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The River

When the Colorado Burst Its Banks and Flooded the Imperial Valley of California

By EDNAH AIKEN

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—K. C. Rickard, an engineer of the Overland Pacific, is called to the office of President Marshall in Tucson, Ariz. "Casey" is an engineer in the office force; he wears "dude" clothes, but he has the motions of a professional.

CHAPTER II—Marshall tells Rickard the Overland Pacific has got to stop in to save the Imperial Valley and sends him to the California coast to investigate.

CHAPTER III—Rickard journeys to Calexico, sees the irrigated desert and hears much about Hardin and his work.

CHAPTER IV—At the hotel he meets Mr. and Mrs. Hardin and Innes Hardin, Hardin's half sister. Disappointed in her husband and an incorrigible coquette, Mrs. Hardin sets her cap for her former lover and invites him to dinner.

CHAPTER V—Rickard visits the company's offices and takes control. He finds the engineer loyal to Hardin and hostile to him. Estrada, a Mexican, son of the father of the Imperial Valley, tells him of the general situation.

CHAPTER VI—Rickard attends a meeting of the directors and asserts his authority. Hardin rages. Estrada tells Rickard of his foreboding that his work will fail.

CHAPTER VII—Innes is discovered in her garden. She tries to cheer up Hardin, who is furious against Rickard.

CHAPTER VIII—The Hardin dinner to Rickard discloses further the family character. Hardin is surly and unlikable. Innes has a fainting fit. Rickard plans a "progressive ride" in Rickard's honor.

CHAPTER IX—Rickard encounters the headboard of the company's engineers. He is stirred by the Indians' statement that the "progressive ride" of a year ago, when the Great Yellow Dragon, the Colorado, grows restless. He makes various preparations, publishes work on the Calexico levee and is ordered by Marshall to make a fighting chance of the completion of Hardin's pet project, a gate to shut the break in the river.

CHAPTER X—A family luncheon of the Hardins which then breaks up. CHAPTER XI—Hardin discovers that Rickard is planning a levee to protect Calexico and puts him down as incompetent. Gerry thinks her lord jealous.

CHAPTER XII—San Francisco is destroyed by earthquake and fire, and dredge machinery which Rickard had ordered Hardin to have shipped, is burned through Hardin's neglect. Rickard secretly equips the big water tower as a fighting chance.

CHAPTER XIII—Gerry Hardin decides that Rickard still loves her and plans a campaign that promises trouble.

CHAPTER XIV—The progressive ride is begun under adverse conditions—wind and dust, with the guest of honor absent. Then MacLean, Rickard's secretary, brings word that the river is raging and every man in the valley is fleeing.

CHAPTER XV—Hardin motors off with a load of dynamite, leaving everything in confusion. Innes, who has been waiting for Hardin's return, issues orders in her brother's name, to save her brother's face. The levee and the signal tower save Calexico till Rickard's return.

CHAPTER XVI—Gerry Hardin begins to get really interested in Rickard. The wind blows a gale and the levee is in danger again.

CHAPTER XVII—Women as well as men work on the levee the second night. Innes finds Rickard and Gerry together and begins to suspect her sister-in-law. Her brother's wrongheadedness and Rickard's evident affection only serve to embitter Innes against Rickard.

CHAPTER XVIII—The river washes away half of Calexico, Calexico's Mexican winery, but Calexico still stands. CHAPTER XIX—A stormy public meeting is held in which representatives of the Overland Pacific and the California and Mexico clash. A telegram from Rickard that the river has broken out again saves the big levee and the valley by all.

Downstairs, Babcock's gavel rapped unheard. Behind the excited figure wielding the stick, sat Marshall, his unreadable, sweet smile on his face. His eyes were on Babcock, who was vainly clamoring for order. "Program that meeting!"

Hollister was trying to make himself heard to Barton over two rows of seats, but his voice was like a child's on an ocean beach. Barton was surrounded by eager anxious men. The audience had split into "circles of haranguing centers. It was impossible to get attention. Hardin could see Marshall pull Babcock by the tails of his coat. Unwillingly, he could see Babcock allow the crowd five minutes by his consulted watch. Then again, the gavel danced on the table. Marshall was still smiling. Babcock's shrill voice split the din. "Order. The voice of voices swallowed him again.

"We won't let them in," Grace was yelling, "the valley won't stand for it."

