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Mrs Sarah B Hordle
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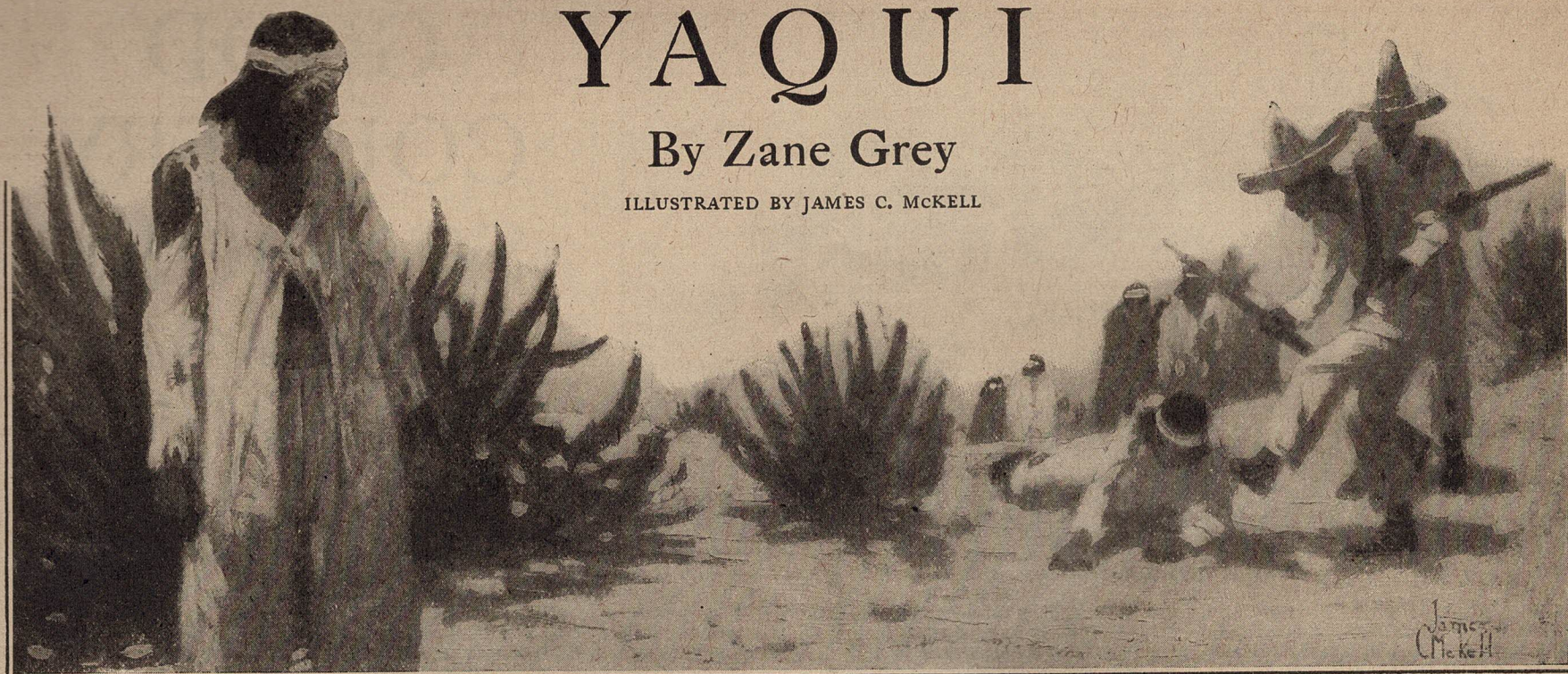
Photograph by G. Gardner Richards

FARMER RULE FOR CANADA

YAQUI

By Zane Grey

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES C. MCKELL



II (Continued)

MONTES thought he would forever carry in memory the tragic face of that Yaqui's wife. Indians had hearts and souls the same as white people. It was a ridiculous and extraordinary and base thing to be callous to the truth. Montes had spent not a little time in the pampas among the Gauchos and for that bold race he had admiration and respect. Indeed, coming to think about it, the Gauchos resembled these Yaquis. Montes took the trouble to go among English and American acquaintances he had made in Progreso, and learned more about this oppressed tribe.

The vast plateau of northwestern Mexico, a desert and mountainous region rich in minerals, was the home of the Yaquis. For more than one hundred and sixty years there had been war between the Yaquis and the Mexicans. And recently, following a bloody raid credited to the Yaquis, the government that happened to be in power determined to exterminate them. To that end it was hunting the Indians down, killing those who resisted capture and sending the rest to the torture of the henequen fields.

