

The Angel Girl

A Wonderful Story of Love and Tragedy in the Canadian Wilderness

Written for LESLIE'S by JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

I've helped to build railroads ever since a line of steel took the place of the old Indian trail through the Crow's Nest, but never had I seen such a blowin' of rock or heard such a rumble of black powder and dynamite as that spring in the Yellowhead, when we was parting the right of way of the C. T. P. over the Big Divide. Word come from headquarters to hurry the work night and day, an' we'd shoved ten thousand men into the mountains an' built a dynamite factory over near Prince Rupert. There wasn't fifteen minutes out of the twenty-four hours that you couldn't hear the going of the blasts, an' if there was anything in what these scientific rain-makers say we'd 'a' had floods for a year from Hogan's Camp to the sea. An' all the time we was shouting for *men men men*, an' put it in the papers how we was killing a thousand fat silvera month for grub an' had cornered all the Chink cooks in British Columbia to make good things to eat. And we got 'em—the men. They was of all nationalities an' colors, from Indian bucks who come in from the prairies to the steerage naggies who couldn't speak a word of English. But the queerest of 'em all, in an on-usual queer sort of way, was Thomas Jefferson Brown.

I found 'im one day two miles down Miette way from the camp, sitting on a pile of ties. He was what you call absorbed. Bein' only a packer an' outfitter, Jack Dito by name, and havin' run up against the rough ends of a rough life for something like thirty years, I can't see much of this thing they call sentiment—specially in mountains an' human animals. But there was something about Thomas Jefferson Brown that gave you a queer sort o' feelin' when he looked at you—something you don't feel very often, an' that sticks.

He was the raggedest lookin' individual that I'd ever see come into the mountains, where as a general thing you don't find rags. There wasn't much left to one arm of his coat, an' it was ripped up the back. It was a size too small for him, too, an' likewise his pants. You had to look close to see what was left of his shoes for he'd biked it in all the way from Miette. An' he wore a stiff straw hat! When you looked at him you felt like laughin' or grab-stakin' 'im to a square meal, but when he looked at you it was just as if Gawd Almighty had brought you up from behind a-purpose to give you a surprise. He wasn't big—not more'n five foot eight or nine, an' slim. And his face would have been almost like a woman's if it hadn't been for the blonde stubble on it, and the eyes. They were blue—his eyes were that deep sort of blue you see sometimes over the mountains when there's snow on the peaks, the blue that's beautiful in the sunlight, but that can darken in a minute an' make you think of thunder

shack, and while I'm digging out a proper outfit of duds, an' a hat that won't make the mountain-tops slide down on 'im, he looks at me in that half-smilin', wonderin' sort of way, as though I was doing some upsettin' in the way of his calculations. I told 'im he could stay with me, an' do odd chores about, seein' as how my old pardner was dead, an' me all alone now. I told 'im how Jim was brought in that day, all crushed up, an' I guess my voice choked up a little, for those eyes o' his grew as soft as a woman's. Jim and I had been together for twenty years, and I told him so much about my old pardner that he wanted to go out an' see where I'd put the cross over 'is grave, in the edge of the timber, an' when we got there Thomas Jefferson Brown took off his hat, an' stood there with his head bowed, an' I knowed he was born as much above me as the sun is above the mountains when he said, "So that's where Jim is? I wish I could take his place, old man. I'm of no account, and Jim was—your pardner!"

began chattering to 'em in Eytalian. I wasn't s'prised at that. I was expecting most anything of him. When he was out of smokin' he'd borrow tobacco from a Swede or a Hunk, an' he'd smile at 'em in a way that'd make them quiver all over with pleasure as they give it to him. But he didn't hanker for work. An' he didn't once go near the big engineering camp, where there was twenty young men with eggcigans. An' he didn't seem to have a cent to his name—smoked his tobacco an' ate my grub, an' now an' then I saw 'im smile and heard him chuckle, as though there was a big joke on somebody. An' I was foolish enough to be happier than I had been since Jim died. An' the happier I was the more it hurt me to see that sick look growin' in his eyes, an' more than once I wanted to ask him to out with it all, for I knew it wasn't sickness that a doctor could touch. But I didn't dare. The nearest he ever came to saying anything was one night when he come in stoop-shouldered an' with a sort of hunted look in his face, a month from the day I found him up the track.

