

BLACK FEATHER

—BY—
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SYNOPSIS

Rodney Shaw, independent trader, arrives in Michilimackinac in 1818, determined to fight the trade monopoly established by the John Jacob Astor company in the Northwest territory. He is met by Conrad Rich, an elderly clerk, Ramsey Crooks, Astor's dominant figure, and Annette Leclere, local beauty and inspiration to all the traders, especially to Burke Rickman, a ruthless trader who is the instrument of destruction to traders refusing to amalgamate with the Astor company. Rouseel, the town bully, wearing the black feather, symbol of invincibility, knocks down Shaw's head oarsman, Basile, and Shaw in return throws Rouseel into the water. Ramsey Crooks presents the symbolic black feather to Shaw. Later, at a conference, Shaw scorns Astor's proposal virtually to surrender his independence, announces his readiness to fight the amalgamation, and prepares to depart the following day. At a ball that evening Shaw recognizes Burke Rickman as the Astor agent who had previously robbed him of his partner and his trade, and as a dangerous rival for Annette, with whom he is infatuated. There is an exchange of bitter words. Annette is chosen queen of the dance, and after flirting with both Rickman and Shaw, chooses Shaw as king for the following evening. Basile warns Shaw to hasten his departure and tells him an old man awaits him at his tent. Shaw finds Leslie, an old free-trader.

CHAPTER II—Continued

"Ay! Who's not heard of them? Far up the Mississippi; good hunters and in rich country. But others are there."

"Others was! Gone, now. Nor-westers 're gone by law. Th' lone independent who opposed 'em 's gone . . . Sioux driven him out. Rich country. Waitin' to be took. By me. With you. I got . . . trade goods. You got th' feet 'nd wind."

"Look!" he said. "Astor figures to step in. He's sendin' Rickman. We'll fix a surprise for 'm!"

He fumbled in the buckskin pouch which hung from his girdle. "Here!" he said and drew out a map, crudely etched on parchment, and pointed to the winding course of the Mississippi and to a lake indicated well towards its headwaters. "Yon!" he said. "Rich country waitin' . . . to be took!"

Again he fumbled in the pouch and this time produced an Indian ceremonial stone of green, shaped like a butterfly, polished to satiny smoothness. "More powerful nor Astor! More valuable nor a ton o' trade goods! Like a key to a lock . . . Key to Pillager lock! Give to me by Standin' Cloud. Pillager chief. Saved his hide three year back. Brothers! Me 'nd Standin' Cloud brothers! He passed th' stone 'nd tells me to send it, if ever I need . . . a brother! No use, then. Two forts a'ready amongst 'em. Trade won't stand another split. But now . . . it's different."

He choked and gasped then and after a struggle gave up and once more reverted to signs. Rodney had strength and agility, he indicated. Rodney could direct the march and pass the credits and see that they were collected.

"Just two of us . . . old free-traders left," he whispered. "Just two as won't belly-crawl to . . . Astor. Do we deal?"

Rodney, stirred though he was at the prospect, demurred. It was not fair, he declared.

"Gabble!" the other cut in. "I got goods . . . Goods 're no use less strong legs 'nd hearts go . . . with 'em. You got legs 'nd heart . . . Do we deal? . . . Don't we?" he asked again and in his eyes was pleading which warmed Shaw with something else than the prospect of being able to make good his boast and satisfy his impulse to stand against the great company.

They talked, then, until dawn silvered the east. Then Rodney half led, half carried the old trader to the camp he had made at the eastern end of the island and left him with word that he would return and give his answer.

"They'll watch ye!" Leslie muttered as Rodney lowered him to his couch of buffalo robes. "They'll watch ye like a lynx watches prey . . . Come late . . . I don't sleep nights . . ."

Rodney slept until the sun was full an hour high. He had gone to sleep with his heart still fast at thought of the opportunity to establish himself again.

And he awakened with his heart going fit to choke him; gasping to himself a name. Over and over he repeated it, sitting there in his robes, blinking at the new day. "Annette!" he said. "Annette . . . Annette . . . Annette Leclere!"

Basile cooked breakfast for him and Shaw ate alone before his tent, the old man eyeing him with ill concealed curiosity. Finally, he could no longer restrain himself and put the question in French:

"Do we put out with the old one?" Shaw smiled. "Does one pass by rare opportunity? Does one, Basile? Of course we put out. But not too hastily. Leslie is a sick man, Basile,"—soberly. "Perhaps even with a heavier sickness than one comprehends. He is unfit for a march. Today, we must make gestures at occupying ourselves. Tonight, during the dance at which I'm to be king,"—with a reminiscent grin—"I slip away and go to him. In the meantime . . ."