But more interesting was the new information that Montes gathered. The Yaquis were an extraordinary, able-bodied and intelligent people. Most of them spoke Spanish. They had many aboriginal customs and beliefs, but some were Roman Catholics. The braves made better miners and laborers than white men. Moreover, they possessed singular mechanical gifts and quickly learned to operate machines more efficiently than most whites. They possessed wonderful physical development and a marvelous endurance. At sixty years Yaquis had perfectly sound white teeth and hair as black as night. These desert men could travel seventy miles on foot in one day with only a bag of pinole. Water they could do without for days. And it was said that some of the Yaqui runners performed feats of speed, strength, and endurance beyond credence. Montes, remembering the seven-foot stature of that Yaqui chief and the spread of shoulders and the wonder of his spare lithe limbs, thought that he could believe much.

The act of Perez in deliberately parting the chief from his loved ones was cruel and despicable; and it seemed to establish in Montes' mind an excuse for the disgust and hate he had come to feel for the tyrannical little officer. But, being frank with himself, Montes confessed that this act had only fixed a hate he already had acquired.

The Brazilian convinced himself that he had intuitively grasped a portent apparently lost on Perez. One of those silent, intent-faced Yaquis was going to kill this epauleted scion of a rich Yucatecan house. Montes had read it in these faces. He had lived among the blood-spilling Gauchos and he knew the menace of silent fierce savages. And he did not make any bones about the admission to himself that

he hoped some Yaqui would kill the peacock Mexican. Montes had Spanish in him, and something of the raw passion of the Gauchos he admired; and it suited him to absorb this morbid presentiment. The Yaqui chief fascinated him, impelled him. Montes determined to learn where this giant had been sent and to watch him, win his confidence, if such a thing was possible. *Quién sabe?* Montes felt more reasons than one for his desire to get under the skin of this big Yaqui.

III

IN THE interior of Yucatan there were vast barren areas of land fit only for the production of henequen. Nothing but jungle and henequen would grow there. It was a limestone country. The soil could not absorb water. It soaked through. Here and there, miles apart, were *cenotes*, underground caverns full of water, and usually these marked the location of a hacienda of one of the rich planters. The climate was hot, humid, and for any people used to high altitudes it spelled death.

The plantation of Don Sancho Perez, father of the young lieutenant, consisted of fifty thousand acres. It adjoined the hundred-thousand-acre tract of Donna Isabel Mendoza. The old Don was ambitious to merge the plantations into one so that he could dominate the fiber output of that region. To this end he had long sought to win for his son the hand of Donna Isabel's beautiful daughter.

The big Yaqui Indian who had been wantonly separated from his wife by young Perez was in the squad of prisoners that had been picked out by the young officer to work on his father's plantation.

They were manacled at night and herded like wild beasts into a pen and watched by armed guards. They were routed out at dawn and put to work in the fiber fields. For food they had, each of them, a single lump of coarse soggy bread—one lump once every day. When the weaker among them began to lag, to slow down, to sicken, they were whipped to their tasks.

Yaqui knew that never again would he see his wife and baby—never hear from them—never know what became of them. He was worked like a galley slave, all the harder because of his great strength and endurance. He would be driven until he broke down.

Yaqui's work consisted of cutting henequen fiber leaves. He had a curved machete and he walked down the endless aisles between the lines of great century plants and from each plant he cut the lower circle of leaves. Each plant gave him a heavy load and he carried it to the nearest one of the hand-car tracks that crossed the plantation. The work of other Indians was to push hand cars along these tracks and gather the loads.

It took Yaqui six days to cut along the length of one aisle. And as far as he could see stretched a vast, hot, green wilderness with its never-ending lines and

lanes, its labyrinthine maze of intersecting aisles, its hazy, copper-hued horizons speared and spiked by the great bayonet-like leaves. He had been born and raised on the rugged mountain plateaus far to the north, where the clear, sweet, cold morning air stung and the midday sun was only warm to his back, where there were grass and water and flowers and trees, where the purple cañons yawned and the black peaks searched the sky. Here he was chained in the thick, hot, moist night, where the air was foul, and driven out in the long day under a fiery sun, where the henequen reeked and his breath clogged in his throat and his eyes were burning balls and his bare feet were like rotting hoofs.

The time came when Montes saw that the Yaqui looked no more toward that northland which he would never see again. He dreamed no more hopeless dreams. Somehow he knew when his wife and baby were no more a part of him on the earth. For something within him died and there were strange, silent voices at his elbow. He listened to them. And in the depths of his being there boiled a maelstrom of blood. He worked on and waited.

At night in the close-crowded filthy pen, with the dampness of tropical dews stealing in, and all about him the silent prostrate forms of his stricken people, he lay awake and waited enduringly through the long hours till a fitful sleep came to him. By day in the henequen fields, with the furnace blasts of wind swirling down the aisles, with the moans of his beaten and failing comrades full in his ears, he waited with a Yaqui's patience.