"Take your medicine," thundered the big organ of Barton. "I warned you, Imperial valley!"

"Betrayal!" groaned the crowd. Down in the orchestra, Barton was holding a hurry-up meeting of the water companies. De la Vega had stepped back and was consulting with Tod Marshall.

Babcock pulled out his watch, his gavel calling for attention. This time he was heard. De la Vega approached the footlights, a questioning look on his face. "We ask for a little time," began he, "actually the house was on 'Withdraw the suits. Give him our answer. We don't want the Service. The valley don't want the Service. Withdraw the suits."

Barton's moon face looked troubled. "We can't answer for all the ranchers." "Yes, you can," screamed Grace, jumping up and down like a baboon. "If you don't, I'll answer for them. Don't you see, it's a trick? It's a trick. I see the hand of the O. P. In this." Friendly hands pulled him down into his seat. The audience was chanting, "Withdraw the suits. Take your medicine."

"Don't lose the concession—Lord, the Service—Give them the answer now." Barton held up a withered hand. The undeveloped body was dignified by the splendid head. "Don't withdraw your concession. I think I can say that Mexico will not be sued."

Again, the shout went up. "Answer like a man! Thank! Good Lord! Say we withdraw the suits!"

"We withdraw the claims against Mexico," Barton sat down to a sudden hush. The first blood had been let.

Once more Babcock's glasses swept the house. He rapped the table with a flourish. "That's not all. We've got more to say to you, Gentlemen, Mr. Marshall."

Marshall stepped forward to a stentorian which was a variety of tribute. He bowed. "I will be brief, Mr. Faraday has asked me to take his place here this afternoon. It's only fair. If it were not for my interference, he would not be involved in this situation. I think you will grant that it is Mr. Faraday's company which can save the valley?"

"To save its own tracks!" yelled a voice from the balcony. Marshall sent a soft smile heavenward. "Incidentally, and it's traffic. Why don't you say it? We don't deny that. The Overland Pacific's no altruist."

There was a jeer which rose into a chorus. "Altruist! Octopus. That's what it is."

Marshall's hand went up. "If you want to hear me!" He waved away Babcock's descending gavel. "I was told it would cost two hundred thousand dollars to close that break of yours. Do you want the actual figures? It has eaten already a million, and the work is not yet done. You know the history of the undertaking. The Desert Reclamation company was in straits. Faraday promised his help on the condition that the affairs of the Desert Reclamation company would be controlled by his company. He took the control. He inherited—what? Not good will. Threats, damage suits. Do you think that snowsides of complaints is going to encourage him to go on? This is what I came here to talk to you about. You ranchers don't want to cut your own throats. Now, there's a good deal going on about which you are in the dark. Faraday's got a right to feel he's shouldered an old man of the sea. He's been trying to dialogue it. He's appealed to the president. Ever since we came into this, the cry from Wash-

ington has been, 'Do this the way we like, or we'll not take it off your hands.' A murmur of angry voices started somewhere, swelling toward the balcony.

"We don't want the government—!" began the rising voices. Marshall's voice rang out: "But the government wants—you! Unless you will help save your own homes, the government will have to, in time. It's got to. Up there at Laguna, have you seen it? There's nothing going on. They're watching us. That's a useless toy if our works are washed out. Faraday says this to you—'Not a sound in the stilled house. Unless you withdraw your damage suits, he won't advance another damned cent.'"

Sharply he sat down before the audience realized that his message was finished. The house had not found its voice, when Babcock's gavel was pounding again for attention. The question, he felt, had not been put to them completely. Perhaps, they did not gather the full import of Mr. Marshall's message. Mr. MacLean would follow Mr. Marshall.

MacLean's superb figure rose from a tree-paneled background. "He should sing 'Brown October Ale,'" suggested Brandon to Hardin humorously.

Hardin's eyes were on MacLean. What did he know about it? What could he tell those men that they did not know? MacLean was a figurehead in the reorganized irrigation company. Why hadn't they called on him, Hardin? He knew more about the involved history of the two companies than the whole bunch on the stage down yonder. He could have told them, he could have called on their justice, their memory—

MacLean was speaking. "Mr. Marshall has likened the river project to the old man of the sea. He has it on his back, while it is busily kicking him in the shins!"

