The Lamp in the Valley

BY ARTHUR STRINGER

W. N. U. Service

THE STORY SO FAR

Carol Coburn, Alaska born, 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.

She is disappointed that he is Sidney Lander and he is surprised in turn to learn her name. He is working for the Trumbull company which is contesting her father's claim. He is engaged to Trumbull's daughter.

Carol had seen Lander and Barbara in fond farewell at the Seattle dock.

Miss Teetzel, head of the Indian school, resents Carol's youth. Carol gets a letter from Lander asking for her father's documents and declaring "The Trumbull outfit and I are parting company."

INSTALLMENT III

CHAPTER III

I couldn't send documents which I didn't possess on to Sidney Lander. And I couldn't get any response to my repeated letters to the high-and-mighty Record Office officials at Juneau. I had to wait, as women so often have to do in this world.

Summer, up here under the shadow of the pole, seemed a very short season. I'd been twice to Anchorage, to explore the wooden-fronted shops and buy things to cover my nakedness and bring home an armful of month-old magazines. And through it all, as the voice over our tinny radio announced, "Time marches on."

For the sun was swinging lower and lower and the birch leaves were turning and the wild fowl heading south. The fireweed was red on the hillsides and I once more faced the familiar old task of stoking a drum stove with spruce logs. There was a sheeting of ice on the trail pools in the morning and we breakfasted by lamplight. Doctor Ruddock brought Katie O'Connell seven wild ducks which he'd shot on the Inlet, explaining that the six mallards were for the staff, and the spoonbill for the principal. With the coming of the first untimely snowfall, in fact, I'd taken to whipcord riding breeches and invested in a pair of pacs, high boots made of rubber, with generous enough foot room to allow for at least two pairs of woolen socks. Katie, when she saw me thus attired, proclaimed that I once more looked like an old-timer. Then she went over her combination rifle and shotgun, which she called a "game-getter," and asked if I'd swing in with her on a moose hunt across the Inlet.

But instead of a moose hunt we went on a baby hunt. For Katie had been right about her vanished papoose. Word came that our poor little redskinned Oedipus had been found abandoned in a poplar grove east of Wasilla. Doctor Ruddock, who brought the news to Toklutna, said there was a passable trail through the hills and delegated Katie and me to motor over to Matanuska Valley and bring the outcast back.

Katie, who would have started out for Timbuctoo at a word from that doctor of hers, lost no time. It wasn't an entirely dignified departure, for it took place in the school's old wood-toting motor truck.

By noon the next day we won through to the Matanuska River, where we were told to push on eastward along the valley toward what was called the Butte. High up in the hills, as we went, I could see mountain sheep, looking like little clouds anchored to the rock ledges.

Then Katie snorted aloud. For at a turn in the road we came face to face with a bewhiskered old-timer with a holstered hunting knife and a six-gun swinging at his hip, to say nothing of a long-barreled rifle in the crook of his arm. He looked, for some reason, like a picture out of the past. The light in his saturnine old eye was none too kindly as he studied us and then inspected our mud-covered truck.

"Them contraptions," he mordantly announced, "weren't built for North Country mushin', no more'n women were."

Katie, after agreeing with him, made an effort to explain our mission there. The rugged and defiant old figure assailed the trail ruts with a barrage of tobacco-juice shrapnel.

"Injuns like that ought t' be shot. And in the good old days," he said as he slapped his six-gun, "I'd a done it on sight." He spat again. "That's what's the matter with this whole gol-darned country. She's gone soft on us. And 'stead o' spoon feedin' them copper-bellied sons o' she-dogs she should be puttin' a bounty on their scalps." And still again he spat. "That's what's spilin' this ol' territory. Too much gover'ment. I've trapped her and prospected her from Keewalki down t' Wrangel. And in the ol' days—"

"We're from the Toklutna Mission," interrupted Katie, "on an emergency case."

"So I savvied," was the unhurried response. "But in the ol' days, as I was sayin', we could run our own camp. But now it's your Uncle Sam who steps in and runs us same as he runs the Injins. He makes a raft o' fool minin' laws, slaps a closed season on beaver, and gits a game warden after us if we shoot a lady-caribou t' keep body and soul together. He tells us t' settle down and grow turnips. But once we clear an acre or two he claims we ain't provin' her up right and puts her back in the public domain."

The old-timer, when he spat again, was able to convert the movement into a sweeping gesture of repudiation.