He saw his people beaten and scourged and starved. He saw them sicken and fail—wilt under the hot sun—die in the henequen aisles—and be thrown like dogs into ditches with quicklime. One by one they went and when they were nearly all gone another squad took their places. The Yaqui recognized Indians of other tribes of his race. But they did not know him. He had greatly changed. Only the shell of him was left. And that seemed unbreakable, deathless. He did not tell these newcomers to the fields what torture lay in store for them. He might have been dumb. He only waited, adding day by day, in the horror of the last throes of his old comrades, something more to that hell in his blood. He watched them die and then the beginning of the end for his new comrades. They were doomed. They were to be driven till they dropped. And others would be brought to fill their places, till at last there were no Yaquis left. The sun was setting for his race.

The Yaqui and his fellow toilers had one day of rest—the Sabbath. There was no freedom. And always there were guards and soldiers. Sunday was the day of bull-fights in the great corral at the hacienda. And on these occasions Yaqui was given extra work. Montes knew the Indian looked forward to this day. The old Don's

son, Lieutenant Perez, would come down from the city to attend the fight. Then surely Yaqui fed his dark soul with more cunning, more patience, more promise.

It was the Yaqui's work to help drag disemboweled and dying horses from the bull ring and to return with sand to cover up the gory spots in the arena. Often Montes saw him look up at the crowded circle of seats and at the box where the gray old Don and his people and friends watched the spectacle. There were handsome women with white lace over their heads and in whose dark and slumberous eyes lurked something the Yaqui knew. It was something that was in the race. Lieutenant Perez was there leaning toward the proud señorita. The Indian watched her with strange intensity. She appeared indifferent to the efforts of the *picadores* and the *banderilleros*, those men in the arena whose duty it was to infuriate the bull for the artist with the sword—the matador. When he appeared the beautiful señorita awakened to interest. But not until there was blood on the bright blade did she show the fire and passion of her nature. It was sight of blood that quickened her. It was death, then, that she wanted to see.

And last the Yaqui let his gaze rivet on the dark, arrogant visage of young Perez. Did not the great chief then become superhuman, or was it only Montes' morbid fancy? When Yaqui turned away did he not feel a promise of fulfillment in the red haze of the afternoon sun, in the red tinge of the stained sand, in the red and dripping tongue of the tortured bull? Montes knew the Yaqui only needed to live long enough and there would be something. And death seemed aloof from this Indian. The ferocity of the desert was in him and its incalculable force of life. In his eyes had burned a seared memory of the violent thrust with which Perez had driven his wife and baby forever from his sight.

Montes' changed attitude evidently found favor in the proud señorita's eyes. She had but trifled with an earnest and humble suitor; to the advances of a man, bold, ardent, strange, with something unfathomable in his wooing, she was not indifferent. The fact did not cool Montes' passion, but it changed him somehow. The Spanish in him was the part that so ardently loved and hated; his mother had been French and from her he had inherited qualities that kept him eternally in conflict with his instincts.

Montes had his living quarters in Mérida, where all the rich henequen planters had town houses. It was not a long horseback ride out to the haciendas of the two families in which Montes had become most interested. His habit of late, after returning from a visit to the henequen fields, had been to choose the early warm hours of the afternoon to call upon Señorita Mendoza. There had been a time when his calls had been formally received by the Donna Isabel, but of late she had persisted in her siesta, leaving Montes to

Dolores. Montes had grasped the significance of this—the future of Dolores had been settled and there no longer was risk in leaving her alone. But Montes had developed a theory that the future of any young woman was an uncertainty.

The Mendoza town house stood in the outskirts of fashionable Mérida. The streets were white, the houses were white, the native Mayan women wore white, and always it seemed to Montes as he took the familiar walk that the white sun blazed down on an immaculate city. But there were dark records against the purity of Mérida and the Yaqui slave driving was one of them. The Mendoza mansion had been built with money coming from the henequen fields. It stood high on a knoll, a stately white structure looking down upon a formal garden where white pillars and statues gleamed among green palms and bowers of red roses. At the entrance, on each side of the wide flagstone walk, stood a huge henequen plant.

On this day the family was in town and Montes expected that the señorita would see him coming. He derived pleasure from the assurance that, compared with Perez, he was someone good to look at. Beside him the officer was a swarthy undersized youth. But Montes failed to see the white figure of the girl and suffered chagrin for his vanity.

The day was warm. As he climbed the high wide stone steps his brow grew moist and an oppression weighed upon him. Only in the very early morning here in Yucatan did he ever have any energy. The climate was enervating. No wonder it was that servants and people slept away the warmer hours. Crossing the broad stone court and the spacious outside hall, Montes entered the dim, dark, musty parlors and passed through to the patio.

Here all was colorful luxuriance of grass and flower and palm, great still ferns and trailing vines. It was not cool, but shady and moist. Only a soft spray of falling water and a humming of bees disturbed the deep silence. The place seemed drowned in sweet fragrance, rich and subtle, thickening the air so that it was difficult to breathe. In a bower roofed by roses lay Señorita Mendoza, asleep in a hammock.