"Mr. Marshall has given you Mr. Faraday's message. He has asked you to dismiss your damage suits. I ask you to do more than that. Put your hands in your pockets! Come out and help us. You don't want the government. I am told that is the sentiment of the valley. When you called to them, they wouldn't help you; they wouldn't give you an adequate price. Congress will soon be adjourning. What is Mr. Faraday saying to Washington? Is he going to close that break? That depends on you. Withdraw your suits. Do more. Stop fighting against us. Fight with us."

The audience stirred emphatically, angrily. Before MacLean was done, voice screamed from the balcony. "You can't cut that. That's a threat. You're in too deep. You can't fool us. You've got to save yourself. You've got to go on. Tell Faraday to tell that to Washington."

The uproar was released. Black, from the Vestaria, jumped on his chair. "I am speaking for the valley. We can't help. You know it. We're stripped. We're ruined. You think to threaten us with the government—if we wait for the government to decide, the valley is gone—and the railroad's money with it. I tell you, your bluff won't go. We want justice. We are going to have justice."

"Justice!" came from the surging ranchers. "Fair play," yelled Black. "You can't trick us. We were not born yesterday. We have rights. The company brought us here. What did we give our money for? Desert land? What good is this land without water? We bought water. Give us back the money we've put in—that's what we're asking for. We won't be scared out of our rights."

There was a growling accompaniment from the back rows, herding together. "Order," cried Babcock, thumping his gavel. "Let Mr. Black have the floor."

Black had not stopped. Wildly his hands cut the air. His speech, though high-pitched, had a prepared sound; it tapered toward a climax. He gave individual instances of ruin. "Grace, Willard Grace, his crop gone, his place cut in two. Hollister and Wilson of the Palo Verde, the ranch a screaming horror. Scores of others. He would not mention his own case; and then he itemized his misfortunes. Pariah, his place, secured beyond all future usefulness. What had they come into the valley for? Who had urged them? There were pledges of the D. R. water pledges. That was all those ruined men were pleading, the redemption of those pledges. Individual ruin, what did it mean? A curtailing of luxuries, of personal indulgence. "I tell you, it means food, bread, potatoes; milk for the babies; or starvation."

Black had touched the deep note. This was the answer. This was what they wanted to say. "You ask us to help you, us, who are taxed already to our breaking point. You say your company won't be further. What does that help mean to you? Poverty? A few thousand, a million to the O. P., a corporation, what does a loss mean to them? Poverty? I tell you, no. A smaller dividend, maybe, to whom? Yes, to whom? To the men who live in Fifth avenue, whose wives are dragged about in muslins. Why draw their suits? Help Faraday, and ruin men like Pariah? Men of the valley, what is your answer to Faraday?"

The crowd was on its feet, swaying and pushing. The air was fetid with breaths. Wilson's crowd had forgotten its lognettes. "No," yelled the ranchers. "We say, no."

A boy ran his way from the wings, a yellow envelope in his hand. Babcock waved him on to Marshall. The audience was crying itself hoarse. Babcock lost control of the meeting in that minute of turning. Hollister, of the Palo Verde, was striving to be heard; Babcock's hammer sounded in vain. By Marshall's eye had caught a spark from the yellow envelope. He sprang forward, holding the dispatch toward MacLean. His excitement caught the eye of the crowd. "The river!" There was a sudden hush. "The river's out again!" A groan swept through the house, there was a break toward the doors.

Marshall's voice halted them. "Men of the valley," the audience, swayed again, listened. "Hear me. The river's running away again down yonder. This is a message from Rickard. It's broken through the levee. It's started for the valley. Now, who's going to stop it? Can you? Where's your force your equipment? What's your plan to that call but the company you are bounding? I gave you Faraday's message. His hands on the table. Not another cent from him unless you withdraw those suits. You say you have given me your answer, Black's answer. Now the river plays a trick. It calls your bluff. We stop the river, men of the valley? We can. Will you withdraw your suits? You can. What is your answer now, Imperial valley?"

The scene broke into bedlam. Men jumped to their chairs, to the velvet rim of the boxes, all talking, screaming, gesticulating at once. The Yellow Dragon was never so fearfully visualized. Out of the chaos of men's voices came a woman's shriek, "For God's sake, save our homes." It pitched the panic note. "Save the valley! Stop the river!"

