The Lamp in the Valley

BY ARTHUR STRINGER

W. N. U. Service

THE STORY SO FAR

Three women love Sidney Lander, Alaska mining engineer. He is engaged to Barbara Trumbull, whose rich father is contesting the mining claim of Klondike Coburn, now dead. Because of Carol Coburn, teacher at Matanuska, Lander breaks with Trumbull.

Salaria Bryson, a big out-door girl, also loves Lander. She disappears.

Lander finds Salaria. She had injured her leg while hunting. Barbara misinterprets the rescue and flings away her engagement ring.

At last the air begins to clear up in Carol's and Sidney's romance.

Lander and Carol decide to fly to Chakitana, scene of her father's claim. But they seem unable to charter a plane.

Trumbull's hand is seen in this.

INSTALLMENT XVII

It was the incompetents, of course, who'd caused the most trouble, the incompetents like the prolific and indolent Betsy Sebeck and her unkempt brood of offspring. But even in their sloth they remained instruments of destiny. For it was the mountainous Betsy's two-year-old daughter Azalea who tried her best to swallow an open safety pin, while playing about a littered tent floor, the safety pin already alluded to. The pin stuck in the child's throat, and the mother, thinking it was choking to death, ran out screaming for help. It wasn't long before Katie and her Black Maria arrived on the scene. She failed to find the pin and suspected it had slipped down to the child's esophagus. But as she was without either X-ray machine or bronchoscopic instruments, she decided the case was serious and took matters in her own hands. In the absence of her Ruddy she radioed for a plane to carry her patient down to a properly equipped hospital.

The answer came, three hours later, when we heard the drone of a motor through the hilltops.

The courier of the sky, in this case, proved to be Slim Downey, the Cordova pilot, who had picked up the summons when he stopped to refuel at Fairbanks, on his way south from the upper Porcupine. He swung down between a furry colony of mountain clouds and was quickly surrounded by an army of rapt-eyed watchers.

But while the colony children pawed about the knees of that helmeted Viking and fingered and patted his plane struts, Katie did an odd and altogether unexpected thing. When she noticed her little patient in greater distress and giving every evidence of a choking fit, Katie took the child by the heels, and, holding her upside down in those muscular big hands of hers, abruptly cracked-the-whip with that limp and unprotesting little body. She swung and jerked it as a busy housewife shakes a floor rug to rid it of dust. It seemed like sudden madness. But an equally sudden shout went up from the watchers.

For there, in plain view, they saw a safety pin fall out between their feet.

"I guess that puts a kink in my mercy flight," observed Slim Downey as Lander pushed through to his side.

I saw the two men standing there, talking together. And I saw a quick and affirmative nod of Slim's helmeted head. But it wasn't until Lander shouldered his way through to my side that I realized the import of their hurried conference.

"We've got our break," he said with an exultant light in his eye. "Slim's to fly us in to the Chakitana."

It was while Lander was stowing away our duffel, half an hour later, and I was waiting to climb into the cabin, that the culminating touch came to that drama of speed.

It came in the person of Salaria, mounted bareback on one of her father's horses.

She swung off her horse and came straight to my side. Then she caught at my arm, as though to hold me back from climbing up into the cabin.

"Kin I come?" she said. She said it roughly yet almost imploringly.

"What for?" I asked, at a loss for words before such impetuosity.

"To swing in, if there's any fightin'," she announced. "I kin be a two-legged wildcat when there's call for it."

I had to tell her, of course, that there'd be no call for it. But I noticed that Salaria's dusky eyes continued to hold a look of desperation.

"You've got Sid Lander," she said with a shoulder-movement of comprehension touched with abnegation. "I'm as dumb as a fool hen in a snowdrift," she dolorously confessed. "I never savvied."

"Savvied what?" I questioned.

"I never savvied until that silk-skinned Trumbull cat put me wise," was Salaria's embittered reply. "But I sure gave her an earful when I had the chance. I may not git him. But she won't."

CHAPTER XXI

The valley, which had once seemed so big to me, became a narrow shadow between clustering peaks, peaks as white as wolf teeth, that lost their sharpness as we climbed.

"Why do you call this ship the Snowball Baby?" Lander inquired of the singularly silent man at the stick.

Slim Downey laughed.

"That's what they christened her back at Bear Lake," he answered. "Up at Eskimo Point they used to call her the Igloo Queen."

Still again I heard Lander's voice.

"Why aren't you carrying radio equipment?"

Slim laughed for the second time.

"I'm a bush pilot. What good is two-way radio to us when we're belly-dragging through a thousand miles of wilderness?"

"You know the Chakitana, of course?"

"Sure," answered Slim. "I was grounded and frozen in there two winters ago. Since then we've kept a gas cache at Carcajou Lake." He scanned the welter of peaks and valleys over which we were arrowing. "You'll be seeing it in half an hour, if the fog holds off."