Softly Montes made his way to her side and stood looking down at her. As a picture, as something feminine, beautiful and young and soft and fresh and alluring, asleep and therefore sincere, she seemed

all that was desirable. Dolores Mendoza was an unusual type for a Yucatecan of Spanish descent. She was blond. Her hair was not golden, yet nearly so; she had a broad, low, beautiful brow, with level eyebrows, and the effect of her closed lids was fascinating with their promise; her nose was small, straight, piquant, with delicate nostrils that showed they could quiver and dilate; her mouth, the best feature of her beauty, was as red as the roses that drooped over her, and its short curved upper lip seemed full, sweet, sensuous. She had the oval face of her class, but fair, not olive-skinned, and her chin, though it did not detract from her charms, was far from being strong. Perhaps her greatest attraction, seen thus in the slumber of abandon, was her slender form, round limbed and graceful.

Montes gazed at her until he felt a bitterness of revolt against the deceit of Nature. She gladdened all the senses of man. But somehow she seemed false to the effect she created. If he watched her long in this beautiful guise of sleep he would deaden his intelligence. She was not for him. So he pulled a red rose and pushed it against her lips, playfully tapping them until she awoke. Her eyes unclosed. They were a surprise. They should have been blue, but they were tawny. Sleepy, dreamy, wonderful cat eyes they were, clear and soft, windows of the truth of her nature. Montes suddenly felt safe again, sure of himself.

"Ah, Señor Montes," she said. "You found me asleep. How long have you been here?"

"A long time, I think," he replied, as he seated himself on a bench near her hammock. "Watching you asleep, I forgot time. But alas! time flies—and you awoke."

Dolores laughed. She had perfect white teeth that looked made to bite and enjoy biting. Her smile added to her charm.

"Sir, one would think you liked me best asleep."

"I do. You are always beautiful, Dolores. But when you are asleep you seem sincere. Now you are—Dolores Mendoza."

"Who is sincere? You are not," she retorted. "I don't know you any more. You seem to try to make me dissatisfied with myself."

"So you ought to be."

"Why? Because I cannot run away with you to Brazil?"

"No. Because you look like an angel but are not one. Because your beauty, your charm, your sweetness deceive men. You seem the incarnation of love and joy."

"Ah!" she cried, stretching out her round arms and drawing a deep breath that swelled her white neck. "You are jealous. But I am happy. I have what I want. I am young and I enjoy. I love to be admired. I love to be loved. I love jewels, gowns, all I have, pleasure, excitement, music, flowers. I love to eat. I love to be idle, lazy, dreamy. I love to sleep. And you, horrid man, awake me to make me think."

"That is impossible, Dolores," he replied. "You cannot think."

"My mind works pretty well. But I'll admit I'm a little animal—a tawny-eyed cat. So, Montes, you must stroke me the right way or I will scratch."

"Well, I'd rather you scratched," said Montes. "A man likes a woman who loves him tenderly and passionately one moment and tears his hair out the next."

"You know, of course, señor," she replied mockingly. "The little Alva girl, for instance. You admired her. Perhaps she —"

"She is adorable," he returned complacently. "I go to her for consolation."

Dolores made a sharp passionate gesture, a contrast to her usual languorous movements. Into the sleepy, tawny eyes shot a dilating fire.

"Have you made love to her?" she demanded.

"Dolores, do you imagine any man could resist that girl?" he rejoined.

"Have you?" she repeated with heaving breast.

Montes discarded his tantalizing lightness. "No, Dolores, I have not. I have lived in a torment lately. My love for you seems turning to hate."

"No!" she cried, extending her hands. She softened. Her lips parted. If there were depths in her Montes had sounded them.

"Dolores, tell me the truth," he said, taking her hands. "You have never been true."

"I am true to my family. They chose Perez for me to marry—before I ever knew you. It is settled. I shall marry him. But —"

"But! Dolores, you love me?"

She drooped her head. "Yes, señor—lately it has come to that. Ah! Don't—don't! Montes, I beg of you! You forget—I'm engaged to Perez."

Montes released her. In her confession and resistance there was proof of his injustice. She was no nobler than her class. She was a butterfly in her fancies, a little cat in her greedy joy of physical life. But in her agitation he saw a deeper spirit.

"Dolores, if I had come first—before Perez—would you have given yourself to me?" he asked.

"Ah, señor, with all my heart!" she replied softly.

"Dearest—I think I must ask you to forgive me for—for something I can't confess. And now tell me—this reception given to-morrow by your mother—is that to announce your engagement to Perez?"

"Yes and I will be free then till fall—when—when —"

"When you will be married?"

She bowed assent and hesitatingly slid a white hand toward him.

"Fall! It's a long time. Dolores, I must go back to Brazil."

"Ah, señor, that will kill me! Stay!" she entreated.

"But it would be dangerous. Perez dislikes me. I hate him. Something terrible might come of it."

"That is his risk. I have consented to marry him. I will do my duty before and after. But I see no reason why I may not have a little happiness—of my own—until that day comes. Life for me will not contain all I could wish. I told you, now I am happy. But you were included. Señor, if you love me you will remain."