Marshall's Indian eyes were reading that mass of scared faces as though it were a sheet of typed paper. "Barton," he called through the din. "Where's Barton?"

Two men lifted Barton's puny figure upon their shoulders. His vibrant voice rolled above the shouting. "The valley withdraws its suits against the company."

"Then the company," yelled Marshall's oratory, "the company withdraws the river from the valley!" Pandemonium was loose. There were cheers, and the sound of women sobbing. Barton was carried out on the shoulders of his henchmen. Black led a crowd out, haranguing to the street. On the street, Marshall fell back to MacLean. "That was a neat trick the river threw in our hands." His voice had dropped from oratory; the declaiming fire was gone from the black eyes. "It's only a break in the levee. Rickard says he can control it; estimates two weeks or so. It may cost the O. P. a few thousand dollars, but it saved them half a million. Now we'll have that game of poker, MacLean."

In the balcony, Hardin was staring at Brandon. "If that wasn't the devil's own luck!" To be continued.

Call the case of William Hohenzollern.

IMPORTANT NEWS THE WORLD OVER

IMPORTANT HAPPENINGS OF THIS AND OTHER NATIONS FOR SEVEN DAYS GIVEN

THE NEWS OF THE SOUTH

What is Taking Place in The South-land Will Be Found in Brief Paragraphs

European

Germany has been told in a treaty, some eighty thousand words in length, the terms upon which the allied and associated powers will make peace with her. This notable document which the leading statesmen of the various nations, together with a swarm of experts from the principal countries involved, have been working since the convening of the peace conference on January 18, is introduced by an extensive preamble, and her old-time resources as a strategy upon which the treaty is based. The document, long as it is, is shorter than was indicated by the forecasts which had estimated its length at one hundred thousand words. The treaty is not printed in German. The text is in French and English on opposite pages.

The terms of the treaty apply the end of Germany as a military power. She is deprived of virtually all her fleet, her army is cut down to non-military dimensions and she is sharply restricted along lines through which her old-time resources as a strategy are to be worked militarily to rehabilitate herself. Economically, also the future course of Germany is helped about with stipulations intended to insure her ability to pay the indemnity demanded by the allies, but to prevent her from exploiting her old-time resources as a strategy competitor of the nations about her which she overran and devastated during the war.

The ceremonial of handing the treaty to the Germans took place in the hall of the Trianon Palace hotel, a spacious well-lighted chamber with tiled floor and chandeliers arranged in the form of a square. It was presided over by Georges Clemenceau, the French premier, who sat at the corner of the head table, with President Wilson and the other American representatives on his right, and David Lloyd-George, the British premier, and his colleagues on the left. Mrs. Wilson was an interested spectator of the function.

The youth who was arrested outside the house of Premier Clemenceau has admitted to the police that he had been the delegate who signed the peace treaty, but that Germany will not pay an indemnity.

Congressman Drane recently took up with the government authorities the matter of securing a more intensive patrol of the Florida coast by the coast guard for the prevention of smuggling operations, and requested that steps be taken at once to this end.

As President Wilson will not be present at the opening of the special session of congress on May 19, he will cable his message from Paris, and it will be read immediately after congress convenes. This has been announced from the White House.

Secretary Baker announces that by August the last man of the American expeditionary forces will have been withdrawn from France. He says this estimate is based on the movement of three hundred thousand men a month to the United States.

Not within the memory of the oldest attendee at the white house has a congress met with the president absent from Washington, and it is said that this is the first time that the executive of the American nation ever had sent his message by wire.

Director General Hines announces that the railroad administration will return to the old system of competitive bidding in placing its orders.

Director General Hines says the government's deficit in operating the railroads for the first three months this year, or the difference between net earnings and one-fourth of the guaranteed annual compensation, will be \$192,000,000 for all roads under federal management. The government's loss for 1918 was \$226,000,000.

The clause regarding responsibilities which was not acted on at the previous session of the plenary conference, it is understood, has been incorporated in the final draft of the treaty. This provides for the trial of the former German emperor.

The peace treaty formulated by the allied and associated powers has been handed to the German delegation by Versailles. Definite announcement of the time when the Germans are to be made cognizant of the price that once imperialistic Germany must pay for having instigated the world war has at last been made.