But the fog didn't hold off.

A new uneasiness crept through me as we went higher, to climb into the clear. Our pilot seemed to be watching the valley bottom over which we were winging. He dropped lower as the cloud floor fell away under us. He gave me the impression that he was peering about for familiar landmarks.

Then I saw him stiffen and cry out, at the same time that Lander leaped to his feet.

"What's that?" was the latter's sharp demand.

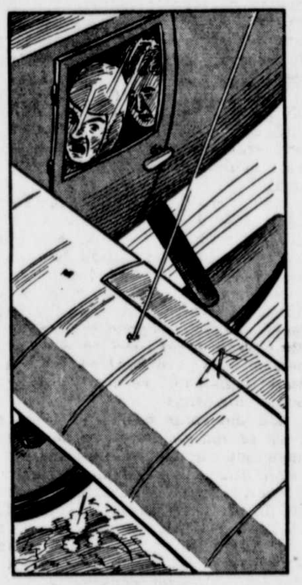
Slim Downey didn't turn as he shouted back. But there was indignation in his voice.

"It's rifle shots. There's some fool shooting at us."

"Turn back," I heard Lander's voice call out.

"And go down like a duck?" was Slim's sharp-noted reply. "Not on your life!"

Then I saw the helmeted head stoop closer to the instrument board. This was followed by a series of hand movements that were meaningless to me. But even before I



"It's rifle shots. There's some fool shooting at us."

heard the stutter of the engine I could read alarm in that forward-bent figure.

"They got my fuel tank," Slim suddenly shouted over his shoulder. "That's Blackwater Lake on our left there. I think I can make it. I've got to make it."

We veered a little as we slid down an invisible stairway that was nothing but crystal-clear air whistling through our struts. I could see the earth coming up to meet us. And I could feel Lander's hand groping for mine as we catapulted over ragged cliffs with little patches of snow between them. Then the valley widened again and between the lightly wooded slopes beneath us I could see a dark-surfaced pool of water that became much more than a pool as we drew down on it.

I heard Slim's throaty shout of gratitude and felt Lander's hand tighten on mine. But we merely sat there, in silence, as we taxied to a stop.

"What do we do now?" asked Lander with what I recognized as purely achieved casualness.

Slim took out a cigarette and sat down on a rock. Then he mopped his face.

"We've got to get gas," he announced, "from our Carcajou cache. But it's no good to me, of course, until I've plugged that hole in my tank."

"Can you do it?" I rather tremulously inquired.

Slim laughed at my woebegone look.

"It'd surprise you what a bush-hawk can do when he has to. When I was iced down on Cranberry Lake last winter, with a dead battery and no starting crank, I was blacksmith enough to turn an oil-screen wrench into a hand crank. There's always a way, young lady."

Lander placed his consoling big hand on my shoulder and said: "It's all right. We're not licked yet."

"I know it," I said with a foolish little surge of faith.

"We've grub for two weeks," he pointed out, "whatever happens. We've fuel, all the fuel we need. And a chance for snowshoe rabbit or caribou if we need it. You'll sleep in the plane cabin tonight and Slim and I'll camp on shore here."

"And then what?" I asked, trying to keep the desolation out of my voice.

"Then in the morning, when Slim's working on his ship and packing in the gas, you and I will start overland for Big Squaw Creek. We should do it in a day. And every day counts."

It was easy enough to say. But out on the trail, ten hours later, I realized there was little romance in mushing over the broken terrain of the Alaskan hinterland. There was no path through the spruce groves and no foothold on the hillside rubble. Twice we worked our way up rough traverses that came to a dead end and compelled us to retrace our steps. Our shoulder packs trimmed down as they were to essentials, seemed to grow in weight with the growing hours. I even came to resent the tugging burden of Sock-Eye's old six-gun swinging from my belt holster. But I could see that my own burden, compared to Lander's, was trivial. For my trail mate carried a belt ax and rifle and grub bag and blankets. Sometimes he had to use the ax to cut a way through the undergrowth.

We were two plodding animals, swallowed up by the wilderness, fighting our way through from one peril to another. And when we slept out that night, with a campfire between us and the aurora borealis brushing the blue-white peaks of the mountains above us, I lay stunned with a slowly widening sense of solitude touched with unreality.

It was the far-off howl of a wolf that brought a final cry of protest from my lips.

"I'm not much good to you, am I?" Lander quietly announced.

I detected a new timbre in his voice. And it was both a joy and a peril to me.

"You're a good fighter," I told him.

"But that isn't everything," he suggested.

"No, it isn't everything," I agreed.

His gaze went, for a moment, down the dark valley, and then returned to my face.