"Dolores, can you think we will not suffer more?" he asked.

"I know we will afterward. But we shall not now."

"Now is perilous to me. To realize you love me! I did not think you capable of it. Listen! Something—something might prevent your marriage—or happen afterward. All—all is so uncertain."

"¿Quién sabe?" she whispered; and to the tawny sleepy languor of her eyes there came a fancy, a dream, a mystic hope.

"Dolores, if Perez were lost to you—one way or another—would you marry me?" he broke out huskily. Not until then had he asked her hand in marriage.

"If such forlorn hope will make you stay—make you happy—yes, Señor Montes," was her answer.

There came a time when Yaqui was needed in the factory where the henequen fiber was extracted from the leaves. He

(Continued on Page 33)



Then From His Lips Pealed an Awful Cry

YAQUI

(Continued from Page 13)

had come to be a valuable machine—an instrument of toil that did not run down or go wrong. One guard said to another: "That big black peon takes a lot of killing!" and then ceased to watch him closely. He might have escaped. He might have crossed the miles and miles of henequen fields to the jungle, and under that dense cover had made his way northward to the coast. Yaqui had many a chance. But he never looked toward the north.

At first they put him to feeding henequen leaves into the maw of a crushing machine. The juicy, sticky, odorous substance of the big twenty-pound leaf was squeezed into a pulp, out of which came the white glistening threads of fiber. These fibers made sisal rope—rope second in quality only to the manila.

By and by he was promoted. They put him in the pressing room to work on the ponderous iron press which was used to make the henequen bales. This machine was a high, strange-looking object, oblong in shape, like a box, opening in the middle from the top down. It had several distinct movements, all operated by levers. Long bundles of henequen were carried in from the racks and laid in the press until it was half full. Then a lever was pulled, the machine closed on the fiber and opened again. This operation was repeated again and again. Then it was necessary for the operator to step from his platform upon the fiber in the machine and stamp it down and jump upon it and press it closely all round. When this had been done the last time the machine seemed wide open and stuffed so full that it would never close. But when the lever was pulled the ponderous steel jaws shut closer and closer and locked. Then the sides fell away, to disclose a great smooth bale of henequen ready for shipment.

The Yaqui learned to operate this press so skillfully that the work was left to him. When his carriers went out to the racks for more fiber he was left alone in the room.

Some strange relation sprang up between Yaqui and his fiber press. For him it never failed to operate. He knew to a strand just how much fiber made a perfect bale. And he became so accurate that his bales were never weighed. They came out glistening, white, perfect to the pound. There was a strange affinity between this massive, steel-jawed engine and something that lived in the Yaqui's heart, implacable and immutable, appalling in its strength to wait, in its power to crush.

IV

THERE seemed no failing of the endurance of this primitive giant, but his great frame had wasted away until it was a mere hulk. Owing to his value now to the hacienda, Yaqui was given rations in lieu of the ball of soggy bread; they were not, however, what the Indian needed. Montes at last won Yaqui's gratitude.

"Señor, if Yaqui wanted to eat it would be meat he needed," said the chief. Then Montes added meat to the wine, bread and fruit he secretly brought to the Indian.

When Montes began covert kindnesses to the poor Yaqui slaves the chief showed gratitude and pathos: "Señor Montes is good—but the sun of the Yaquis is setting."

Perez in his triumphant arrogance evidently derived pleasure from being magnanimous to the man he instinctively knew was his rival.

One day at the hacienda when Montes rode up to meet Donna Isabel and Dolores he found them accompanied by Perez and his parents. Almost immediately the young officer suggested gayly:

"Señor, pray carry Dolores off somewhere. My father has something to plan with Donna Isabel. It must be a secret from Dolores. Take her a walk—talk to her, señor—keep her excited—make love to her!"

"I shall be happy to obey. Will you come, señorita?" said Montes.

If they expected Dolores to pout they were mistaken. Her slow sleepy glance left the face of her future husband as she turned away silently to accompany Montes. They walked along the palm-shaded road, out toward the huge, open, sunny space that was the henequen domain.

"I hate Perez," she burst out suddenly. "He meant to taunt you. He thinks I am his slave—a creature without mind or heart. Señor, make love to me!"

"You will be his slave—soon," whispered Montes bitterly.

"Never!" she exclaimed passionately.

They reached the end of the shady road. The mill was silent. Montes saw the Indian standing motionless close at hand, in the shade of the henequen racks.

"Dolores, did you mean what you just said?" asked Montes eagerly.

"That I will never be Perez's slave?"

"No; the other thing you said."

"Yes, I did," she replied. "Make love to me, señor. It was his wish. I must learn to obey."

With sullen scorn she spoke, not looking at Montes, scarcely realizing the actual purport of her speech. But when Montes took her in his arms she started back with a cry. He held her. And suddenly clasping her tightly he bent his head to kiss the red lips she opened to protest.