The sound of shod wheels rolling on gravel checked him and he looked up to see Annette in her gig, careening down the narrow street. But she could not help giving him notice as he leaped outward, flinging up an arm to make the leading black shy wide, grasping the filly's rein.

"Impudence!" she cried, feigning pique. "You will have me upset, Rodney Shaw. Stay back!"

"I stay here. I defy you!"—as he vaulted the wheel to the seat beside her.

"But you were to be gone from Mackinac! All have heard the brave things you said to Mr. Astor. Did you not mean them? That you'd be gone in defiance to him?"

"Not until those ripe lips hunger as mine hunger!"

"Nonsense, sire!"

So he drove with her that morning and strolled with her that afternoon. He wooed roughly, madly until, late in the afternoon, Annette fled his avid arms and hungry lips and sought sanctuary from his determination in the house of the old aunt which was her home.

He went back to his tent, walking lightly, head high. Men turned to watch him because, between sun and sun, he had become famous. He had defied Astor and he had flaunted his trespassing in romance upon grounds which, that spring, at least, had been admittedly Burke Rick-



"We'll Sting Astor and Claw Back at Rickman."

man's. Others wondered what manifestation Rickman's resentment might take. But Burke Rickman was not to manifest his resentment. Not openly. Donald MacIver, the shrewd Scot and loyal servant, had seen to that.

He and Rickman were together when Annette drove past that bright forenoon with the pugnacious young Shaw on the gig seat beside her, and MacIver had seen the chill of threat show in the other's eye and the heat of jealousy creep into his cheek.

"Don't, lad," MacIver muttered while his eyes twinkled. "Tis a passing thing. No challenge to ye, is yon upstart. Let him go on. Let him spend, mayhap, hours wi' th' lass. He'll gi' us what we need quicker so thun by any ither means. He's not Meester Astor's mon. 'Nd he must be so if we discharge our duty. He made his boasts last night that he'd trade again, 'nd in th' territory. It's our obligation to detain him where, to follow, to crush th' juice o' resistance from his very bones, if need be. Would he gi' us a hint as to where he'll trade? No! But will a lad tell th' innermost secrets of his heart to a lass? Ay! From her we'll learn."

Rodney gestured as king at the dance in the company headquarters that night and told himself that he was only waiting for the hour to grow late before slipping away to join Leslie.

But when the hour grew late he put it off. Multiple joy and achievement were there. Annette, first of all, was there, challenging and tantalizing him. And Rickman was there, his resentment badly under control.

But depart at last he did, and found Leslie waiting.

"Well? Do ye take my offer?" the old trader asked.

"I do, pardner."

"Good! We'll sting 'im, th' two on us! We'll sting Astor and claw back at Rickman for what he done to ye . . . Look, pardner!"

He led Shaw to the stores of trade goods, snug under their oilcloths, and by the light of a blazing torch Rodney beheld the valuables piled neatly there.

"Ought to be spy," Leslie whispered. "My men tell on hearin' Rickman puts out afore long. We'd best be weeks . . . ahead on him."

"Can you travel?" Shaw asked bluntly.

"Few days . . . rest'll fix . . . me."

So, for a week, while he waited for Leslie to gain strength, Rodney Shaw reveled in the pretense that feminine charms held him at Mackinac. Despite the truth that courtship served as a blind to confound the watch he knew must be kept on him, he was enmeshed, as many another had been caught in this half decade since Annette Leclere, done with Montreal schooling, had come back to live with her old aunt.

A forbidding woman, this aunt, a grim, forbidding woman, sprung from metif stock, a fixture in the place, midwife and seeress, speaking a jargon of Ojibway and patios and seemed to take pride that so few understood her well.

Shaw disturbed the old lady and she stormed at Annette for having him about, but it did no good. The girl laughed at her.

Then, from pan to fire, Rickman was banished, tossed aside, snubbed, it would seem, and now it was Shaw who came hammering on doors before dew was dry.

CHAPTER III

Rodney Shaw changed his approach to Annette, scarce knowing that he changed. The light of amused combat left his eyes for minutes; his voice pleaded softly. He lost poise, lost years; he would boast to her of what he had done, of what he could do; he would plead before her . . . And he would plead, almost seriously, as others had pleaded. Almost seriously . . . not quite, and not for long.

And at those times, the girl was not so ready of tongue. She listened, denying his half-reverent pleas by her silence—but still she listened.