"And right now a thievin' lot o' politicians is set on turnin' this valley into a truck garden for a bunch o' broken-down corn-rustlers on relief. They've got their survey men over there, markin' out road lines and drivin' stakes and claimin' they're pavin' the way for the resurrection of Alaska. And next spring they're countin' on plantin' an army o' pie-eaters on the valley tundra and watchin' 'em git rich growin' spinach for themselves."

He shifted his cud and brushed aside the mittened hand with which Katie was semaphoring for silence.

"This ain't no place for college doods," he doggedly pursued. "I got one o' them know-it-all engineers over t' my shack right now. He kin talk big about g'ology and machine-minin', but he could no more take a tom-rocker back in the hills and wash out a poke o' dust than I could pilot one o' them airplanes that's stampedin' our good ol' brand o' husky-dogs off the trails of Alaska."

Katie, very plainly, could stand for no more.

"That's all very interesting," she bellowed. "But we're here to find an Indian baby. And if you can help us in our search I'd rather like to know it."

The challenge in Katie's voice brought a keener look of animosity from the bewhiskered old face.

"I was a-comin' to that, lady, if you'll only keep your shirt on." And still again he spat with deliberation. "Your Injin baby's over there in my wickyup."

"I was a-comin' to that, lady, if you'll only keep your shirt on."

"It's where?" cried Katie, reminding me of a coiled cobra.

The old stranger seemed to relish her bewilderment.

"It's over yonder in my wickyup, with that dood engineer tryin' to wet-nurse a little life into it. And I'll be doggoned if he ain't got it squallin' again like a two-year-old."

"Take me to it," commanded Katie. Her lips were grim as she motioned for the old-timer to climb up on the truck. She was, apparently, too exasperated to talk to him. So I did the conversing.

"Where," I asked as we rocked along the rough trail, "was the baby found?"

"Why, this long-legged quartz-cracker came mushin' down through the hills with a sheep dog at his heels, a right smart dog with a nose like a weasel's. Fact is, that hound smelt out something in a poplar grove jus' over the knoll beyont my clearin'. Kept whimperin' and whinin' and circlin' back there until his owner jus' had t' investigate. And there he finds an Injin baby wrapped up in a ragged blanket. And then comes stampedin' t' my shack door sayin' we've sure got t' save that little Injin's life. It looked plumb dead t' me. But I'll be gol-darned if that dood didn't get some signs o' life out o' the little varmint, after workin' over her half the night and warmin' her up with hot milk and my last bottle o' hootch.

"What's your name?" I asked, primarily to cover Katie's open groan of indignation.

"You can call me Sock-Eye," he answered, "Sock-Eye Schlupp. What's yourn?"

"It's Coburn," I told him. And the deep-set old eyes studied me with a livelier interest.

"You ain't Alaska born?" he ventured.

"I was born," I proudly explained, "on the Koyukuk."

The man who called himself Sock-Eye stared at me.

"A Coburn from the Koyukuk? You ain't meanin' to tell me you're ol' Klondike Coburn's girl?"

I announced that I was.

"Why, I mushed many a trail with that leather-necked ol' pan-swizzler," was his slightly retarded rejoinder. "And I seen you when you was a squallin' little brat no bigger 'n a minute, over back o' Pickle Crick Camp. Why, it was me helped tote you down t' the sky-pilot at Elk Crossin', when you was christened. And consoomed my share o' the moose-milk after that sky-pilot 'd mushed on t' his next mission post. They called you Carol in them days."

"Carol Koyukuk Coburn," I said, feeling a little closer to him.

"Sure it was, girlie," said my new-found friend. "Your pappy 'd been pannin' pay dirt along the Koyukuk and held he was handin' luck on t' you with that name." Sock-Eye spat luxuriously, indicated the right trail fork for Katie to take, and turned back to me. "But his own luck didn't hold out. It sure didn't." Still again Sock-Eye spat. "That was a dirty deal they gave him over on the Chakitana."

"He died there," I said, with reproving quietness in my tone.

"And died fightin' for his rights, tryin' to push through t' the Record Office to git his patent from bein' canceled on him. But he was buckin' something too big for him. Seems like you got t' be a college g'ologist and a law sharp before you can stake a claim in this country nowadays."

"Then somebody else should be keeping up the fight," I said with a sort of she-wolf fierceness that brought the deep-set old eyes back to a study of my face.

" 'Tain't a fight where a pinfeather cluck like you'd have a look-in," observed Sock-Eye Schlupp. He spat wide into the fringing spruce. "And nothin' much is gained by bellyachin' over water that's gone down the flume, girlie. You should be satisfied Klondike sent you outside t' git eddicated proper."