"Let me go!" she begged wildly.

"Oh—I did not—mean — Montes, not so! Do not make me —"

"Kiss me!" whispered Montes hoarsely, "or I'll never let you go. It was his wish. Come, I dare you—I beg you!"

One wild moment she responded to his kiss, and then she thrust him away.

"Ah, by the saints!" she murmured with hands over her face. "Now I will love you more—my heart will break."

"Dolores, I can't let Perez have you," declared Montes miserably.

"Too late, my dear. I am to be his wife."

"But you love me, Dolores?"

"Alas! too true. I do. Oh, I never knew how well!" she cried.

"Let us run away," he implored eagerly.

Mournfully she shook her head, and looking up suddenly she espied the Yaqui.

His great burning cavernous eyes, like black fire, were fixed upon her.

"Oh, that terrible Yaqui," she whispered. "It is he who watches us at the bullfights — Let us go, Montes —"

Oh, he saw us—he saw me — Come!"

Upon their return to the house the old Don greeted them effusively. He seemed radiant with happiness. He had united two of the first families of Yucatan, which unison would make the greatest henequen plantation.

The beautiful señorita had other admirers. But this marriage had unusual advantages. The peculiar location and productiveness of the plantations and the obstacles to greater and quicker output that would be done away with, and the fact that Lieutenant Perez through his military influence could work the fields with peon labor—these facts had carried the balance in favor of the marriage.

The old Don manifestly regarded the arrangement as a victory for him which he owed to the henequen, and he had decided to make the wedding day one on which the rich product of the plantation should play a most important part.

"But how to bring in the henequen!" he concluded in perplexity. "I've racked my brain. Son, I leave it to you."

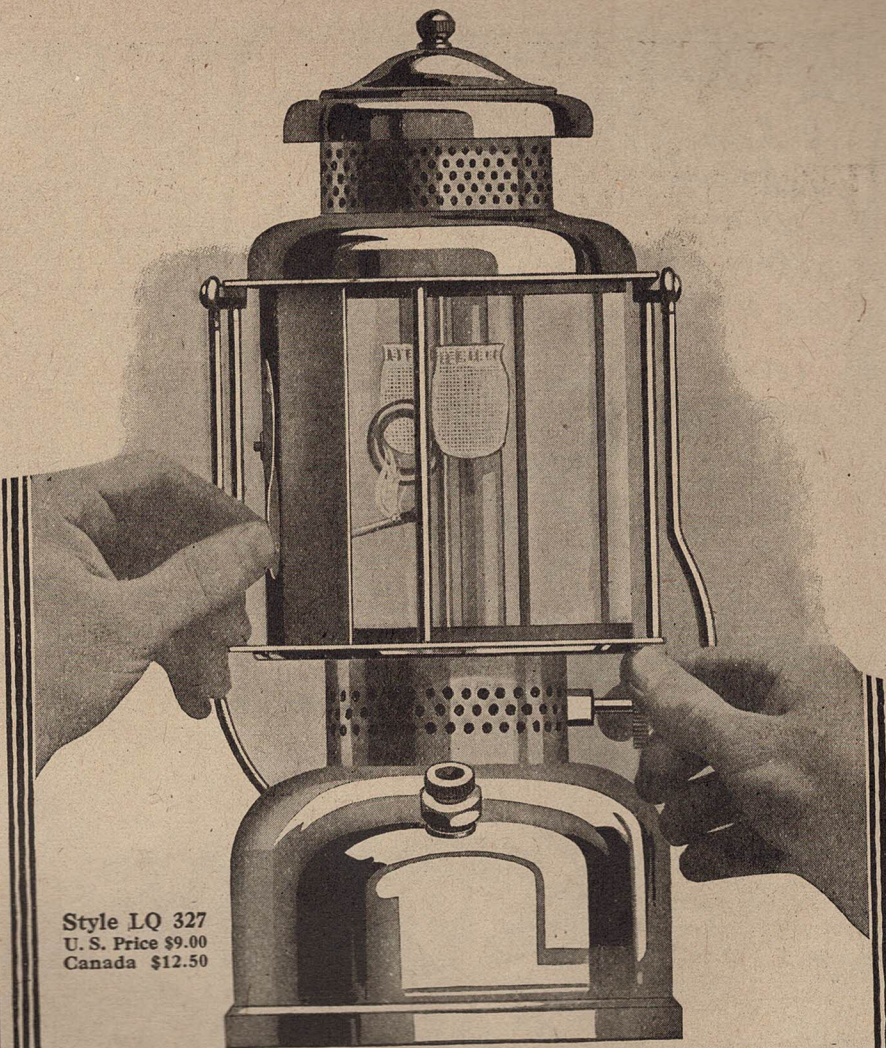
Young Perez magnificently waved the question aside. Possessing himself of his fiancée's reluctant hand he spoke in a whisper audible to Montes. "We planned the wedding presents. That was the secret. But you shall not see—not know—until we are married!"