"I'm a thee-orist, Jack," he says. "An' I'm working out a thee-ory. It's harder work—than breakin' rock." An' he smiles in a sick sort of way. An' a little later he says, "Jack, do you like to read?"

I tells him that I does, when I can get the sort of readin' that doesn't come from a Sunday School library, an' ain't sent in by them good wimmin who thinks we railroad builders are convicts just loosed out of jail. At that he gets up and brings me a book I'd never seen before, and he says: "Read that."

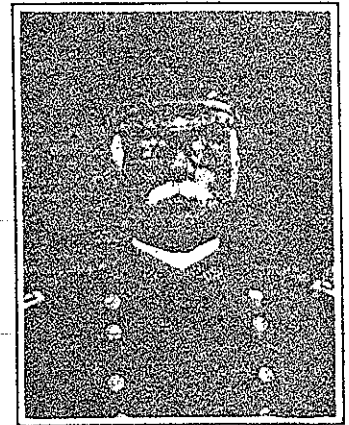
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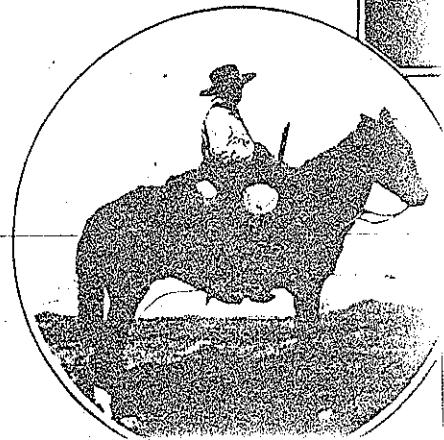
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It was just two weeks after that day that the Stranger come to Hogan's Camp. The new man wanted work, an' wanted it bad, an' as I was just leaving with an outfit, an' needed help, I took him without askin' questions—not even knowin' his name. Two hours later a dynamite shot went bad on us, an' two of my men were killed. One of 'em was the Stranger. The other had friends, who cared for him, but the Stranger didn't so much as have an envelope or a card in his pockets to tell who he was, an' we laid him out in



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General Hugh L. Scott, commanding the Second Cavalry Brigade on the Mexican border, who was sent with a detachment to suppress an uprising among the Navajos of New Mexico. Riding ahead of his troops and accompanied only by an Indian guide, he went boldly into the camp of the chiefs and quickly ended the revolt. This brave officer has great influence with the Indians of the Southwest.



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He said that was his name, an' he said also that it was a glorious country, an' that he had been makin' some mental observashuns, to prove which he produced a note-book filled with them funny marks the Chinks put on their laundry slips, only they ran in straight lines instead of up an' down.

"You write Chinese," I says.

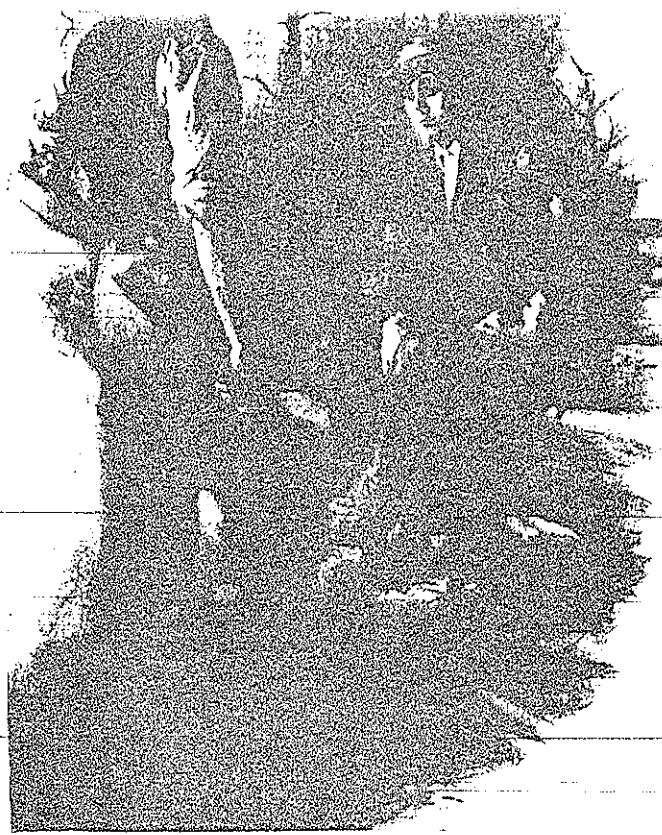
"It's not Chinese," says he. "It's shorthand," an' he smiles as he looks up at the tops of the mountains.

