed the button and framed his stooping head in a sudden shaft of light.

I gulped as the light fell on his face. That face was strong and bronzed and touched with a quiet audacity that went well with his big frame. But I had seen it before, in an altogether different setting. For this was the mackintoshed man who had stood in the rain with a blonde and blue-eyed girl in his arms before the Yukon pulled out from the Seattle wharf. He had been so absorbed in that last clasp that he almost missed getting aboard.

The memory of that scene promptly chilled and steadied me. An ice wall as wide as the Columbia Glacier seemed to drift in between us.

"I don't suppose it makes much difference," he said out of that silence, "but my name is Lander, Sidney Lander."

"No, it doesn't make much difference," I heard myself saying in an oddly thinned voice.

"Why?" he demanded, conscious of that remoter note.

"We'll probably never see each other again," I said with a limping enough effort at indifference.

"But I think we will," he corrected with unexpected solemnity. My hand, resting on the rail, could feel his bigger hand close over it.

"Hasn't Eric the Red done enough of that?" I asked in an adequately frosted voice.

The man who called himself Sidney Lander promptly lifted his hand away.

"But I still want to know your name," he quietly reminded me. "I think you owe me that much."

I laughed and stood silent a moment.

"My name's Carol Coburn," I finally admitted, "free, white, and twenty-one, and heading back to the icebound hills of her birth."

"Coburn?" he repeated. And his voice impressed me as almost a startled one.

"Carol Koyukuk Coburn," I announced, "with the Koyukuk usually suppressed."

"What was your father's name?" he asked.

"His real name," I said, "was Kenneth Coburn. But back on the creeks he was known as Klondike Coburn."

That brought silence between us again. And when the man beside me spoke, it was in an oddly altered voice.

"It's a small world, isn't it?"

I didn't, at the moment, see much point to that observation.

"I was beginning to feel it was an oppressively big one," I said as I stared out over the lonely hills.

"How long," he asked, "will you be at Toklutna?"

"For at least a year," I told him. "But why do you ask?"

"Because I think I'll be seeing you," he said, without the slightest trace of levity.

## CHAPTER II

It wasn't until the crowding and confusion of our shore stop at Cordova that I saw Sidney Lander again. Then I caught sight of him on the dock, stooping over a wire-covered crate. He let out a long-haired sheep dog which disdained the chop bone held out in front of it. The quivering animal merely flung itself on its master, whimpering and crazy with joy.

"This is Sandy," he said as he stroked the dog's nose. "There's just Sandy and me."

"I'm flying in to the Chakitana," he said. "But Sandy doesn't like air travel." I could feel his eyes on

**Instead of answering me he led me toward the gangplank.**

my face. "You go on to Seward, of course?"

"Then in to Toklutna," I said.

"It would be funny, wouldn't it, if we found ourselves on the same trail there?" he said.

"What does that mean?" I asked, when the Yukon's warning whistle gave me a chance to speak again.

Instead of answering me he led me toward the gangplank over which the last of the passengers were crowding aboard. The smile faded from his face as he stood there, with my hand in his. He neither spoke nor said good-by. But his eyes, as he looked down at me, did things to my heart action. For my woman's instinct told me that something was stirring deep in that bear cave of silence. Those eyes, I felt, were saying something that his lips seemed afraid to put into words.

All the way to Resurrection Bay, in fact, I felt oddly alone in the world. It seemed less and less like going home.

Yet I knew, once we reached Seward, that I was back on the frontier.

But when I found myself face to face with that solemn big schoolhouse surrounded by a straggle of cabins that made it look like a mother hen surrounded by her chicks, no sense of high adventure reposed in my arrival.

It was Miss Teetzel who spoiled everything. For Miss Teetzel, the school head, proved to be a somewhat dehydrated spinster with an eye like a bald-headed eagle's and a jaw like a lemon squeezer. I could see her disapproving glance go over my person, from my gray tweed cap with its rather cocky Tyrolean feather to my frivolous suede pumps. I plainly didn't fit in with her idea of what a teacher should be.

I didn't much mind being consigned to the smallest and meanest room in the big old building. But I couldn't overlook the spirit of hostility with which I was ushered into my far-north mission. For that spirit expressed itself, once I'd unpacked, in the first task with which Miss Teetzel confronted me. It was to take charge of the washing from the children's ward. And it was rather a septic mess to get clean, even with the power machine which Miss O'Connell showed me how to operate. But I knew the lemon-squeezer lady was playing an operatic air or two on the keyboard of my endurance. So I put on my rubber gloves, and shut my teeth, and went through with my job.

It wasn't until my third day at Toklutna that I had a chance to humanize the cell-like baldness of my room.

Miss O'Connell helped me do the decorating. And this same Katie O'Connell proved herself the one girl I liked in that new valley of loneliness. She had Irish gray eyes, a sense of humor, and a frame like a man's. She was, I discovered, really a graduate nurse and should have worn a uniform. But she bowed to the law of the frontier and dressed that muscular body of hers in mannish-looking flannel shirts and khaki breeches and high-laced hunting boots.