Montes dropped his eyes and his brow knit thoughtfully. Later, as a peon brought his horse, he called Perez aside.

"I've an idea," he said confidentially.

"Have Yaqui select the most perfect henequen fiber to make the most beautiful and perfect bale of henequen ever pressed. Have Yaqui place the wedding presents inside the bale before the final pressing. Then send it to Donna Isabel's house after the wedding and open it there."

Young Perez clapped his hands in delight. What a capital plan! He complimented Montes and thanked him and asked him to keep secret the idea. Indeed the young lieutenant waxed enthusiastic over the plan. It would be unique; it would be fitting to the occasion. Perez would have Yaqui pick over and select from the racks the most perfect fibers, to be laid aside. Perez would go himself to watch Yaqui at his work. He would have Yaqui practice the operation of pressing, so at the momentous hour there could be no hitch. And on the wedding day Perez would carry the presents himself. No hands but his own would be trusted with



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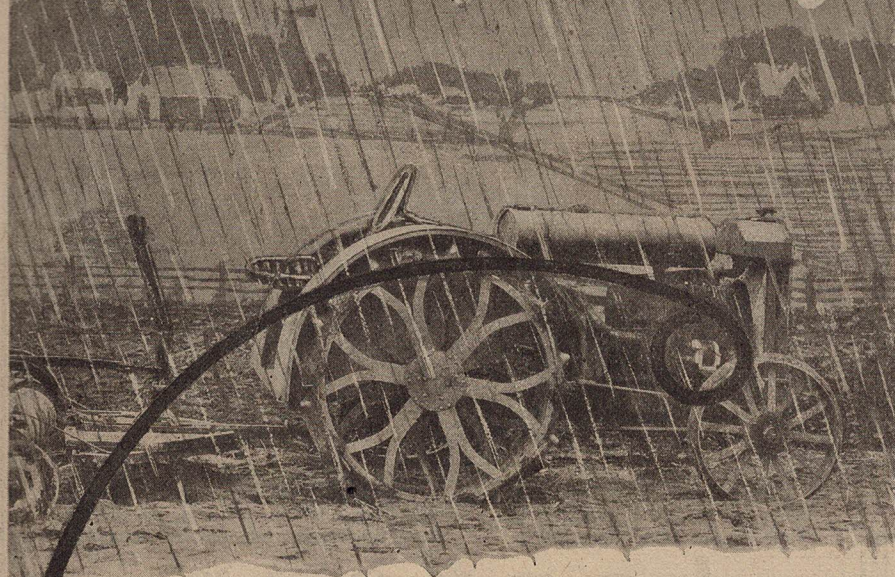
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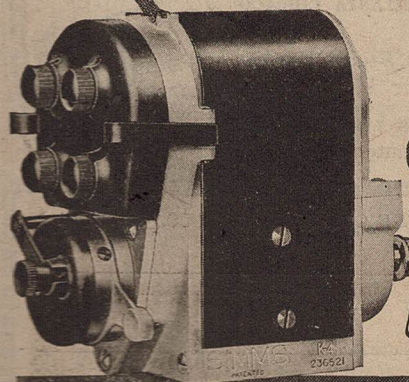
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MAGNETOS

**FOR TRACTORS-TRUCKS
 PASSENGER CARS**

those jewels, especially the exquisite pearls that were his own particular gift.

At last the day arrived for the wedding. It was to be a holiday. Yaqui alone was not to lie idle. It was to fall to him to press that bale of henequen and to haul it to the bride's home.

But Perez did not receive all his gifts when he wanted them. Messengers arrived late and some were yet to come. He went to the mill, however, and put Yaqui to work at packing the henequen in the press and building it up. The Indian was bidden to go so far with the bale, leaving a great hole in the middle for the gifts and to have the rest of the fiber all ready to pack and press. Perez would not trust anyone else with his precious secret; he himself would hurry down with the gifts, and secretly, for the manner of presentation was to be a great surprise.

Blue was the sky, white gold the sun, and the breeze waved the palms. But for Montes an invisible shadow hovered over the stately Mendoza mansion where Dolores was to be made a bride. The shadow existed in his mind and took mystic shape—now a vast copper-hazed green-spiked plain of henequen, and then the spectral gigantic shape of a toiling man, gaunt, grim and fire-eyed.

Montes hid his heavy heart behind smiling lips and the speech of a courtier. He steeled himself against a nameless and portending shock, waiting for it even when his mind scorned the delusion. But the shock did not come at sight of Señorita Dolores, magnificently gowned in white, beautiful, serene, imperious, with her proud tawny eyes and proud red lips. Nor when those sleepy strange eyes met his. Nor when the priest ended the ceremony that made her a wife.

He noted when Lieutenant Perez laughingly fought his way out of the crowd and disappeared. Then the unrest of Montes became a haunting suspense.

