

BOMBS BURST ONCE

By GRANVILLE CHURCH

W.N.U. SERVICE

THE STORY SO FAR: Jeff Curtis and his wife, Lee, are already on their way to Tierra Libre when Jeff receives a note from Zora Mitchell warning them not to come. It is too late to turn back, so Jeff decides not to tell Lee, who was opposed to their returning to the tropics. She finally agreed to go only after Jeff had persuaded her that the job of chief engineer for a newly organized fruit company is the chance of a lifetime. He nearly changed his own mind about going after talking long distance to Jerry McInnis, a former associate of his in Tierra Libre, who told him that Zora Mitchell's husband had been killed. It is Mitchell's job that Jeff has been called to fill. They are docking now at Cabeza de Negro, Jeff thinking of Zora's note, "Don't come." NOW CONTINUE WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER II

Don't come! And here he was with Lee in the curve of his arm, Buddy and Chuck tugging at his trousers, with Tierra Libre rising up out of the morning sea, the buildings of Cabeza de Negro taking shape. His arm unconsciously tightened about Lee.

Long before they drew close enough to make out details of the sturdy new docks and receiving sheds they saw the motor launch cutting along the coast as though to intercept them. It, too, was headed for the port, and at last Curt recognized the figure standing in the cockpit.

He yanked off his hat to wave it wildly. "Jerry, you old muckle-head," he shouted. "I might've known you'd come down to meet us."

"Yeh, got you wireless you were coming through Cabeza. Hiya, Curt. Hiya, Lee," called the stocky man in the launch. "It's good to see you folks again. Where're the kids?"

Curt and Lee each picked up a child and stood him on the broad rail. Buddy, from his new vantage point, piped up: "Mummy, what's a muckle-head?"

"A muckle-head, darling," she answered gravely, "is your Uncle Jerry down in the little boat. See?"

There was no opportunity for dallying here. The launch drew away and by the time the Pisces warped up to the dock Jerry McInnis—leathered face, close-cropped hair, weather-stained clothes—was waiting for them.

A dockhand delivered a message from Senor Montoya on a company briefcase. The senior had been delayed in getting down river to meet them but would reach Cabeza in another hour or so.

"That one of their river boats?" "Yep. They have two. But we can talk later, Curt," Jerry scooped up the children, one in each arm. "Let's find a more comfortable spot for the wait. Lee, you're looking great! If I didn't know better I'd guess you were twenty. Hard to believe these are yours. Marta sends her love and can't wait to see you."

McInnis, chuckling, nodded from Curt's piled luggage to his own launch boy, and the mestizo immediately took possession to stand guard. Then the Associated man led the way from the dock to the one main street of the town. There were signs of recent construction. The new company was booming the village.

"That's a good dock they've built," Curt said. "I suppose Mitchell did it?"

"Sure."

Just the one word, and it sounded strange. Clipped and odd, for McInnis. Curt threw his friend a side-long glance.

"Looks like they're really going it big here."

Associated Fruit Growers—where Curt and McInnis, fresh from M. I. T., had their first years of practical engineering—stretched along the north bank of the Rio Negro, a hundred kilometers or more of banana plantations in an almost unbroken line. These were fed by a narrow-gauge railroad, and there was one handling of fruit from farm pick-up platforms to conveyor belts at shipside.

But the new Compania Agricola Tropical, south of the Negro, had more of a problem. It wasn't possible to run a railroad through to the sea. Salt marshes lay between their concession and the coast and made it necessary to handle fruit by rail from farm to river port, and by steamer or lighters from there to Cabeza where ocean vessels could pick it up. Not so good, two handlings of perishable fruit. Costly, too. And the delay and expense of hauling construction materials up river was sharp in Curt's mind.

"Well, here we are."

McInnis stopped before a small cantina, the facade a blinding, bilious green in the raw sunshine. McInnis put the boys down, led them inside. Lee and Curt followed.

"It's nearly lunch time," McInnis remarked. "Shouldn't the kids be fed, Lee? You know what the cooking is like here, but we can probably get canned soups."