Today, he was in such a mood, stupefied by her intoxicating beauty, pleading with her to go inland with him. And she put him off and when he wheedled for reasons she listed his shortcomings. She was in play, but he failed to realize her words were not full-meant.

"Presumptuous, reckless, audacious, foolhardy—"

"To desire one so lovely?"

"To risk further the ill will of the company!"

"Ho!" he laughed. "Why should I fear?"

"But they have stripped you of your trade! They will crush you, if you persist!"

"They will try, yes. But they do not guess the card hidden in my sleeve!"

"Card? You possess some secret? Or is this only an idle boast?"

He had been toying with that same black ostrich plume which had reposed these days in his waistcoat pocket and now he waved the symbol of superior strength in a dismissing gesture.

"Listen!" he said, halting in their walk and leaning close. "They think me a pauper, and that is well. But here under their nose I've acquired a share in goods beyond my wildest dream! And with these goods I march to the richest ground untended, a ground they plan to work!"

They were on a forest trail on the heights of the island. Dappled sunlight fell upon them, scents of balsam and cedar were in their nostrils.

"Ah, Annette!" he breathed, taking her hands. "I never dreamed, in the years I've lived, that such a desirable person as you pressed foot to earth! . . ." She was in his arms, then, yielding gently and he felt her quick and irregular breathing against him.

"Dear Annette! Sweet Annette! And I've wasted years thinking of trade, when it's love I want! I've wasted my life, holding freedom as a goal, when it's enslavement in your heart I need!"

"Enslavement, Rodney?"

"Enslavement?" He repeated the

word aloud and looked away from her and at his manner alarm swept into the girl's face. "Of course, it's what I want!" he cried, laughing hungrily to cover his confusion. "You're sweet! You set me on fire!" he muttered, grasping her so roughly that, half frightened, she sought escape.

They returned to the village, Shaw's tongue losing its ease. He tried to pass off that unguarded moment, those impetuous words, and conduct himself as he had at other times, but fright persisted. Let lips seduce him from that objective which was the breath of his life? Ah, no! He'd gone far enough along this course.

At the gate he told her he could not be with her this night. He had affairs to attend, he said. He was brusque and absorbed, having been frightened by the strength of his own emotions. He left her, impelled to run in flight and she stared after him with the mingled feelings of one who has been rebuffed.

So that night the girl sat alone, hurt and outraged. And Burke Rickman, prowling the places of merriment in his role of spy, saw neither her nor Shaw. But Shaw, he discovered, was at his tent. Annette, then, might be alone and the time he had awaited, and the mood which had been so long in shaping, might have arrived. So he rapped on the aunt's door and found her there, with signs of tears on her cheeks and high temper in her eyes.

Sly, this Rickman, in playing on tempers. He questioned adroitly and probed and prodded to no avail. And he kept on, belittling Rodney, scoffing at him, predicting his dire future until Annette went white again with provoked loyalty and boasted of Shaw's strength and courage and possessions and plans; her thoughts and impulses were all ajumble, hating and loving Rodney in the same moment, defending him while she longed to hurt him.

She achieved both. Her boasts were the things Rickman had waited to hear; that was all he needed, to know Shaw had a partnership and planned to march to a rich ground unclaimed by traders.

So, at midnight, when Rodney slipped along the trail to Leslie's tent another followed furtively and when Shaw heard from his partner's lips the thing he had suspected and feared, this other listened, prone behind a boulder . . .

Leslie no longer deceived himself. The hand of death lay heavily upon him. Giles, his clerk, was holding a cup of water to his lips as Rodney appeared. The old man smiled weakly.

"I've held ye . . . back . . . Delayed ye . . . thinkin' I . . . might git . . . strength . . . No good," he whispered. "Jist one thing . . . I want. It's to . . . see th' Pillager trade . . . out of yon . . . hands. You go," he said and weak though he was, the order came imperious-ly.

Rodney knelt beside him in the entry to the tent. He could not hear the light scruff-scruff of a body morning closer, could not know that alien ears heard those rasping words, spoken at the cost of such torture.

"You take th' . . . goods. Iffen I . . . don't follow they're . . . yours . . ." he added and his suffering eyes gleamed with stalwart friendliness. "No strings . . . to 'em . . . Yours," he said and looked at Giles as if to adjure the man to bear witness to the agreement.

He fumbled, then, in his pouch and drew out the map and butterfly ornament.

"Take 'em," he gasped. "Use 'em . . . Standin' Cloud . . . 'll treat ye like . . . brother."