"Perhaps I'm not," I said, embittered by a sense of relapse in the face of some old loyalty.

"Then what're you set on doin' with yourself?" my companion coolly inquired.

I told him, briefly, about my work at Toklutna. But it didn't impress him much.

"You're sure wastin' your time on them no-account Nitchies," he averred. His morose eye ranged along the far-off mountain peaks. "Same as I'm wastin' my time in this valley, batchin' it in a ten-by-twelve wickyup and bakin' my own sourdough. I've got me a minin' claim up between the Little Squaw and the Goldstream where the mother lode runs as thick as your leg and once I get back there and open her up she's sure goin' t' be a second El Dorado."

I could feel Katie's elbow prod my ribs.

"They all say that," she muttered.

I remembered that she was right. I'd seen them broken and wasted from bad diet, and arthritic from bad teeth and burnt out with bad whisky, but still nursing their dream of some lucky strike that was going to make them millionaires overnight. And in it, I felt, lay both the curse and the glory of all Alaska.

"Here we be," cried Sock-Eye as we rounded a trail bend and rolled up in front of a log shack with a pair of weather-bleached moose horns over the door.

The light wasn't strong in the shadowy warm room. But I could make out a dog, lying beside the stove, and a man in his shirt-sleeves, stooping over a blanket-lined basket without a handle.

I stared at that man, rather stupidly. Then I looked back at the dog, in an effort to verify the incredible. The man stooping over the blanket-lined basket was Sidney Lander.

I could feel my heart beating a little faster as I stood staring at him. I could see Katie O'Connell's eyes widen as she inspected the nursing flask he'd made out of what looked suspiciously like a beer bottle with a glove finger tied over its end. It wasn't working right, apparently, from the thin wails of protest that came from the basket.

"Leave this to me," said the nurse as she reached for her hand-bag.

Sidney Lander, thus elbowed aside, stood watching the expeditious hands that betrayed none of the hesitations marking his own clumsy movements. When the dog lifted his pointed nose and rubbed it in a friendly way against my knee his owner raised his eyes and stared straight into my face.

He saw, for the first time, just who it was under that worn old parka. But he didn't speak and he didn't smile. He merely stood there, with wonder in his eyes.

"I didn't expect this," he said as Sock-Eye Schlupp busied himself stoking the stove. "I was on my way down to Toklutna to find out why you hadn't much faith in me."

"In what did I fail you?" I questioned, a little resentful of his power to dampen or quicken my spirits.

"I asked for the data and documents to back up your Chakitana claim," he reminded me.

"I don't happen to have any documents, as yet," I told him. "But even if I had, why should they go to you?"

"I wanted to lay them before John Trumbull," replied Lander, puzzling me by the grimness of his jaw-line. "He's the big smoke in the Chakitana Development Company."

"But also your boss," I said.

"I'm afraid he won't be for long," was Lander's unexpectedly embittered reply.

"Why not?" I inquired.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

GRASSROOTS

by WRIGHT A. PATTERSON

(Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

LET'S THINK SANELY ON DEFENSE STEPS

AMERICA SHOULD, and must, prepare for possible war, but why should we become hysterical about it? Why not do the job in a sane way, by progressive steps? Why not push ahead on the production of pants, shoes, rifles, cannon, airplanes, ammunition and everything our soldiers will need? Why confine the production of these things by taking the men who are trained to make them out of industry before they are made, before there is anything with which to equip and train soldiers?

Why upset the industry we so badly need by taking out the men capable of production, or by threatening to take them out?

Why disturb the father of a family with a day-to-day threat of a call to the colors, when that father of a family, that bread winner, will be more valuable to the nation as a producer than as a soldier without equipment?

If we must train men, why not take those of 19 to 21 years who are not yet proficient in industry? There are a million such young men available every year. They are the men who will fight our battles, if any, five years from now. They are the men who can be spared now with the least possible disruption to American industrial production.

A little sane thinking and less hysteria right now will be productive of results should war come in the future, as it may.

• • •

PRODUCTION IS RESULT OF THREE AGENCIES

PRODUCTION in America employs three distinct and necessary ingredients. It employs labor, the work of men's heads and hands, and in America it is the privilege of each one of us to engage in such production effort as, in our judgment, offers the best opportunities, the largest or most permanently assured dividends for the work of head or hands we put into it.

Production employs capital with which to provide tools with which labor will work, the buildings, machines, land and materials needed. That capital is provided by the you's and me's of America who have frugally saved our pennies, dimes and dollars that we may invest them in tools in such enterprises as, in our judgment, offer the least element of chance of losing our savings and the best assurance of continued dividends as compensation for the use of those savings.

