# The Lamp in the Valley

BY ARTHUR STRINGER

W. N. U. Service

**THE STORY SO FAR**

Sidney Lander rescued Carol Coburn from the annoyances of Eric (the Red) Ericson. She is returning to her native Alaska to teach. Her father, a sourdough, died with an unproven mine claim. Lander, an engineer for the Trumbull Co., which is fighting the Coburn claim, breaks with Trumbull. But he remains engaged to Trumbull's daughter, Barbara. Salaria Bryson, an outdoors girl, is also in love with Lander. Lander becomes field manager for the Matanuska Valley project. He takes Carol to a camp dance and he tells her of his love. She reminds him of Barbara. Truly, their paths have crossed many times by now, but Barbara still remains a barrier to their romance.

Their future seems far from clear.

*INSTALLMENT XII*

### CHAPTER XIV

Matanuska was now on the map. The colonists had arrived.

But that Promised Land, apparently, didn't live up to their expectations. For all they found were unfinished roads and harried officials and lumber piles and an impromptu city of tents along the valley flats, army tents in rows as regular as a a wooden floor and boarded side walls and a smoke pipe going up from its roof.

There was no teaching for the chalk - wrangler yesterday when word went round that the first trainload of the colonists was on its way up from Seward, and Katie O'Connell was hurried over from Toklutna to look after the women and children. And since I was detailed to stand right-hand man to Katie, I was there to help make boilers of coffee and watch the disembarking of the disheveled and sea-worn army.

But the note they struck was not always epic.

I could see women still petulant over their weeks of homelessness, surrounded like ship-wrecked sailors by what they could salvage from their long-traveled belongings. I doled out coffee and sandwiches to toil-hardened tillers of the plains and drouth-wizened cattle-raisers from valley farms and Mackinawed ax-wielders from wooded slopes. I tried to give them a welcoming word or two as they stared gloomily about at their Arctic El Dorado and herded their children up to the grub tables. The fact they were to live in tents, it was plain, didn't appeal to them.

It was the young people, to whom Alaska meant excitement and Matanuska spelled romance, who crowded about the cameras—lanky youths and laughing girls, not in the slatted sunbonnets of earlier free-soilers, but in the sweaters and slacks of their own blithe generation. And there were children, slathers of children, with tousled heads and toys in their hands, staring wide-eyed at the white peaks of the Talkeetnas and lustily proclaiming to the world they were hungry.

"You belong in these parts?" a petulant voice inquired of me as I refilled the coffeepots. I found myself confronted by a rotund matriarch with a terrace of chins and eight obstreperous children.

I said that Matanuska was now my home.

"Can't say you look like a girl who'd been brought up on whale blubber," observed my new friend, who asserted that her name was Betsy Sebeck. "But them cock-eyed bureaucrats, of course, ain't got anything ready. There ain't even water, they tell me, in them two-by-four tents. And they ain't got lamps —when they told us we was to be steam-heated and lit by electricity!"

"Things will straighten out," I said as I caught sight of Lander haranguing a group of grumbling free-soilers.

"But there ain't even blankets enough to go round," persisted Betsy. "And if I don't get at a washtub before the week's out them kids o' mine will have to go naked."

The bureaucrats, I discovered, had declined to bring in a piano for her, had lost two of her trunks, and were now trying to stow her away in a back-row tent which her man wouldn't accept. They'd even failed to stock the Commissary up properly, she lamented, and that'd mean, of course, going without grapefruit and ice cream.

But even in the midst of all that confusion and complaining I wanted to cling to the claim there was something epic about the migration.

That fact came home to me more than ever when I stood under an azure Alaskan sky that arched above the blue-ravined slopes of mountains towering up to stately peaks of white and watched the two hundred family heads draw lots for their farm plots. For fate, of course, reposed in that little wooden box that held the plot numbers, since a few of the farmsites were already cleared and fenced and blessed with cabins, while others were swampy and unbroken forest. And as the lucky and the unlucky crowded about a big map of the valley, to determine the position and state of their tracts, there was much cheering and grumbling and groaning.

Salaria, deep-bosomed and Indian-brown, drifted up to my table and viewed the scene with a lip curl of contempt. There she was joined by Sock-Eye, waiting and watchful for the first open jeer from one of those preoccupied cheechakos.

"Looks like a potlatch t' me," observed Salaria. "A potlatch with Uncle Sam passin' out forty-acre farms instead o' two-bit knives. And most o' these poor coots don't even know what they're gittin'."

Sock-Eye spat dourly into the road dust.