"You look—hungry," I observes, hesitatin' to make that remark, notwithstanding he was ragged enough to scare the fool-hens up on the mountains, for I didn't want to hurt his feelin's by insinuatin' I thought he was a tramp. An' at them words his eyes darkened, an' you see that flash of storm in them, an' his smile makes me think of the lightning that breaks through the thunder-caps, as he says.

"Hungry—yes; but not for food."

"Mebby—mebby you'd like a drink," I invites, feeling at my hip pocket.

And then he laughed, an' gripped my hand, and there was a queer tremble in his laugh—an' from that nimit we was partners. They say there's love at first sight between men and women, an' I guess—sometimes—there's that same thing between men. Only I don't like to call it love. It's sick-nish. Between men it's more than that. It's right—some for 'other, an' that's what it was between Thomas Jefferson Brown and me. I got him up to the



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And then he looked at me, and his face was white, and I could see that something was hurting him. I guess it was from that hour—that night—I began to understand. It wasn't Thomas Jefferson Brown's arms, or his legs, or his body, that had gone bad on him. It was his heart. And the pain of what was eating there shone all the time in his eyes, except when he smiled, or when he thought of that something that made 'em like the thunder-caps above the mountains. I don't know why, but I guessed even then that it was a woman. It just seemed to breathe out of him, without a word said or asked. I knew it for sure when I brought home a big calendar one day, with a girl in red on it, a girl with a big black hat an' golden hair. He took one look at it, an' his lips set so tight they was only a straight line, an' his voice had that queer sort o' tremble in it when he asked if he could have it. I said yes, and I never saw it again from that day on. I knew the girl on the calendar had reminded him of someone that he loved—or hated—but I couldn't tell which, to save me, an' I wondered whether he had destroyed the calendar, or had cut out the picture an' carried it about with him.

Thomas Jefferson Brown didn't give any hint that he wanted work, an' I'd sooner thought of askin' him to fly than to shoulder a pick or grub with the navvies and the rock hogs. He'd go down among 'em and watch 'em work by the hour, an' one day I saw a bunch of dagoes that had just come over go as crazy as a lot of monkeys when he

just loosed out of jail. At that he gets up and brings me a book I'd never seen before, and he says: "Read that."

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Thomas Jefferson Brown. He takes off his hat, and stands beside the box.

"Have you said anything, boys?" he asks. "I mean—have you said a prayer?"

There was a silence, an' Thomas Jefferson knew what it meant. You could 'a' heard a pin fall on the bare earth then. He bowed his head an' began to talk, low an' soft like, as though he was speaking to the Stranger himself, an' when he was done there wasn't a man in the shed could speak, an' there wasn't an eye there that wasn't ashamed to look another man straight in the face. An' then Thomas Jefferson looked around, an' said in that quiet voice of his:

"You're sure, boys, that you can't find out who he is—that wherever his friends may be, they'll never know he's here?"

Then Thomas Jefferson Brown lifted the red bandanna we'd spread over the Stranger's face, and at that he give a sudden start, which didn't seem just real to me, an' said in a voice not much over a whisper:

"Boys, I've met this man before! He told me his name. It's Jeff Graham. I'll put a slab over his grave to-morrow."