Production employs management—men with executive ability to bring labor and tools together and to keep them operating, to find markets for what is produced. At all times in America there exists for each of us the opportunity of a place in management if and when we demonstrate that executive ability which would make us of value to labor—those who work with head or hands, and to capital—the savings of frugal you's and me's of America.

Production is the result of these three ingredients applied to the farm, factory, mine and transportation.

That is but the simple A. B. C. of the American system of free competition, the American way of life, under the operation of which we have become the most prosperous people in the world, with the most equitable distribution of wealth. Is it a better system than the totalitarianism of Europe? I know it is.

Of the dividends paid by production in America, labor receives 70 per cent of each dollar for which the products are sold. The second partner—capital—gets 4 per cent. Management gets only 2 per cent, and taxes, insurance, etc., take 24 per cent.

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RECALLING THE BATTLE OF NORWAY

MAJOR BURG, head of the municipal government of the little city of Narvik, Norway, at the time of the German invasion, told me that when the town was the battleground between the invading Germans and the Norwegian and English forces, 70,000 were killed in the fight.

The major had been condemned to be shot by the Germans but escaped over the mountains to Sweden, then through Russia and Siberia to America. In Narvik he was a young lawyer, not over 35. He left a wife and small daughter, who escaped to the far north and were still living there several months ago when he last heard from them. He insists Norway will again be a free nation.

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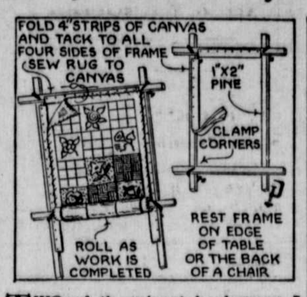
DIVIDING

WE, each one of us, are inclined to endorse the form of socialism that would divide with us what the other fellow has, but we object to dividing what we have with the other fellow. If what you have—land, houses, tools, cars, furniture, or other things—has a value of as much as $2,325, you have your full share of all the wealth of the nation, including all the farms, homes, live stock, railroads, merchandise, etc. If you have more, you might be called upon to divide.

HOW TO SEW

by Ruth Wyeth Spears



TWO of the nicest hook rugs I have were made without a frame. Many rug makers like to work this way so that they may turn the work as they do different parts of the design. Then, too, whenever rug hookers meet there is sure to be an exchange of treasured bits of colored fabrics. In no time at all a rug making group is meeting and it is difficult to carry a frame when one goes visiting. It is often difficult to find space to put a frame away in a small house or apartment, too.

You can see by this that I rather favor working without a frame though I know perfectly well that it is more efficient to work with one. Almost all professionals have frames that rest on a permanent base. I have sketched here the type of frame that most amateurs use. You can buy the corner clamps at the hardware store and put the frame together quickly. It may be the size of your rug or smaller. If it is smaller, just part of the rug is stretched on the frame at one time.

• • •

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ASK ME ANOTHER ?

A Quiz With Answers Offering Information on Various Subjects

The Questions

1. What is the population of Greece?
2. What standards are used by the Bureau of the Census in computing the number of illiterates in the country?
3. Under what conditions may a private in the U. S. army wed?
4. What does a panegyric piece of writing do?
5. "Now God be praised, I die happy" are the dying words of what general?
6. President Andrew Johnson escaped impeachment by how many votes?
7. Does the moon, when it is half full, shed half as much light on the earth as it does when it reaches the full stage?
8. Which is the world's largest flower?
9. Of sheep, cattle, deer, antelope, goats and swine, how many of them are cloven-hoofed animals?
10. How much horsepower is developed by the hydroelectric plant at Niagara Falls?

The Answers

1. The population of Greece is 6,204,684.
2. The Bureau of the Census rules that any person 10 years of age or older who cannot read or write in any language is an illiterate.
3. With his commanding officer's permission.
4. A panegyric piece of writing elaborately praises.
5. James Wolfe (after his victory at Quebec).
6. One. The vote was 35 to 19; a two-thirds majority was necessary for conviction.
7. No, a half-full moon sheds only about one-ninth as much light on the earth as one that is full.
8. The krubi which grows in Sumatra and takes 12 years to bloom. It is over 8 feet high and 12 feet in diameter. It is bell-shaped and has a disagreeable odor.
9. All of them.
10. At present over a million horsepower is produced, and experts estimate that the volume of water which pours over the precipice could develop over 3,975,000 horsepower, or nearly one-tenth of the power needs of the United States.

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