Lee smiled. "I don't need a brick wall to fall on me. Go ahead, you two. Have a drink. I know you have plenty to talk over. I'll drag out my rusty Spanish and get along."

The men turned to the deserted bar at the end of the room, mounted uncomfortable stools and ordered gin rickeys. While the native bar-

tender mixed them nearby, Curt made conversation.

"Jerry, it'll cost so much to produce and ship fruit here that I don't see how these people can hope to compete with Associated. Not without a subsidy, and Tierra Libre does not grant subsidies."

McInnis grunted.

"Well, that's their business."

"Of course," Curt mused on, "it's a pretty slick hombre who could put anything over on Old Man Moore. I could give even money the Old Man figures they'll go broke getting into production, then plans to bid in and take over the concession cheap. Maybe throw a bridge across the Negro and handle the fruit once from pick-up to the dock at Soledad."

McInnis grinned, but said nothing. The bartender placed the drinks before them, then left to lend a hand in the kitchen lean-to.

Alone now, and with a furtive glance to be sure Lee was occupied with the children, Curt pulled forth Zora Mitchell's letter. He spread it open before the other, and his face was serious, his voice low.

"Jerry, what've I got into?"

McInnis read the note, refolded it, slid it back to Curt. He frowned. He took a long pull at his drink.

"All right, Jerry, out with it," Curt spoke again. "What's up?"

"Well, Curt," his friend said finally, "my reason for coming down



"There's nothing I can put a finger on."

to the coast to meet you wasn't altogether social. But now I'm here, I have my doubts. There's nothing I can put a finger on." He paused.

"Come on, pal, we know each other's first name. Spill it."

"Well, Curt, I can't help feeling there's something fishy about your new outfit. They have more men on their payroll than we have, for instance, Americans as well as natives, trying to get things set before the next rainy season. That's all right. But Soledad's the only live spot—such as it is—within their range. You couldn't call Cabeza a satisfactory place to live a fellow up over a holiday."

"So—well, damn it all, you'd expect that gang to come to Soledad once in a while. But no one ever does. The two Swedes and the Dutchman I told you about are the only ones who ever get to Soledad, and that's only on business, to supervise receipt of shipments."

"And they don't talk! We tried to get up a ball game with your people once. No go. It's as though this Montoya was afraid his men'd spill something to our advantage. And that's carrying the rivalry theme a bit far for this business and this country. I—well, you see how vague it is, only a feeling . . ."

Curt reflected. He pushed his glass around in circles on the bar. "Ever get over to the new plantings yourself?"

"No," grinned McInnis. "That wouldn't be etiquette. The Old Man paid them a courtesy visit once, but we're rival outfits. If I went over they'd think I'm snooping. All the dope I've had on them is picked up from natives. You know how stuff gets around."

"And that leads right into what I really came down here for. It was especially to—uh, warn you. But, he held up his hand, "don't ask me against what. I don't know. That note from Zora Mitchell—I'd talk to her as soon as I could. Sounds like she knows something."

He held an uncomfortable silence for a moment. Then:

"I got hold of a rumor after you called me several days ago. There's no evidence, mind you, and it was too late to stop you by cable. Well, the natives working for me have their own ideas about Mitchell's death. They say it was no native did the job, but a couple of white men. But Curt," he expostulated,

"you know no white man would hack a guy to pieces the way Mitch was found."

Curt thought this out. "Huh, unless it was to hide the fact that it was a white man's killing. And suppose it was a white man, Jerry, or a couple of them? So what? Old Mitch knew his job, but he certainly piled up enemies. You and I know that well enough. He made engineers out of us, first job out of college, but we got plenty bruised in the process. Men with less sense of humor than we have can't take the treatment he dished out."

Curt pulled at his drink reflectively.

"You didn't give me any details," he mentioned after another moment.

"There aren't many. A track-walker found him early in the morning—fortunately before the buzzards did. Let's see, the 11th, it was. About a kilometer outside of Tempujo, in a ditch by the track. The damn zopilotes were wheeling overhead, so he got the section handcar, loaded the body onto it—"

"The 11th?" interrupted Curt. "That's the date of their letter to me! They didn't waste any time. Wonder how they picked a man so quickly?"