"They think they're gittin' something for nothing," he averred. "But them giloots'll be about as happy in this valley as blacksnake on an ice block."

"Lander says there's a shortage of axes and work tools," I was prompted to explain.

"Of course there is," exulted Salaria. "They've got grand electric coffee-grinders but no power t' run 'em. They've got a string o' threshin' machines, but no crops in t' thresh."

"And stoves over there rustin' in the rain," added Sock-Eye, "but nowheres t' put 'em. And a mountain o' them new-fangled enamel sinks and no kitchens t' set 'em up in. And a carload o' harness, by gad, and no workhorses t' buckle it on."

The tumult had subsided and the shadows were growing longer and I could see smoke going up from the unbroken line of smoke pipes before Katie was able to join me at my alfresco coffee table.

"They're pretty well settled," she said as she munched a sandwich between her strong white teeth. "But I wish Ruddy was here."

I asked her why. She postponed her answer until she had polished off her sandwich and reached for her second cup of coffee.

"There's a baby over there I don't like the looks of," she finally announced.

"What's wrong with it?" I questioned.

"I don't know, yet," she said as she bit into a sandwich. Then her eyes became ruminative. "Wouldn't it be sweet if measles got into this little family circle. Or scarletina! Or even whooping cough." Her tired

**"They're pretty well settled," she said.**

looking eyes surveyed the row of white-walled tents. "There's six hundred kids in that camp, in one mad huddle, and not a roof over their head if a bug or two got into their blood!"

I asked if they all hadn't had medical inspection.

"They're supposed to," admitted Katie. "But if I know my onions there's a father of seven over in that line-up who won't last long. He's plainly tubercular. And there's a Michigan woman who's been having labor pains all the way up from Seward."

"What does that mean?" I asked with a qualm of dismay.

"It means," said the weary-eyed Katie, "that we can't sit here enjoying the scenery. You'll have to scrub up, old-timer, and help me with the delivery."

Two hours later I heard the first faint wail of the first baby born in the Matanuska Colony.

### CHAPTER XV

If I'm the lamp in the valley I've got to burn with a brighter wick. Colonel Hart called me into Headquarters and told me I was to have a schoolhouse as soon as they could find a building that would suit the purpose. The real school, he explained, couldn't go up until next year. But if the Colony children could be grouped into classes of some sort, and a teacher rotated among them, there might be less grumbling from the parents and less hell-raising by the youngsters.

So for two or three weeks, he proceeded, I'd have to do the best I could as a circuit-rider teacher. The first call on the workers, of course, was to get homes built.

I suggested that a portable blackboard would be a help, since a blackboard was to a teacher what a throne was to a king, the seat and symbol of his power.

"All right," the man at the desk answered across his mountain of blueprints. "Tell that bunch of transient workers out there to make your board and make it pronto. Tell them I said so."

So I sallied forth to where six flannel-shirted CCC workers were languidly piling lumber at the track side. I ignored a quite audible, "Pipe the peach!" as I approached them. I merely informed them of the Administrator's order for the concoction of a four-by-six portable blackboard.

"You can have anything we've got, baby-eyes," said one. And still another coyly observed that his own schooling wasn't all it should have been and it seemed about time to be starting over.

It wasn't, of course, as bad as it sounded, being carried on with that half-respectful and heavy-jointed jocularity peculiar to the regions where life is rough and chivalry is apt to stay in its shirt-sleeves. And, for all their banter, they assured me I'd have my board, neatly nailed together and ebonized with a flat coat of lampblack. They even promised to have it at my cabin the next day.

I rather overlooked their eagerness to know just where that cabin was. And it would all have worked out better, I imagine, if they hadn't first gone over to Wasilla where flourishes the valley's only open bar, and where they were joined by a dozen or two other transients. There, at any rate, they plainly drank more moose-milk than was good for them. I could hear them as they came in a body toward my cabin clearing, singing as they came:

"Oh, then, my Booska,
Don't you cry for me,
For I'm off to Matanuska
With the teacher on my knee."

Someone with an accordion was leading them in that familiar old pioneer tune. But I didn't find the newer wording altogether to my liking.

I closed and fastened my door.

I pretended to be writing at my table end, sitting there, rather anxiously, as they worked pole ends under the sill logs and tried to impart a ship-at-sea motion to my small cabin. But they soon tired of that, finding the shack too heavy to be converted into a rocking chair. So they proceeded to serenade me, more noisily than ever And to the general din they added a salvo or two of revolver shots. When I realized that one of the faces peering in at the window was that of the fire-eating Eric Ericson I found the last of my patience ebbing away.