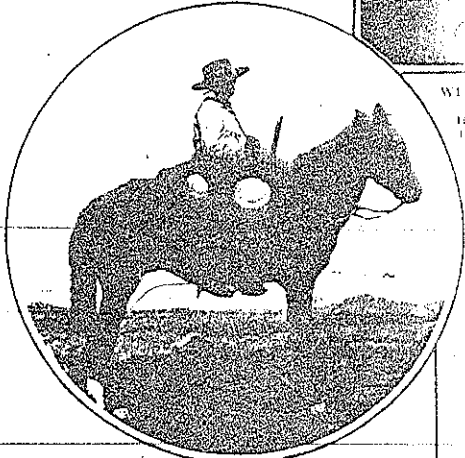
That night I wanted to read another of the books, but when I went to look under the bunk they was gone. I asked Thomas Jefferson about 'em, an' he said:

"I thought you'd read 'em. . . . I've taken them away."

(The continuation of this story will appear in the two following issues.)

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General Hugh L. Scott, commanding the Second Cavalry Brigade on the Mexican border, who was sent with a detachment to suppress an uprising among the Nueces of New Mexico. Riding ahead of his troops and accompanied only by an Indian guide, he went boldly into the camp of the chiefs and quickly ended the revolt. This brave officer has great influence with the Indians of the Southwest.



A MEXICAN SOLDIER WHO OUGHT TO BE IN SCHOOL

A 12-year-old boy who is actually enrolled in Villa's cavalry and fights valiantly in the "rebel" ranks. He is one of many boy-soldiers who to-day are fighting on both sides in the bloody revolution south of the Rio Grande.



A SWEET SINGER OF IRELAND

A new photograph of the famous tenor, John McCormack, taken with his wife. He has recently returned from Melbourne, Australia, where he crowded a vast auditorium sixteen times in two months.

Walker L. Ditture Houston cents a bush

The Angel Girl

Part II

By JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

SYNOPSIS of the preceding chapter: A rough, rugged railroad-builder on the Canadian Northwest comes one day upon "the raggedest looking individual that I'd ever see come into the mountains," but there was a look on the man's face that made the railroad man feel sorry for him. His name was Thomas Jefferson Brown, he said. A friendship sprang up between the two men and Brown went to live in the shack with the builder. But he didn't seem to want work; he just sat around and made shorthand notes. One day he admitted that he was a writer and that he had published some "best sellers," but he did not seem to have any particular interest in life. Two weeks later another stranger left the camp; he wanted work and got it but was killed two hours later by a dynamite blast. He was about to be buried as an unknown when Thomas Jefferson Brown came in and insisted upon having a prayer over the coffin. Then he lifted the handkerchief from the stranger's face and gave a start. "Boys, I've met this man before!" he said. "He told me his name; it's Jeff Graham." And the next day Brown put a slab at the head of the grave, with Jeff Graham's name on it.

THERE was a curious change come over Thomas Jefferson Brown after that night when Jeff Graham lay dead in the shed. It seemed as though his lips grew set a little tighter, an' there was more 'n' more of the hurt in his eyes. He'd talk an' laugh when we was together, but more often than not I'd see his laughter wasn't the real thing, but had somethin' hard an' unpleasant in it. An' I seen so little of him after a time that it began to get lonely. He took to goin' off by himself, an' hikin' deep into the mountains. He'd start out in the morning, sometime before it was daybreak, an' he wouldn't come back till dark. Once or twice he stayed out all night, an' it wasn't infrequent for him to git out o' bed when he'd ought to be asleep, an' slip out into the night alone. Once I'd have sworn I heard him crying over in his bunk, but I couldn't bring myself to believe that. Anyway, he was pinched an' white an' sick looking the next morning.

This was two or three days after the division engineer had brought his wife and daughter to live at the camp. Helene was her name—the girl's name—an' she'd just got out of a girls' college somewhere down East. Thomas Jefferson and me was down at Stewart's camp store buying tobacco when she rode up with Mr. George, her father. They was after a can of orange marmalade, an' the girl was on a bald-faced cayuse, hangin' on for dear life. I ain't much for beauty, but I couldn't help lookin' at her. It wasn't just prettiness. It was something that made you go away feelin' better for havin' seen it, like as though you'd looked at an angel. I guess there ain't many faces like hers, leastways outside of the place where angels ought to be. I'm good at colors which comes of livin' in the mountains. An' I never see what you might call such a color—blend as she made on that yeller-hidged bald-faced cayuse. There was a big pile of shining, curling brown hair caught up careless like on her head, and under that her cheeks was like them crimson sunset flowers you see on the mountains in the autumn, an' her lips were parted just enough to see the white of her teeth. An' her eyes! Gawd, you'd trusted your naked soul into her keepin' after looking at them! She looked straight at us and I felt Thomas Jefferson Brown's hand clutch my arm of a sudden, an' I heard 'im give a quick breath. An' then she dropped the little whip she had, an' quick as a flash Thomas Jefferson was out there, with it in his hand, an' bowin' like a king. I was proud of him then. An' those eyes of hers, soft an' brown an' pure looking as the sweetest flower that ever growed, met his fair an' square, an' I could see the color rippling deeper in her cheeks as she