"Well, the date's correct. I remember because we had an early evening dinner-dance on the Tekla at Soledad the night before Mitch was found. And the Tekla pulled out for Cristobal about 9:00 p. m. on the 10th."

"It did!" exclaimed Curt softly. He looked at McInnis. "Their letter to me was dated the 11th, but air-mailed from Cristobal on the 12th. Didn't notice that discrepancy at first. When I finally did, I figured the letter either made a plane to the Canal Zone, or was misdated in error."

"We have no air service to Panama from Soledad—direct. Course, it's less than two hours by air to the Zone, but I doubt they'd make the flight just for a letter. Anyway, I know a messenger from Tempujo brought mail to the Tekla just before it sailed. Came as our party was breaking up and going ashore."

"Then the chances are the letter to me, dated the 11th, was put aboard the Tekla which sailed the 10th. Actually mailed before Mitch was found murdered. Right?"

"By God, Curt, that's so!" McInnis brought his palm down on the bar. "Mitch was killed some time after dark on the 10th and discovered early on the 11th."

"Meanwhile . . ." Curt fell silent, then looked up keenly. "The two Swedes are white men."

McInnis frowned. "And there are plenty more white men where you're going. No, Curt, the Swedes are not what we'd want for bosom pals, but we've no right to jump to conclusions. Besides," he dropped the scowl and grinned, "I did some checking up myself. Had my motor boy ask questions here and there. The Swede made the run from Tempujo to San Alejo late that afternoon, while Mitch was staying in Tempujo overnight."

Another silence fell between them. Then Curt spoke harshly.

"Jerry, there's more here than meets the eye. If Mitch's killing was a grudge payment, then, Tierra Libre being what it is, there's little we can do about it. Nothing, in fact. And there's nothing for me to worry about. I don't make enemies like Mitch did. But if there's more behind it . . ."

McInnis heaved a sigh.

"Curt, be careful! Don't mount any white charger over Mitch. He asked for it. He's been asking for it for years. And you've got Lee and the kids here now. But if—well, I don't have to say it, but if you find you're in a spot, call on me."

They downed the last of their drinks and swiveled to face the room. But before rejoining Lee Curt brought up another matter.

"By the way," he said slowly, studying his friend's face, "I saw a destroyer headed for Soledad this morning. American, I suppose—looked like ours. Any particular reason for it?"

"No. The country's quiet as a church meeting. Dr. Arcas only one step removed from being a dictator, sure, but a good one. Seems to be what the people need, they're satisfied. He's solidly entrenched, too, there's no opposition to speak of. But . . ." He paused.

"Well?"

"Well, we had a Navy visit only a couple of weeks ago, and they certainly aren't scheduled to stop in again so soon." He added, in a puzzled tone, "Funny I didn't see the ship as I came down the coast."

"You were pretty low in the water and they were some distance off."

"Huh. Well . . ." He shrugged. They started across the room to rejoin Lee and the boys. McInnis dug his fingers into Curt's arm.

"See Zora Mitchell, Curt, first thing you get to San Alejo. But only to find out if you have anything personal to guard against," he said insistently. "Don't borrow trouble. You're a family man now. What's more, the family's right here with you."

"Yeh, I see what you mean," Curt answered dryly, his eyes on Lee and the children.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Smart Accessories Give Even Your Old Clothes New Beauty

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



IT'S patriotic to be budget-saving in dress during these challenging war times, which mind you, in no wise means that one should sacrifice attractive appearance in practicing economy. On the contrary, one of the greatest services American women can render during these strenuous times is to be cheer-radiating and inspirational in the matter of becoming dress.

More and more women of keen fashion insight are realizing the wisdom of investing in one or two really worthwhile goodlooking costumes made of dependable materials of sterling quality that are smartly styled with utmost simplicity rather than to acquire a lot of shoddy clothes that never seem the right thing to wear to the right place. However, the goodlooking suit or dress tells but half of the dress story. The other half is told in one important word—accessories! It's amazing what magic lies in a flattering hat, important jewelry items, a dramatic use of colorful gloves and belts and bags, in a bright-printed handkerchief, or a spectacular show of intriguing buttons on what might otherwise seem a hopelessly plain dress or suit. There really is no more potent way to chase away an inferiority complex about the dress than the acquisition of flattering accessories.