"I'll go," Rodney said. "I'll give them such opposition they've never dreamed off! I'll be gone before the sun shows," he promised.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Pumpkin, Squash Used to Produce Many Fruits; Over 100 Cross Pollinations

The production of about a dozen fruits from more than a hundred cross pollinations between different varieties of pumpkins and squash made at the state experiment station at Geneva, N. Y., says the Scientific American, has thrown considerable light on the botanical relationships of these groups and, incidentally, has given rise to several new forms that seem to be either immune or highly resistant to squash mosaic. Many unsuccessful attempts to hybridize these two vegetables have been made during the last century, hence the success attending the station trials is being watched with considerable interest because of the many possibilities it holds for developing new and better varieties.

Cucurbita is the technical name for pumpkins and squashes of which three annual species are more or less commonly grown, explains Professor Van Eseltine, station botanist. These species are known as

maxima which includes the winter squashes, such as Hubbard, Boston marrow and related types; moschata, also known as the grammas and best illustrated by the Japanese pie, winter crookneck, and the like, and pepo, or the pumpkins, the fall squashes and the summer squashes or scallops, vegetable marrows, and similar forms.

In each case the forms within these groups crossed readily, but the groups would not cross with each other. This seemed to establish the specific identity of the three groups. In 1930 an attempt was again made to cross these different groups in a study of the origin of the annual cucurbits. About a dozen fruits have been obtained from these crosses and while they present many interesting possibilities, including evidence of marked resistance to squash mosaic, much further study will be required before any very definite conclusions can come from these investigations.

Infantile Paralysis Wave May Let Science Test Preventive

Nasal Sprays Save Laboratory Monkeys, But Will They Work on Humans?



Hero monkey—that's what science calls the tiny rhesus monkey, like the little fellow here, whose nose is being sprayed in an experiment to test a preventive for infantile paralysis; thousands of monkeys have died in the cause. If the sprays prove successful on humans it may mean the end of pitiful cases like that of the little girl above. The annual, nation-wide series of President's Birthday parties helps to raise funds for the research work; a scene from one is also shown.

By WILLIAM C. UTLEY

WITH a wave of infantile paralysis assuming serious proportions in the south central region of the United States, science may find its long-awaited opportunity to make mass tests of nose sprays as a means of preventing the dread, crippling disease.

Nasal sprays have proved nearly 100 per cent effective upon laboratory monkeys, which respond to poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis) in the same way humans do. But until an extensive outbreak of the disease occurred there was no chance to conduct experiments upon humans, for the lives of large numbers of persons must not be endangered unnecessarily.

Now that outbreak may be at hand, for the south central regions are reporting an increase in "polio" cases far over the normal increase which comes with the summer months. Between May 9 and July 24 there were, according to the United States public health service, 486 cases reported from the west south central region, as compared with only 18 cases for the same period of 1936 and 65 cases for the same period of 1935. During these weeks the east south central region reported 317 cases as compared with 234 in 1936 and 57 in 1935. There was some indication of the spread of the disease eastward.

Doctors hope that the nose spray will be proved definitely successful in its application to human beings, for it is more than a century since the first written account of poliomyelitis was made by a trained physician.

English Doctor Started Crusade. Even so, progress has been phenomenally rapid in the light of the age of the disease, for it is probably as old as mankind.

But it was only 102 years ago that Dr. John Badham, of Worsop, England, moved by the condition of four tiny patients, pleaded through the medium of medical journals for other doctors to come to his aid with suggestions for the cure of a disease nobody knew anything about.

Dr. Badham's paper, telling of the plight of the four crippled youngsters doomed to pathetically unhappy lives, launched one of the greatest crusades in medical history. Poorly equipped as they were, doctors of the Nineteenth century did not hesitate in responding to the pioneering Badham's call for assistance.

Get on Trail of Germ.

Only five years later, Jacob von Heine, German orthopedic surgeon of Cannstatt, made public an important study of infantile paralysis. His practice brought him in contact with many cases of deformed limbs in children. A shrewd observer, he noticed something about young paralytics which other medical men had largely overlooked. He saw that paralysis was the result of some kind of acute disease which preceded the appearance of muscular weakness.

The discovery was epochal for, in other words, Heine perceived that paralysis in children didn't just happen—it had a definite antecedent cause. He won for himself a place of honor in ranks of those battling

against the spread of infantile paralysis. It was a battle that widened to many more fronts as time wore on, and by 1885 the infectious nature of the disease was pretty generally accepted.