"I know what you mean," he said in that overdisturbing low voice of his. "But our fight isn't won yet."

"But aren't we letting something better slip through our fingers?" I was foolish enough to cry out.

Lander sat considering this.

"You call me a good fighter," he finally said. "But any fighting I've done for you is easily explained."

"How?" I asked. And again, somewhere between the blue-white peaks, I could hear the far-off wolf howl.

"Because I've always loved you," he said with his face a little closer to mine.

Then he stooped still lower, and pressed his cheek against my cheek. His face was rough and unshaven. But in its very roughness I found something infinitely soothing.

CHAPTER XXII

When we broke camp the next morning Sidney Lander seemed surer of himself. Through his binoculars he examined the wide and twisting valley country and announced that we'd have to climb up into higher territory.

"I begin to know these hills," he told me. "We're at last getting somewhere."

He pointed into the distance.

"That's the Chakitana," he called down to me. I detected a note of excitement in his voice. "And in an hour we ought to be spotting the Big Squaw."

So we pushed on again. But my trail mate's rise in spirits was not an enduring one.

"I don't like this loss of time," he said as he glanced at the sun. "It's three days now. And we may be too late."

"Too late for what?" I questioned.

"We'll know that when we get there," he said with a curtness which I wrote down to overtensioned nerves.

So still again we went forward. We went clambering over mammillated rock ridges and dipping down into blue-shadowed canyons.

"It's great country," Lander called back over his shoulder.

I couldn't agree with him. It seemed wild and torn and empty, the outpost of the world, a scarred battlefield where titanic forces had clashed and enmities older than man had left desolation in the wake of tumult and warfare.

I was glad when Lander came to a stop, at the end of a traverse that led to a wide rock ledge overlooking the westerly running valley. The valley itself widened out, with a cleft or two in the hill ranges where a series of canyons and smaller valleys radiated out from the lower wide bowl, with gravel beds and groves of stunted spruce interspersed along it's broken slopes.

"We've made it," I heard Lander say.

I stood watching him as he moved forward and mounted a glacial hardhead that had all the appearance of a pagan throne carved out of granite. He had a little trouble, because of his heavy pack, in getting to the top of it. Then with his glasses he scanned the valley.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

My Week

by Eleanor Roosevelt

WNU Service United Features

Out-of-Doors Days

Our two days in the country were, on the whole, very peaceful and I think we accomplished a good deal. I was outdoors all one morning looking at trees and planning where to put in shrubs and plants, both at the President's cottage and my own. By noon it began to rain really hard and so, at two-thirty, I did not regret delivering a speech indoors at Vassar college to a group of girls.

I saw a good many of my neighbors and read a good many things which I have been carrying around in my brief case for some time. I was back in New York city by five o'clock the next day and went to the meeting of the Men's Faculty club at Columbia university.

It seemed rather presumptuous to address people on a subject as large as: "What Is Really Happening in the United States Today," many of whom knew much more about this subject than I possibly could. I realized, however, that what I had to say was merely a preface to an open discussion.

It proved to be a very interesting evening, more profitable to me probably than to those who listened to me start it off! President and Mrs. Nicholas Murray Butler were kind enough to come to supper and I enjoyed seeing them very much.

I took the night train back to Washington.

GRADUATES

One afternoon, I received a group of winners in an essay contest from Lancaster County, Pa. They were such bright looking young people and evidently were enjoying their trip to Washington. Then we gave the annual tea for the graduating classes of the various schools. I think the group should be congratulated, for they came past me more rapidly than any other group that has ever been here.

UNION NOW

At dinner that night, Mr. Clarence Streit talked to us a little about his lectures on his plan "Union Now." After dinner, Mr. Theodore Dreier showed us some of his slides of Black Mountain college, near Asheville, N. C. This is a most unique educational experiment, where the students and faculty are not only building their own buildings, but really are attempting to demonstrate democratic procedure in an educational institution.

Then the movie, "Men of Boys Town," was shown and made a tremendous impression on everybody. I had to leave for a time to broadcast for the Federal Employees' council, but could tell on my return what a moving story it is.

COMMON SENSE

There is an editorial in Common Sense for this month, which I think will do a valuable service in stimulating thought and argument. It is entitled "Whose Sacrifice?" I am going to quote one thought here: "Sacrifice is indeed called for. But it is the sacrifice of the old methods of unplanned, competitive, monopoly profit-seeking business, and not the sacrifice of the bread and butter of the poor."

That is a large statement with which many people will agree wholeheartedly. The difference always arises as to how we shall achieve the ends which almost anyone will concede are desirable. The editorial makes some valuable suggestions. Some of the statements are open to argument. But, after all, the value of anything which is written lies largely in its challenge to further thought and study. I hope a great many people after reading this month's Common Sense, will do some constructive thinking.