If you want to know the "last word" in high-fashion jewelry, it's gilded sterling silver. To guarantee yourself a possession that will turn your simplest black frock into an eye-impelling costume, treat yourself to a set of gilded sterling silver jewelry designed by Monet as shown to the right above in the illustration. The bracelet, the clip or brooch, each item is so light yet has that expensive look that makes them real conversation pieces.

The tall, sculptured crown and the dramatic brim of the hat worn with this jewelry tells the story of smart millinery for fall. The elegant, initialed suede bag is a masterpiece that is perfectly attuned to the patrician pace set by the entire accessory ensemble.

You can count on buttons to carry gown and coats and blouses to dizzy heights of style distinction. There's nothing smarter this season for buttons than silver, and you can use them to your heart's content for there is no ban on silver. For the buttons that go meandering down the front and over the pockets of the suit shown to the left above La Mode has molded luck into the sterling silver cloverleaf pieces. These gleam effectively against their dark background. The suit you plan to wear another season can be given a new look with silver buttons.

Below to the right in the group is one of those winsome frocks done in pastel wool that young girls regard as perfect to wear under their new nylon fleece coats. Note the artistry of its stunning large buttons.

The stunning hat shown below to the left in the picture is made of finely pleated and intricately manipulated crepe. A band, Egyptian in design and studded with colorful stones is a color delight. The flow-ers on the "kerchief by Burmel" pick up the bright hues of the jewel-studded hat band, and the color scheme of costume is perfect. This flower-splashed "hanky" is pure linen, and that's something to brag about these days.

Released by Western Newspaper Union.

Fur-Trimmed Suit



Just one fur-trimmed suit after another is the prediction for this fall and winter. Suitable for the rather dressy occasion, this soft suit of novelty worsted, made from 100 per cent naphthalated wool, is a forerunner of a fashion that is gaining momentum as the colder autumn days approach. Fox fur forms the deep collar and pouch pockets. The skirt is pleated at the front to give the new slimming lines. Pockets of fur such as beaver or the spotted pelts are smart on bright colored wool coats and dresses. The fur-bow neckline is also an outstanding favorite.

Quaint Trimmings

Recall Past Era

Many of the quaint trimming effects that were the pride of our ancestors in the early Victorian days and which we find so faithfully recorded in daguerreotypes have been revived in the present fall modes. This is notably so in the way edges of dresses, coats, capes and blouses are being finished off with animated little dangling balls and fringes of varied types. Designers are using cunning bead ball trims and little balls of cord formation, also of wool yarn, and even velvet-covered balls dangle along the edges of yokes, shoulder epaulettes, scarfs and from drawstring bags and about the brims of hats.

Back into the fashion picture, too, have come wee fur tail trims, and quite a little bead fringe is being used. Other trims that are in the news include bows galore and various demure and quaint uses of ribbon. Touches of knit and crochet abound as a trimming feature, and there are some interesting things being done with crocheted metal thread.

The beadwork and sequin embroidery that is being done this season reveals many new and artful uses, with special enthusiasm shown for all over nailhead studded effects.

Temperamental

Watch hemlines! They are growing very temperamental. They dip, they slash, they take upon themselves deftly scalloped or saw-tooth edges, and they capture ruche effects and revel in fringe embellishment. They indulge in band embroidery treatments, and they sometimes achieve drape effects that give them grace and new distinction.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL Lesson

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. (Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Lesson for October 18

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GROWTH IN CHRIST

LESSON TEXT—Luke 1:40-52; II Peter 1:1-8. GOLDEN TEXT—But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—II Peter 3:18.

Growth is a normal thing. We expect it of the child, and when it fails we know that something is wrong. Just so there is something very decidedly wrong in the life of the Christian who fails to grow in grace. If a child fails to grow we are alarmed, but if a Christian does not grow we hardly notice it, or at most only express our regret. We need a revival.