while I sneak away, careful that I don't break a twig under my big feet.

Funny how things sometimes turn out simultaneous like. It was that same night that the train brought up the woman in black. She was a tall, slim woman; older than the Angel-Girl, and with a different sort of beauty—a beauty that'd make men stare, but not with the same sort o' feelin' as the Angel-Girl's. She was a blonde, but not the washed-out sort that come up the line; her hair was real gold, and she didn't have painted eyebrows or rouged cheeks. She was pretty all right, but there was a wild sort of look in her eyes, and she didn't look this way or that as she went into the agent's office. I couldn't help thinkin' of her that night, and I would have told Thomas Jefferson, but when I reached the shack I found a note he'd written sayin' he'd gone up the line for a few days with Mr. George and his daughter. And the next day, when the agent told me who the slim woman in mourning was, I wished Thomas Jefferson was there to take my place. For I knew I'd have to help her, secin' as how Thomas Jefferson an' me had come to be looked on as the caretakers an' owners of Jeff Graham's grave. She was Jeff Graham's widow. It was hard to believe that, for to look at her you'd think she wasn't of the sort that'd marry the rough-looking chap who'd come to work among the rock-hogs.

Bob, the agent, had told her about me—an' Thomas Jefferson, an' how we'd cared for her husband and put a slab over him, so I didn't need any introduction when I went to her at Frazer's sleeping place, which was the nearest thing we had to a hotel at the rail-end. When she comes into the room where I was waitin', an' I bobbed my cap and held out a paw to her, just as Thomas Jefferson would have done, she give a funny kind of cry, an' caught my hand, and looked at me. That was all. For a whole minute she just looked, an' her lips trembled like a little kid's about to cry, an' you could see the end of her chin quivering in a way that made something big and lumpy rise up in my throat. An' then she said: "You'll take me to him."

She didn't go back for a hat. An' all the way to the grave she put her little hand on my arm, where I could feel it tremble, and her face



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she was sick with grief over Jeff Graham. I can't explain just the feelin'. But it was there. I couldn't like such a woman—not more than ordinary. It wasn't thought of her that made me pray for the hour when Thomas Jefferson would come home. It was the Angel-Girl. That's what I called her—always—to myself. I know that just lookin' at her, an' havin' her speak to me, an' seein' that pure glory in her eyes, had made me a better man. She was of the sort that could make any man rise up out of the dregs of perdition, an' be a man. An' she was with me all that day, an' I could feel the soft touch of her hand in my calloused paw, an' I heard her sweet voice—an' I saw that pile of shining curls on Thomas Jefferson's breast again, an' that love-light o' the angels in her eyes. By night I was ca'mer. I waited the next day, an' the next, and on the third the woman in black hunted me up, and some of the grief was gone from her face.

"I want 'im dug up," she says. "I'm goin' to take him back home with me."

That night Thomas Jefferson and Mr. George 'n' the Angel-Girl returned to camp. Thomas Jefferson was happy. An' the Angel-Girl was happy. That same night I saw the woman in black, an' she promised to meet me at the grave sharp at nine o'clock the next morning.



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"I've put her in every book I ever wrote," he says to me, as we're going back to our shack. "She's my Eileen, my Isobel, my Hope—my everything that has made love an' happiness possible in my books. And I've found her!" An' he trembles as he speaks, an' there's a new fire in his face, and when I was gettin' supper he went out for wood, an' I heard him singin' for the first time since I found 'im hidin' in from the Miette.