When they started to pound on the door again, this time with one of their heavier poles, I could see that it would soon go down under their blows. And that not only brought the light of battle into my eye but prompted me to cross to the dish shelf and reach for Sock-Eye's old revolver. Then I lifted away the crossbar and swung the door open.

But instead of shrinking back they began to laugh at me and my threatening firearm. They could see hesitation, I suppose, in the very way I held that old six-gun.

It was Eric the Red who swayed closest to me.

"Mightn't it go off, angel-eyes?" he taunted.

"It will," I warned him, "unless you stand back."

I could even feel an impulse to resent his mockery stiffen my finger on the trigger. But he was too quick for me.

With an unexpected upsweet of his hand he knocked my arm above my head. The shock of that blow made the revolver go off, high in the air, and before the smoke cleared away they were crowding in closer, pretending to be fighting for its possession. I could see, by their laughing faces, that they rather liked my struggles. But they made it a point to keep my right hand pinioned above my head.

"It mustn't lose its temper," said Ericson, with his face close to mine. He even passed mockingly admiring fingers across my tumbled forelock. And as I shrank back from that odious touch a motor truck of battleship-gray came clattering across the clearing.

It wasn't until I saw him pushing in through the crowd that I realized the newcomer was Lander. He scattered the startled transients right and left as he came. A heavier-bodied man, who tried to block his way, went suddenly flat on the dooryard soil as my rescuer's fist thudded against his jaw. The crowd was no longer laughing.

Ericson, close to me in the doorway, half-turned to fathom the reason for the sudden silence. And I could see Lander's mouth harden into a grimmer line as he saw and recognized that half-turned face. The mallet-like fist, swinging for the second time, sent my tormentor sprawling in across the cabin floor. He lay there, face-down, as Lander turned on the resentful group behind him.

They fell back a little, milling and shouting as they went. But they at least fell back. Lander, stooping down from his towering height, lifted Ericson from the floor and flung him out through the open door. Then he reached for the revolver still clutched in my hand and took it away from me.

*(TO BE CONTINUED)*

# Kathleen Norris Says:

## *What Price America?*

(Bell Syndicate—WNU Service.)

*Gather the youngsters into your house for debate and coffee and doughnuts, once a week. Let them know that under their own constitution they can introduce any changes they wish; that it is the miracle and privilege of democracy that it can change and develop with the changing world.*

***By KATHLEEN NORRIS***

DEMOCRACY can only work if the members of that democracy work for it. Democracy can only be proved a success, among the varied types of government the world has tried and is trying, if every one of us wakes herself out of the slumber of centuries and asks herself what democracy is, and whether it's a good thing, and whether it's worth fighting for.

And when I say "fighting" I don't mean with guns and bombs, for my own profound belief, after more than twenty years active service in the cause of world peace, is that no gun and no bomb ever did anything to defend democracy or establish anything else that is good.

I mean fighting with God's own weapons of brotherhood, service, sympathy, understanding. These are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord—all of which are the true weapons, and the powers of evil can never stand against them.

**Democracy Challenged.**

Our fight for democracy m[illegible] on in our homes, through th[illegible] daily jobs that we have to m[illegible] solve, and unless it succeeds it is going to fail in the world. For never since its very beginnings has it been challenged as it is challenged today.

A democracy—which in our form is a republic—means that the people rule. They look at their candidates, they decide which ones they like, and they put those men into power. Fascism, Nazi-ism and Communism mean that the people are told what to do, eat, spend, wear, think and say. Monarchies and Czarisms and oriental rule also meant this. The thin little fringe of places and peoples who believe in democracy is diminishing now to a very small percentage indeed. Unless we defend it it will vanish from the earth.

Good men and wise men from the days of the Greeks and Romans have been dreaming of world republicanism, world democracy. Plato dreamed of it, Sir Thomas More dreamed of it. Washington saw the great vision, and through bewilderment and desertions, treason and poverty and failure and despair, brought it to birth. We possess it.

**What Is Freedom Worth to You?**

But how much do you care about it? How much is it worth to you that America shall go on as America, free of speech, free of press, free to worship God in her own way?

Do you care enough to read one or two books of the thousands that are being circulated now, telling you what other countries are doing, and how their ways differ from ours? Are you willing to say some evening in the near future: "George, let's go to that meeting, or that rally, or that lecture or that debate, and see what these candidates are like and what they are promising and planning?"

Do you care enough to know the answers to your children's questions when those children speak airily of the superior methods of Russia, or slightingly of the greatest country in the world, which is their own.