By and by the guests were directed out to the shaded west terrace, where in the center of the wide stoned space lay a huge white glistening bale of henequen. Beside it stood the giant Yaqui, dark, motionless, aloof. The guests clustered round.

When Montes saw the Yaqui like a statue beside the bale of henequen, he

sustained the shock for which he had been waiting. He slipped to the front of the circle of guests.

"Ah!" exclaimed the old Don, eying the bale of henequen with great satisfaction. "This is the surprise our son had in store for us. Here is the jewel case—here are the wedding presents!"

The guests laughed and murmured their compliments.

"Where is Señor Perez?" demanded the Don as he looked round.

"The boy is hiding," replied Donna Isabel. "He wants to watch his bride when she sees the gifts."

"No—he would not be there," declared the old Don in perplexity. Something strange edged into his gladness of the moment. Suddenly he wheeled to the Yaqui. But he never spoke the question on his lips. Slowly he seemed to be blasted by those great black-fired orbs, as piercing as if they had been lightnings from hell.

"Hurry, open the bale," cried the bride, her sweet voice trilling above the gay talk.

Yaqui appeared not to hear. Was he looking into the soul of the father of Lieutenant Perez? All about him betrayed almost a superhuman intensity.

"Open the bale," ordered the bride.

Yaqui cut the wire. He did not look at her. The perfectly folded and pressed strands of fiber shook and swelled and moved apart as if in relief. And like a great white jewel case of glistening silken threads the bale of henequen opened.

It commanded a stilling of the gay murmur—a sudden silence that had a subtle effect upon all. The beautiful bride, leaning closer to look, seemed to lose the light of the tawny proud eyes. Her mother froze into a creature of stone. The old Don, in slow strange action, as if his mind had feeble sway over body, bent his gray head away from the gaunt and terrible Yaqui. Something showed blue down under the center strands of the glistening fiber. With a swift flash of his huge black hand, with exceeding violence, Yaqui swept the strands aside. Then from his lips pealed an awful cry. Instead of the jewels, there, crushed and ghastly, lay the bridegroom Perez.

(THE END)

Silver Plume

(Continued from Page 21)

I learned quickly because I wasn't afraid. I had never been beaten or abused, as you know, and nothing scared me. You can do almost anything with a horse if you have got his confidence, and you would be surprised if you were aware of how much we know without being told. I think a horse is possessed of a seventh sense, which gives him a species of intelligence not even possessed by human beings.

For instance, I could always tell when anyone was coming to our place long before they came in sight. I always knew when a storm was brewing, and could scent a water hole for miles before we reached it. If you are riding a horse on a dark night and are wise to the ways of these animals, you will let him pick his own path. If you do that, you find he will dodge all the bad places and take the right road back to his own stables.

The calico pony was also an apt pupil, and to tell the truth I think that he even learned faster than I did. That was, perhaps, because he was older and had had more experience. We were a very handsome pair. My master took the greatest care of us both and once a week he washed out our manes and tails. Then he used to rinse them out with a little salt and water to make the hair grow luxuriantly.

Well, the harvest season was over at last and young Towers was ready to go. He had saved up his money and had over a hundred dollars. Jimmy was crazy to go with him, but did not know how he could manage it, because he did not want to leave without his horses and his father was always on the ranch.

Then one day, by some lucky stroke, Mr. Harding was called to Spokane. He would be gone several days and that was the opportunity the boys were looking for.

I don't know how Jimmy broke the news to his mother that he was going away. It must have been a hard blow to her. I only know that the morning after his father left the boys got ready to set out. Their

few belongings were strapped back of the calico pony's saddle. My master rode me.

It was a sad parting for us all, especially for Jimmy's mother. When we were ready to go she came out and just hung to him; she was weeping bitterly. But after a while she stopped crying and told Jimmy that she would feel all right when he was gone. She said that she knew he could never get along with his father and that he would follow his inclination to go out into the world sooner or later, so that she had figured out it was better to let him go with a light heart.

We rode westward all morning and I imagine covered between ten or fifteen miles, then the boys dismounted and removed our saddles. We had a feed of oats apiece and were rested for a couple of hours, after which we proceeded on our journey. Along toward evening we came to a small town which was one of the stations of the Great Northern Railway.

Early next morning we were taken over to the railroad station and led up a steep incline to a platform. Standing on the rails before it was a freight car. I had never seen one before. It looked dark inside, but I had every confidence in my master and followed him right in.

The calico pony told me that he had once before been shipped in a freight car. He said this was the real way to travel and not to be afraid when the engine backed up and was hooked onto the car.

Of course, I promised that I would not, and told him I wasn't afraid of anything. But all at once something struck the car behind me with a great bang and the concussion was so great that I was thrown to my knees. I scrambled to my feet and tugged wildly at the lead lines. I think if I had succeeded in breaking loose I would have jumped clean out the open door of the car, but my master stood close to me, stroking my face and talking to me.

(TO BE CONTINUED)