The next day I almost falls stone dead when I sees Thomas Jefferson Brown in company with the division engineer, smokin' 'n' chattin' with him, as though he'd known 'im all his life, when he comes along to inspect our work. An' from that day on Thomas Jefferson was up to the engineers' camp reg'lar. It was a week before I saw what I'd guessed to be true. I comes on 'em, riding along a trail on two cayuses, an' Thomas Jefferson stops me and gives us an introduction. The girl holds out a hand that ain't bigger'n two of my fingers, an' smiles at me in a way that sets my hard old heart tremblin' like a scairt bird, an' she says, so sweet and true like that it sounds like music:

"He's told me so much about you. I've wanted to meet you—to know you. I've known Mr.—Mr. Brown for a long time—through his books. I read them all—when at school—some of them twice." And I can see a pride in her eyes when she speaks—and something else that makes me think mighty deep after they'd gone.

I know they're happy—Thomas Jefferson an' the Angel-Girl, as I got to thinkin' of her. One day I come pretty near makin' an awful mess of things. That was three weeks later. I'd put on moccasins because of sore feet an' was coming quiet through the bush, when not ten feet ahead of me I seen something that made my heart pop up in my mouth mighty sudden. They didn't hear me, an' I didn't wait long to look at something that was none of my business. But what I seen was like a picture that won't rub out. I see that big pile of shining brown curls laid close against Thomas Jefferson's breast, an' the Angel-Girl's face looking up at him. An' then I sees her arms creeping about his shoulders, and at that there come a little cry from Thomas Jefferson that I can hear but don't understand, and he puts his face close down to hers—

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Bob, the agent, had told her about me an' Thomas Jefferson, an' how we'd cared for her husband and put a slab over him, so I didn't need any introduction when I went to her at Frazer's sleeping place, which was the nearest thing we had to a hotel at the rail-end. When she comes into the room where I was waitin', an' I bobbed my cap and held out a paw to her, just as Thomas Jefferson would have done, she give a funny kind of cry, an' caught my hand, and looked at me. That was all. For a whole minute she just looked, an' her lips trembled like a little kid's about to cry, an' you could see the end of her chin quivering in a way that made something big and lumpy rise up in my throat. An' then she said: "You'll take me to him."

She didn't go back for a hat. An' all the way to the grave she put her little hand on my arm, where I could feel it tremblin', and her face was that dead white it made me think of the little snowy rock-bells we trod under our feet as we went. Her hair was caught up careless when we started out, and now the wind blew it about her face an' shoulders, an' the sunlight set it all afire and glistenin', like gold that's been carried a long time in a buckskin sack. It looked strange against the white of her grief-filled face. When we come up to the grave she stood still for just a moment, an' that was the most terrible moment of all—for she turned up her face, and there was that hurt in her eyes I'd never seen in human eyes before, an' she seemed to be praying. And then she threw herself down on Jeff Graham's grave, an' I could hear her sobbin' his name, an' talkin' to him, and after that she lay there and cried like I've seen little children cry, with that long, sheeny hair of her's spreading all out over the mound we'd made. After a time she got up, an' threw back her hair, and there was a quieter an' more peaceful look in her face. She asked me all about him—how he'd died, an' if he'd said anything about her. I made it as easy as I could, an' then she began telling me about him.

"He was good to me," she says, "an' he loved me—he almost worshipped me." And then she goes on, from one thing to another, and as she talked, with little sobs breakin' in her voice now and then, my blood turns colder and colder, until it seemed as though it was the ice-water from the mountain tops that was running through my veins. For it wasn't of the stranger that had worked among the rock-hogs that she talked. It was of Thomas Jefferson Brown! An' I understood. Thomas Jefferson was the real Geoffrey Graham. And she thought he lay out there—dead—under that slab on the knoll!