Yet it was not until 1908 that the first real advance was made in the search for a germ. Then Landsteiner and Popper, in Paris, injected portions of the brain and spinal chord, taken from a fatal human case of infantile paralysis, into some monkeys. They succeeded in infecting the monkeys with the disease, thus putting it on an experimental basis for the first time. Only a short time later several doctors almost simultaneously managed to pass poliomyelitis from one monkey to another. They were Flexner and Lewis in New York, Leiner and Von Weisner in Vienna, and Landsteiner and Levaditi in Paris.

The way was now cleared to studying the mechanism of the disease. It was indicated how the germ was spreading, but scientists still had not banded in any united effort. It took a national tragedy to wake them up.

In the summer of 1916 the great infantile paralysis epidemic hit the United States. It began in a small area in Brooklyn, then spread rapidly over the rest of New York City and Long Island, eventually cascading over the entire country. It touched every state, and struck down more than 25,000 persons, most of them children.

Health Officers at Loss.

Panic swept the nation. In the mistaken belief that only those under sixteen were susceptible, railroad officials refused to let children ride on trains. Vigilante bands of citizens established unofficial martial law in many places, and health certificates were required as "passports" for children moving from one community to another.

Health officers made every conceivable effort to check the disease, but they still lacked a working knowledge of ways and means to combat its ravages. The epidemic died of itself, finally, and so did public terror. There have been less epidemics since then; 15,000 cases were reported in 1931, and 10,000 each in the years 1927 and 1935.

Medical science recognized infantile paralysis as one of its most challenging problems and redoubled its efforts to find an answer. Foundations, research laboratories both public and private, universities and individual physicians and research workers concentrated their attention upon it.

But it remained for a layman, Col. Henry L. Doherty, to begin the most novel move in the battle, one which popularized the fight among all classes of Americans. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, himself a victim of infantile paralysis, inspired the move. President Roosevelt's previous interest in the cause of fellow sufferers had been repeatedly manifested by activities on behalf of the Warm Springs, Ga., foundation where victims are treated.

First President's Birthday Ball.

Visiting Warm Springs in 1933, Colonel Doherty also became deeply interested, and acquired a first-hand knowledge of the research and after-treatment work going forward in this country. He saw the need for more widespread co-ordination of effort. After discussing the mat-

ter with the President, he conceived the idea of a gigantic series of parties which would enable millions of Americans to do their share in the war on polio.

Under Colonel Doherty's direction the mammoth party-organizing task was started. A national headquarters was established in New York and civic-minded persons were called upon to help. The first series of parties was held on January 30, 1934, the President's birthday.

Funds Aid Experiment.

So far more than \$4,000,000 has been raised by the annual parties. Seventy per cent remains to fight infantile paralysis in the community where it was raised, while 30 per cent goes to the national fund, to be used for research or rehabilitation work.

One important use to which the receipts from the parties was put was the development of the nasal spray preventive for poliomyelitis.

How this spray came to be discovered is a dramatic episode in medical history. The subvisible microbes have ever defied scientists to follow their meanderings. Yet, after long and brilliant experimentation, scientists in laboratories in New York, Chicago, Stanford university and London at last found out that the nose was a doorway to the polio virus.

In the laboratories of the United States public health service, Charles Armstrong, a "microbe hunter," decided that if he could find some means of blocking that doorway, there would be no way for the deadly germs to attack. For three years he experimented with a whole drove of rhesus monkeys. Finally he found what he wanted. By washing the insides of the monkeys' noses with a weak solution of picric acid and alum, he was able to save 24 out of 25 monkeys exposed to a hot, exceptionally dangerous infantile paralysis virus!

Confusion Hampers Test.

Armstrong was confident that if his solution worked with monkeys it ought to be effective on humans. But he was forced to wait for an opportunity to make the test. It apparently arrived last summer, when an epidemic broke out in Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee. Rushing to the scene, he won widespread support to his plan of spraying the solution into the children's noses.

He planned to have the doctors supervise the spraying and keep careful records. Unfortunately the experiment got out of hand: the doctors became swamped with demands upon their time and many parents used the easily procurable solution without bothering about scientific counsel on its use.

After salvaging what records he could and making extensive records of his own, Armstrong decided that a more powerful solution was needed. Two California scientists, working on funds supplied by the President's Birthday Ball commission, supplied it. They were E. W. Schultz and L. P. Gebhardt of Stanford university, and they offered a 1 per cent zinc sulphate solution. Zinc sulphate had been used for years as an eyewash. They discovered it was virtually 100 per cent effective in preventing infantile paralysis when sprayed into the noses of monkeys.

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