Cable advice received at the white house indicate that President Wilson will not hasten his return to Washington because of the extra session of congress. There is now no intimation as to when he is expected to return, but the general belief is that it will not be before June 1.

Governmental efforts to hasten the return of industry to normal peace-time activity by stabilizing prices through the industrial board of the department of commerce came to an end May 9 following a final unsuccessful effort to bring the railroad ad-

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ministration and steel producers to an agreement on prices.

A conspiracy to induce British sailors to demobilize themselves by marching out of their barracks has been discovered. The object of the plot is stated to be to compel the government to use force if the projected disorders should occur, the organizers are believing that this would precipitate anarchy.

Gen. Sir A. A. Barrett, in command of northern India, has begun operations against the Afghan tribesmen who crossed the Afghan border and occupied positions on the Indian side. Authoritative statements of opinion by most of senators on the treaty by Versailles probably will not be forthcoming until after congress has met in extra session.

Both the council of four and the council of foreign ministers arrived at their sessions May 9. The former is giving special attention to the impending negotiations between the allies and Austria, and the latter is discussing reports on the boundaries of former Austro-Hungarian territories.

A dispatch from Naco, Ariz., says it is reported that Mayor Rocha of Cananea was kidnapped by bandits and that he had been carried away to be held for ransom.

Two of the American navy seaplanes—the NC-1 and the NC-3—arrived at Halifax, N. E., thus finishing successfully the first leg of their trans-Atlantic flight.

Within the next few days it is announced, Argentina will expel three hundred anarchistic agitators, most of them Russians and Italians, among them seventeen women.

The captain of a German submarine arrived in London recently and was put in jail. He is stated to have been the commander of a boat which sank several hospital ships.

Domestic

Of thirty-six states which report labor shortages to the federal employ-

ment service, twenty, all in the north, showed a surplus of labor; six, in the South, showed a shortage, while ten report an equality.

Determined efforts by the delegates to the National Caucus of the American Legion, which opened at St. Louis, Mo., to force the chairmanship of the organization on Lieut. Theodore Roosevelt, failed, and Col. Henry D. Lindley of Dallas, Texas, was elected chairman.

Fifteen persons were killed when one of the worst tornadoes ever experienced in southwest Texas, swept the lower Rio Grande valley, demolishing farm houses and doing great damage to growing crops.

The storm which swept Texas took its heaviest toll of life at Mission, where a shed in which Mr. Vick, his wife and four children and a number of Mexicans had taken refuge from the hurricane, collapsed. Mr. Vick and two of his children were instantly killed.

Julius Barnes, United States wheat director, announces on his return to New York from Chicago, that he has completed negotiations to bring four million bushels of Canadian wheat into the United States for distribution to the mills.

Incoming transports poured into New York approximately three thousand members of the Eighty-second division, and the entire organization, with the exception of those units intended to land within the next week.

Of the units thus far returning from overseas duty fully 80 per cent of the enlisted men are from the north and central west, the personnel from the entire south not being more than 20 per cent and from the whole organization was comprised.

Approval of the sale of twelve army camps—eight National Guard sites and four small miscellaneous camps—for a total of more than five hundred and forty-nine million dollars—is announced by the acting secretary

The state department has given out the information that three thousand employees of an American mining company at Santa Eulalia, Mexico, have been removed to Chihuahua City because of threats of Villa.

The lower house of the Florida legislature passed a memorial which will be submitted to congress calling upon that body to pass an act requiring deportation of all foreign-born persons who claimed exemption and were exempted from military service in the recent war against German autocracy on the ground that they were subjects of and gave allegiance to a foreign country.

Fire in a downtown business and apartment building at midnight May 5 trapped many persons, the Columbus, Ohio, police say. Men, women and children jumped from upper floors into life nets. One baby was thrown from the third floor and was caught in the arms of a youth aiding the firemen. Scores of women jumped from the upper apartments of the seven story building, were injured and rushed to the hospital. Only one is known to be dead, but it is estimated that those trapped may run up to 30 or 35.

THIS KIND OF SPIRIT WON THE WAR.

The following letter has been received by the War Loan Organization at Richmond, Va. from Mr. A. W. Hall, manager of the Skyville (Md.) Herald.

"The Herald will go to the charge. Moreover, we invite you to use its columns in any way you see fit for the Victory Loan. It has freely given service and space for all war activities and will not stop now. Please accept the free copy."