III

I don't know how I kept the truth behind my tongue as we went back to Frazer's place. But I did. And all that day I felt queer trembles running through me, for I couldn't get out of my mind the thought of the serpent I'd took for a pardner in Thomas Jefferson Brown. I couldn't think of him as Geoffrey Graham, an' I guess that once or twice, if he'd been there, I'd put my hands to his throat. It wasn't so much the thought of how he'd tricked me, or of the woman in black, that madlened me. There was something about this woman with the sheeny gold hair that didn't strike deep down in your heart, though I knew

she was sick with grief over Jeff Graham. I can't explain just the feelin'. But it was there. I couldn't like such a woman—not more than ordinary. It wasn't thought of her that made me pray for the hour when Thomas Jefferson would come home. It was the Angel-Girl. That's what I called her—always—to myself. I know that just lookin' at her, an' havin' her speak to me, an' seein' that pure glory in her eyes, had made me a better man. She was of the sort that could make any man rise up out of the dregs of perdition, an' be a man. An' she was with me all that day, an' I could feel the soft touch of her hand in my calloused paw, an' I heard her sweet voice—an' I saw that pile of shining curls on Thomas Jefferson's breast again, an' that love-light o' the angels in her eyes. By night I was ca'mier. I waited the next day, an' the next, and on the third the woman in black hunted me up, and some of the grief was gone from her face.

"I want 'im dug up," she says. "I'm goin' to take him back home with me."

That night Thomas Jefferson and Mr. George 'n' the Angel-Girl returned to camp. Thomas Jefferson was happy. An' the Angel-Girl was happy. That same night I saw the woman in black, an' she promised to meet me at the grave sharp at nine o'clock the next morning. At quarter after nine I was up there, with Thomas Jefferson Brown. We came up behind some bushes, and when we stepped out there stood the woman, face to face with us, not ten steps away. I ain't much on word-picturin' and I can't tell much of what happened then. But it must have seemed to the woman just as though the grave had opened there at her feet, an' Geoffrey Graham had stepped out of it alive. She stared stared like a mad woman—an' I didn't look at Thomas Jefferson. But I heard a strange cry come from him, an' then with a scream she sprang to him, and threw her arms about him, an' then I heard her sobbin'—sobbin'—sobbin'—and I turned away. I went back to the cabin. It was a long time before Thomas Jefferson came. And when he came through the door his face was white an' set, and his hands were clenched. And I guess that my face was set just as hard, and that my fists were doubled, too. And he knew—knew what I was goin' to say, what I might do. Before I could say a word, or move, there comes that softer look in his face, and he pulled something from his pocket, and says:

"Jack, old comrade, read that—before you say a word."

It was a newspaper clippin', almost two columns of it, and while I'm reading he goes over and sets on the edge of his bunk, with his face in his hands. When I'd finished I went over to him, an' I put a hand on his shoulder, an' says—prised at the funny sound of my own voice, "Tom, is this true?" I still couldn't help from calling him Tom.

"It's true—I swear before God that it's true," he says. "And have you told her?"

He knows that I'm referring to the Angel-Girl, and he grips my hand hard as rock, and for a moment the blue in his eyes is like that of the sunlit sky.

"Everything," he says. "I told her the truth about myself the second time I met her. She has read that, and a dozen other clippings. And they made no difference—to her, except that she tried harder to bring me back life, hope, happiness. After that happened—back there—the world crumbled under my feet. I wanted to lose myself, and that night some strange impulse moved me—and I gave the unknown dead man my name. Then, I met her. My God, she has made me ten times stronger than I have ever been. She loves me. And I—I worship her."

"And now," I says, "the other has come back to you."

(Continued on page 40)

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about the question to happen now. I asked myself the question which I knew was up to Thomas Jefferson. "What would you do?" I asks myself. "What would you do in a case like this?" An' then I saw their two faces, the woman's and the Angel-Girl's, and a shudder creeps through me when I look at her's, an' I laugh low and happy, out of pure joy for Thomas Jefferson, when the Angel-Girl smiles back at me with those pure eyes. "There ain't no two ways," I assures-myself, and then Thomas Jefferson comes back, late in the afternoon, and near strikes me cold dead with his sick looks and the funny ideas he has on the subject.

"When is she goin' back—where she come from?" I inquires.
"I don't know," he says, lookin' at me in a dazed sort of way. "She's come back. And she was my wife."

"Good Gawd," I shivered. "You don't mean—you don't mean—you still care for her?"
I see the gleam of his teeth between his lips.