At Toklutna she plainly found plenty to do. For of the thirty-seven children in our school three had tubercular neck glands, two had congenital hip disease, and another dozen either ear trouble or ominous chest coughs. They were the offspring of the once stalwart Eskimo and the noble red man of the North, proving how merciless the hand of mercy could sometimes be. Our civilization, plainly, hadn't done much for those misfits. We thought we'd been helping them, but all we did was take away their stamina and pauperize them. We left them so improvident they came to regard it as foolish to go out and fish and hunt and trap.

So they let the white man bask in the glory of the white man's burden. They gave up and wallowed in shiftlessness and loafed about in rags and mated and reproduced and passed their ill-begotten offspring over to Toklutna to feed and clothe and make into good little Americans.

Miss Teetzel, I soon discovered, did her best to keep the native girls in the school from talking with the old women of the outside settlement. For these verminous old squaws had a lot of tribal superstitions they tried to pass on to the youngsters. According to Miss O'Connell, they made a practice of not letting their first-born children live, especially the Copper River Indians who believed that if their first little papoose lasted only until he was eight or nine months old his father went straight to the Happy Hunting Grounds.

Katie O'Connell, in fact, was on the warpath because of an Indian couple who sneaked over into the Matanuska Valley with their seven-months-old baby, ostensibly on a hunting trip. But if they came back without that papoose, our grim-eyed nurse proclaimed, she was going to have them locked up for life.

Miss Teetzel took the savor out of my mission. She also quietly contrived to make me as uncomfortable as possible. She seemed to feel that the scrub brush was a major factor in pedagogics.

But Sidney Lander was right. I hadn't much to work on at Toklutna. The little slant-eyed Eskimos, I found, were both brighter and merrier-minded than the Siwash children. They all seemed fond of music, though, especially the march music Katie and I pounded out on the old school organ. So the two of us concluded that a little dancing might brighten up the emptiness of their evenings. We tried putting them through an old-fashioned square dance or two. And just when the fun was at its highest Miss Teetzel appeared and looked me over with that sardonic eye of hers.

"I'm afraid," she observed, "that you're a trifle too modern for us."

I had to swallow it, of course. But after that we were restricted to group-singing and saluting the flag and a handful of dolorous old hymns which my Siwash charges translated into a pagan chant of woe.

As I quartered back across the schoolyard, after stopping a fight between two of my little redskin warriors (based on a can of tinned cow stolen from the kitchen), I bumped into Doctor Ruddock, who looked us over once a week. He stopped, with his black bag in his hand, and rather solemnly looked me over.

"You're not very happy here," he said. "How'd you like a whack at a school over at Wasilla?"

My first impulse was to tell him that I didn't believe in running away from things. But I said, instead, that I was waiting for rather an important report from the Record Office at Juneau.

He glanced at the shabby old barracks that overshadowed us.

"Well, if they crowd you too hard here, let me know. I can pull a string or two, when you're ready. And that Matanuska Valley, if I don't miss my guess, is going to be very much on the map."

The memory of that message didn't stay with me as long as it might have. For on my way to my room Katie O'Connell handed me a letter from Sidney Lander. It had come out from Chakitana by airplane and had been mailed at Fairbanks. The writer of that letter said that I had been very much in his thoughts. But the comforting little glow a message like that could bring just under one's floating ribs was cut short by the further message that the sooner I could marshal all data and documents in connection with my father's Chakitana claim the more definite it would make Lander's course of action in the immediate future. "The Trumbull outfit and I are parting company," it concluded.

*(TO BE CONTINUED)*

# Washington Digest

BAUKHAGE

Nat'l Farm and Home Hour Commentator.

## Drop in Spring Pig Crop Predicted by Government

### Rise in Pork Prices Considered Likely; Washington Correspondents Discuss 'Jitters' of War Rumors.

WASHINGTON.—"Pigs is Pigs"—that was the name of one of the funniest short stories ever written. Of course pigs "isn't" pigs. They "is" shoats and hogs and a number of other things including sausage and pork chops.

Not long ago the mail carrier probably stopped at your gate and asked a lot of impertinent questions about your plans for your porkers and the other day the department of agriculture finished reporting what the mail carriers reported to them. The result was the semi-annual Pig Crop report which said that there would be 10 per cent less little pigs going to market next spring than last.

Officially the Agricultural Marketing Service said this:

"The downswing in hog production which began in the spring of 1940 continued through the fall and will continue at least through the spring season of 1941, the Agricultural Marketing Service reported today. The decline apparently has been at an increasing rate. The percentage decrease in the 1940 fall pig crop was greater than that of last spring, and the indicated percentage decrease for the spring of 1941 is a little greater than that for the fall of 1940.

"The fall pig crop of 1940 is estimated at 12.5 per cent smaller than that of 1939. The decrease in the 1940 spring pig crop was 9 per cent. The combined pig crop of 1940 is down 10 per cent from last year but the crop is the second largest since 1933.

"The indicated number of sows to farrow in the spring season of 1941 is 14 per cent smaller than the number farrowed in the spring of 1940.

"This information, from the December Pig Crop survey, is based upon returns from 160,000 farmers obtained in co-operation with the post office department through the rural mail carriers."