CONGRESSIONAL WIVES

I had a very pleasant luncheon one day during the week with the wives of the members of the Seventy-third congress, who came to Washington in 1933 when we did. Then I received some 200 members of the Daughters of Patriots and Founders at the White House. After that I took the plane to New York city.

I spoke at the dinner given by the New York city board of education to hear the conclusions of months of hard work and innumerable reports, made by groups of doctors and educators on the care and education of handicapped children. It is a study made in New York city, but of value to the whole country.

Changes have come about in medical care, more knowledge is now at hand and certain new techniques must be developed in order to give handicapped children the best possible opportunity for education and future usefulness in life. I hope many people will read this report, since we have, I believe, some 6,000,000 handicapped children in the country.

FRIENDS OF CHILDREN

The next noon I spoke on a broadcast which is being inaugurated by the Friends of Children Incorporated. Once a week they will broadcast an American play for children. It will go by shortwave not only to British children, but to other children throughout the world. Up to this time, the Friends of Children, Inc., have been sending boxes of clothes to children in England, but they felt that there was need for a message which would interest the children themselves and tie them closer to children in this country.

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

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WNU Service

Washington, D. C.

FRANCES PERKINS

For a long time Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins seemed unaware of her unpopularity. But in recent months it apparently dawned on her. To give the President freedom of action to replace her (a degree of sincerity in marked contrast to certain of her former colleagues), she tendered her resignation, but for weeks he failed to act on it.

His failure to name a successor cannot be attributed to lack of material. Three top-notch New Dealers of proven ability have been available—Solicitor General Francis Biddle, who was chairman of the original national labor board; William H. Davis, vice chairman of the national defense mediation board, who has had extensive experience in the labor field; and Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia of New York.

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FDR PAYS STIMSON HIGH PRAISE

Through half a century Franklin Roosevelt and Henry L. Stimson have differed on almost everything political. But at the Gridiron dinner, Roosevelt paid his Republican secretary of war one of the finest tributes he has ever given anyone in public life.

The suffering people of the world, he said, must keep faith in their democratic ideals and in their hope for peace.

It was in this connection that the President paid his tribute to his Republican secretary of war. Mr. Stimson, he said, had never lost faith. In 1931, when the world was first beginning to plant the seeds of the present war, (when Japan invaded Manchuria), it was Stimson who registered the first protest against an aggressor nation. History, the President said, would vote Stimson an everlasting debt for keeping faith and working for the principles of peace.

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ZAPP IN HAVANA

Dies committee investigators have uncovered the interesting fact that Dr. Manfred Zapp, head of the Nazi Trans-Ocean News Service, was socially active during the Pan-American conference in Havana last year.

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REFUELING BARGES IN MID-ATLANTIC

The navy has been making some careful studies of how to carry out Roosevelt's promise of a bridge of ships across the North Atlantic to carry supplies to England. One result is a unique plan for anchoring flat-bottomed scows or barges in mid-Atlantic to serve as refueling depots for airplanes.

The plan is not yet perfected, and still awaits higherup approval. But here are details of the revolutionary idea.

British experience in the North Atlantic has shown that scouting-bombing planes are the most effective protection for merchant vessels. Planes can sight an undersea boat at a far greater distance than a surface vessel, then drop depth bombs on it.

Chief problem is the refueling of these planes. Expensive aircraft carriers, requiring three years to build, cannot be used as airplane bases in mid-Atlantic. They are too easy targets for submarines.

However, the flat-bottomed scow does not have sufficient depth in water to be a target for a submarine.

Furthermore, in the relatively storm-free summer months, flat-bottomed barges would experience little trouble from weather. They would be subject to attack from the air, but on the other hand each would be defended by its own scouting planes, and if it were sunk the cost of replacement would be insignificant.

Whether the barges and their accompanying planes would be constructed for use under the British flag, or whether the United States would risk its own planes that far at sea has not yet been determined. But it is known that the navy has the scheme under consideration.

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BRIDGE OF SHIPS

Any big move to aid Britain on the sea in cargo ships will be a big boon to the American railroads. For it is quietly planned to give the British the large fleet of freighters operating between the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards.

These total 113 ships, averaging around 7,000 tons. Last year they transported 7,000,000 tons of freight between the two coasts. Rail haulage across the continent was over 1,000,000,000 tons and the carriers have advised the government that they can handle the additional amount without difficulty.

However, the cost will be higher, but this is considered part of the price to be paid for national defense.

The intercoastal vessels are privately owned and authorities still are undecided how to take them over. Two courses are open: to buy them outright or to requisition them and come to terms later.

Most of the ships are old and slow, but they are the only ones immediately available. This factor of immediate availability without seriously impairing U. S. shipping, decided Roosevelt to take them over to help maintain the "bridge of ships."

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