If you don't, if you still think the most absorbing problems in the world are those of getting the spare-room blankets cleaned and being sure the lower pie-crust is good and crisp, then you don't deserve to be an American, you don't deserve to live in a democracy, and you're doing your bit to aid the totalitarian governments.

**STICK-IN-THE-MUD?**

*If your most absorbing problems in the world are those of meal planning, getting the attic cleaned or seeing that young Teddy wears his rubbers, then you don't deserve to live in a democracy. At least, that's the way Kathleen Norris feels. Her view is that you should exercise your mind—study, read, discuss, digest the world changes going on about you. Don't miss this straight-to-the-point argument.*

**Every Voice Needed.**

Don't think that because you live on a limited income in a rented house and run just a little over the budget every month that your voice isn't needed and isn't valuable. Great national changes don't necessarily come from privileged men. Lincoln, Napoleon, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler and countless others knew the sharp touch of poverty and lived the first third of their lives in obscurity.

The reason the dictators have gained so strong a hold is because nine-tenths of the men and women they rule are abysmally ignorant of what is going on, of their own rights and powers. Don't keep yourself in that group unless you want to see our own country menaced by the forces that are honestly convinced that the dictators' way is the right way.

Our share of citizenship now, as American women, is to demonstrate just what is true democracy, to perfect our own system. It is for us to do away with unemployment, poverty, slums, to discourage false philosophies, to upbuild the faith of our great forefathers.

If you can do that for the smallest spot in the smallest of our towns or villages, you will be doing an incalculable service to America. The ways of doing it are infinite.

**First Line of Defense.**

Study unemployment and housing and hospitalization and sanitation in your own community, for instance. Find out why youngsters in high school and college are taking to European ideas; gather the youngsters into your house for debate and coffee and doughnuts, once a week. Stop lamenting that undergraduate morals are something deplorable and the half-baked Communism those children are talking is really frightening, and do something about it. Let them know that under their own Constitution they can introduce any changes they wish; that it is the miracle and privilege of democracy that it can change and develop with the changing world.

Women who are unwilling to make this effort, to uproot themselves from the age-old laziness of not thinking or acting at all in national and international affairs, women who don't know the names of their representatives in Washington, nor how those representatives are voting on questions of vital importance to every wife and mother, needn't be surprised or horrified if American democracy really does totter under oppression from abroad. War naturally destroys democracy for the time being; the individual cannot have any opinion in war; he obeys, and he does nothing but obey. He serves in the ranks or in the munitions factories, he kills, is wounded, dies, without one moment of freedom. This is inevitable.

**A Plan Necessary.**

But when the wars are over—and someday they will be ended, then it will be for us to build a new America, even as they will have to begin to rebuild shattered Europe. And that will be the time for us to decide between a dictator who will tell us that he knows exactly what we must do, or follow a wise and safe democratic plan of our own.

# NEW IDEAS for Home-makers

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS

"DEAR MRS. SPEARS: I have made a pair of spool shelves like those you give directions for in your Sewing Book No. 3. They are painted watermelon pink to match the flowers in my bedroom curtains, and they are very pretty hung at each side of the windows. I would like to make some end tables of spools for the living room, but I can't think of a way to

make them rigid. Have you any suggestions as to how this may be done? B. P."

Curtain rods are used through the spools to make the legs. Better take along a spool to try when you shop for the rods; and get the type that has one piece fitting inside the other. If the spools are a little loose on the rod, it won't make any difference for they must be glued between each spool, and also between the spools and the table shelves. I have shown in the sketch everything else you need to know to make this table. Good luck to you!

• • •

NOTE: If you have an iron bed or a rocking chair you would like to modernize, be sure to send for my Book No. 3. It contains 32 fascinating ideas of things to make for your home. Send your order to:

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## A Bit Mixed

Cross marriages between two families produce some queer mix-ups, but the situation created by an American takes some beating.

He married the daughter of his own daughter's husband by another wife, thus making him the son-in-law of his son-in-law.

His daughter, therefore, became his stepmother-in-law and his bride her own stepmother.

His wife has just given birth to a daughter. She is her step-grandmother's sister, her own mother's step-aunt, and her father's step-sister-in-law. Phew!

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Symptoms may be nagging backache, persistent headache, attacks of dizziness, getting up nights, swelling, puffiness under the eyes—a feeling of nervous anxiety and loss of pep and strength.

Other signs of kidney or bladder disorder are sometimes burning, scanty or too frequent urination.

There should be no doubt that prompt treatment is wiser than neglect. Use *Doan's Pills. Doan's* have been winning new friends for more than forty years. They have a nation-wide reputation. Are recommended by grateful people the country over. *Ask your neighbor!*

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