I. Normal Children Will Grow

(Luke 2:40-52). While Christ was God manifest in the flesh, He was at the same time true man, and as a boy He developed and grew in a normal way.

Unless we meet the tragedy of arrested development we need have no concern about the fact that a child will grow physically, mentally and spiritually. The Lord has placed in the babe in a mother's arms the potential qualities of the man or woman to come. Our chief responsibility is to provide the opportunity for the development of those abilities and qualities which the child has, and of guiding that growth in the right direction.

That is all a parent has to do, but it is enough to call for all the wisdom, judgment, patience and skill of the best of us. Yes, and even that is not enough, we need the wisdom of God and His grace upon our lives to do this vital work as we ought.

The qualities in a boy or girl which will count gloriously for God may be dreadfully effective for Satan if we permit him to get control of our children. May God help us to be alert and skillful in rearing our boys and girls.

While it is true that we can do more for the guidance of physical and mental growth than spiritual (because that is a matter of the grace of God), we can lead the steps of the little child to the house of God; we can teach him to pray and to trust God, and we can set an example of godly living before him. That is all we can do; but again we say, it is enough to demand our best effort and more.

II. Normal Christians Will Grow

(II Pet. 1:1-8).

In Christ there are "all things that pertain unto life and godliness." There is no need of some added experience, or some new and striking endowment, for all the unbelievably great possibilities of Christian grace and growth are in Him. We need only to recognize that fact and yield to Him, and there will be the full development of Christian life and experience.

We have, in practice, so far departed from the normal in Christian life that we can hardly believe that the above is true. In place of the normal Christian life according to God's standard, we have established a standard based on the average Christian life. If we equal it we are satisfied, and if perchance we surpass it we count ourselves among the "more spiritual" ones. And all the time the average standard is far below the normal Christian life which God not only expects, but is ready to enable and empower us to live.

Peter tells us in this passage that the great and precious promises of God in Christ are not only to enable us to escape the corruption of this sinful world, but to go on to a place where we will neither "be barren nor unfruitful" Christians. How will this come about? Verses 5-7 tell us.

Faith supplies in itself (rather than "add to," v. 5), if there is "diligence" (that is, true Christian devotion), a number of other splendid qualities. First comes "virtue"—really moral courage, or nobility of character. What a fine step forward! Then comes "knowledge," that is, a discernment which will give practical skill in effective daily living for Christ. Such spiritual discernment will naturally lead to "self-control"—something much needed by most Christians.

The self-controlled one will always have "patience," that is, the endurance to stand every hardship and trial. We need to be more patient not only with others, but also with ourselves, even in this matter of Christian growth of which we are speaking.

A life like that is a life of "godliness," which will blossom out into real "brotherly kindness." There isn't too much of that in the world today, even among Christians. Let's revive it! Then what? The one who loves his brother will love the whole world (charity, in v. 8, should read "love"). Why not? Are we not all brethren, who know Christ, regardless of race, position or creed?

Let such virtues "abound" (v. 8), and no Christian life will lack in rich fruitfulness for God in Christ. If Christian people would let the new life within them grow, it would surprise us, and them what God would do through them for His own glory.

ON THE HOME FRONT

with RUTH WYETH SPEARS

ANY dining room may be made fresh and smart with built-in cupboards, a little paint and inexpensive curtains. But what may be done to bring a set of outmoded chairs up-to-date? The one sketched at the upper right is typical of many that are substantial and sturdy though scarred by long



use. All they need is an up-to-date frock to make them perfectly at home in a modern dining room.

If your chairs do not have the supports shown at the sides of the seat they will be easier to slip-cover. This cover is of medium blue cotton rep with darker blue for the bias binding and the cotton fringe around the bottom. Large button moulds are covered with the slip cover material for the button-up-back opening. If you are not expert at making bound buttonholes, snaps may be used under the buttons. The narrow ties sewn to the corners of the inside of the seat cover hold it neatly in place.

NOTE: This chair cover is from Book 5 of the homemaking booklets available to readers at 10 cents each. Directions for other dining room chair transformations will be found in BOOK 7, together with an interesting array of conservation ideas which make use of materials around the home. Send your order to:

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666

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