"Care for her!" he cries, clenching his hands. "Can a man care for a woman who's done that? No, I despise her. But it's the other things. She was my wife, an' I still love the other things, the old memories, the old days when I was making my light to climb up, an' she was with me, when—"

His voice choked 'im, an' he stops.

"I understand," I says, an' in a flash my mind goes away back near forty years to a nice an' things I ain't forgot, even now.
"I understand," I repeats. "It's human nature—to think with a kind of longin' for them first tastes of life, even though they opened the windows o' hell and give you a look in. An' you're sorry for her!"

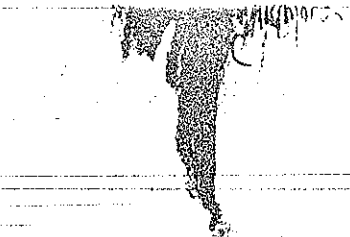
He looks up quick as a flash.
"That's it!" he says, like catching at a straw. "I'm sorry—sorry—"

An' then I hit him to the quick.
"Besides," I says, "she's probably as good as this brown-haired girl over at the camp will be some day. Ten to one she'll grow tired of her husband an' see some other man—"

I ain't got no farther, than that when Thomas Jefferson is on his feet with a spring like that of one of the mountain lions out on Vancouver, an' in that moment I face a demon who'd fight there an' die, I know, just for them words spoken about the Angel-Girl.

"You mean that?" he pants, and I 'low for a moment I'm a bit nervous.

"I mean that I'd kill the man who said them words an' meant 'em, Thomas Jefferson," I says, and I goes out of the cabin, leaving him standin' there, absorbin' the meaning o' them words.
It isn't unusual that I run on the Angel-Girl soon after that, for I'm lookin' for her. It was in a little Eden she'd fixed up all for herself in a grove near the engineer's camp, an' she smiled when she saw me, an' took both my ugly hands in her's, as she always does. I choked up when I saw the little quiver at the corners of her mouth, an' that look she tried to hide in her sweet eyes—a look as though someone she loved was dyin'.



"I still love the other things, the old memories, the old days when I was making my light to climb up, an' she was with me."

woman who had been his wife are standin' there, where I could almost touch 'em if I reached around the corner. I crept nearer, an' listened, and just then the train gave the three-minute whistle. There was that sob—sob, low an' heartbroken, an' Thomas Jefferson Brown was talkin'.

"God knows I'm sorry," he says. "I'd give up my life now—an' be happy to die if it was all undone. But it isn't, an' it can never be. You'll go back, an' be a good woman. I know that. There's a big place in the world for good women, an' I've faith that you'll fill one of 'em. May God bless you—sobel—an'—good-bye!"

—I didn't wait any more. I slunk off like a dog, an' there come out of me the first sound like a baby cry I'd made in thirty years. I heard the grain when she left, an' I waited in the trail for Thomas Jefferson Brown. The moon had come up over the mountains, an' I could see his white face as he come.

He was walkin' quicker, an' his head was high up. When he see me, he stopped, an' we stood face to face. Then he took my hands, an' I guess it was more'n a minute we stood there without speaking.

"She's gone," he says then, and he looks over my shoulder toward the engineers' camp. An' what was there must have shone to him like the Star of Bethlehem to the three wise men I have heard of in the desert, for there come into his face what must have come into theirs then with that new dawning of life. An' I frees his hands, while he goes to the Angel-Girl.

(CONCLUDED)

Greatest Mail Service on Earth
(Continued from page 10.)

The report also includes most interesting details concerning the enormous amount of newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals handled annually by the Post Office Department. For the last year this exceeded 1,000,000,000 pounds—a total of about 5,000,000,000 pieces—for the first time in the history of the postal service. As a governmental tribute to the dissemination of intelligence, Uncle Sam has carried this mail for 1 cent a pound, although a commission has figured out that it costs approximately 6 cents a pound to handle it. The commission recommended an increase to 2 cents a pound, and the matter is still in the hands of Congress. Until this rate has been readjusted, Postmaster General Burleson declares nothing should be done with reference to the proposed decrease of first-class rate to 1 cent an ounce.

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