**EXPECT PRICE RISE**

Now according to past experience these estimates have proved to be pretty accurate and so the city folks can expect to have to pay more for their pork chops and the demand will probably exceed the supply.

Eventually that may apply to milk, too, but right now there are thousands of potential customers of

*A family tree of value.*

dairy farmers who would buy if milk and milk products were cheaper.

Efforts of the department to breed better cows is illustrated in the accompanying photograph. I wouldn't want to go on record as saying that the fine old Aberdeen-Angus that flourish in my home state of Illinois would be flattered to learn that mixing promiscuously with the strange-looking critter in the picture with the enlarged collar button on the back of its neck, would improve their family tree—but it's a fact. At least the Brahman cow has certain points which help an Aberdeen-Angus if it has to live down Texas way. It's cool in Scotland where the Aberdeen-Angus came from. It's hot in tropical Asia where hump-backed beauty originated. The Brahman have sweat glands in their skin which acts as a refrigerating system. And a little of that goes pretty well in the Gulf states of this country.

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***News Correspondents Discuss War Jitters***

This is a story of chin-beards and war.

We have been going through some jittery moments in Washington lately with war and rumors of war all about us. In the midst of the confusion, little things, unimportant things which we remember years afterward but which never get into the papers or the history books stand out clear and sharp in our memories like a lantern swinging on a dark night, like the eerie, night-mare sound of the first coyote call you ever heard on a lonely ride home, with the moon half hidden under the moving clouds.

I was sitting in the Press club on a recent Sunday evening. There were a couple of correspondents there but the place was almost deserted. A heavy set fellow carrying a walking-stick came in.

Of course we began heckling him a little. But he's equal to it. Leon Henderson is one of the New Dealers who has managed to hold his ground, winning hate from some, respect from others who disagree with him all down the line. I'll never forget one occasion in which he figured. I can't mention the names of the men present but they were all legitimate contenders for nomination of the presidency of the United States. And Henderson offered a 10 to 1 bet that none of them would be candidates. One, only, got furious and when it was his turn to speak, launched into one of his famous invectives against Henderson and all his works. It was a good show but Henderson proved right in the end. He won the bet.

**TALK ABOUT CRANKS**

Well, what we said to Henderson that Sunday night and what he said in reply wasn't particularly important until we got to talking about the cranks trying to see government officials with plans for saving the world.

Then somebody said to Henderson: "Have you met the man who is communicating with Mars?"

Before he could answer, one of the cynical listeners who insisted that the administration was trying to get us into war, piped up:

"I thought you folks were already in communication with Mars."

"No," Henderson answered, quick as a whistle, "we aren't trying to communicate with the god of war, we are trying to keep away from him."

Mr. Henderson left. Representative Tinkham of Massachusetts came in. We greeted him. He said he'd been away.

Naturally the talk turned to beards. For Representative Tinkham has a famous beard. A fine wavy hirsute decoration that makes him look as friendly as some of the kindly animals you've seen with similar appendages. Beards are no longer the style. I often regret it and I have always believed that their absence was due to one of two things: moral cowardice on the part of those who fear to be different or, as in my own case, an inability to raise a crop of whiskers that would look like anything but a wheatfield in the dust bowl.

**TINKHAM WELL KNOWN**

But Representative Tinkham is more than a beard. He is a Washington institution. When the government purchased a well-known apartment house in the capital, in which he has had his bachelor quarters for years, and turned the building into one of the alphabetical agencies, Mr. Tinkham stood on his legal rights and refused to move out.

There he remained among his trophies—heads of wild water-buffalo which he had outfaced in the jungles—lions that he had not only outbearded but beaded; tigers, elephants, tusks and all—and of course, his own much-photographed beard.

However, it is not merely the fact that Representative Tinkham has faced beasts in the jungle that has made him famous. He has faced opposition for his seat in congress since 1915 and has never been defeated. And he does it without making a speech. Perhaps he is successful because he has never made a speech. Like the growing of a beard, that method is different.

And Representative Tinkham has another distinction. He is a member of the opposition, if not the "loyal opposition" an opposition which he considers is based on loyalty—loyalty to his state and his nation.

"It may be too late to keep us out of war," he said, "but I am going to fight to do it."

And with that he turned on his heel and with his whiskers waving like the defiant plume on the hat of Cyrano de Bergerac, he stalked out of our presence, the tails of the strange, half-length pea-jacket he wears for an overcoat, flapping in the breeze.

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The Singer Sewing Machine company has been given one of the government "educational orders" for revolvers. If this keeps up we may be beating our knitting needles into bayonets.

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The bureau of home economics is watching experiments in developing a turkey with white meat only. Some people predict that eventually a species will be created which lays cranberry eggs.

The next step will be a self-carving duck.

**GREEK CHILDREN**

WASHINGTON. — One story which has not been told here is how a million young folks are helping Greece win the war. These children, members of a National Youth organization, are from 8 to 20 years old. They act as couriers, as aids to firemen, help the nurses and work at all sorts of jobs vacated by the men called to the front.

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**Man's Will**

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THE TRUTH SIMPLY TOLD

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