

# PARROT & CO

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*The Place of Honeymoons*, etc.

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## SYNOPSIS.

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Warrington, an American adventurer, and James, his servant, with a caged parrot, the trio known up and down the Irrawaddy as Parrot & Co., are bound for Rangoon. Elsa Chetwood, rich American girl tourist, sees Warrington and asks the purser to introduce her. He tells her that Warrington has beaten a syndicate and sold his oil claims for £20,000. Warrington puts Raja and they pass two golden days together on the river. Martha, Elsa's companion, warns her that there is gossip in Rangoon. Warrington interferes in a row over cards caused by an enemy. Newell Craig, and threatens to shoot him unless he leaves town. Elsa is annoyed by Craig and stabs him with a hatpin. Warrington bids Elsa good-by. Warrington discovers Elsa on the Singapore steamer. Elsa tells him of her engagement. He avoids Elsa, who thinks he may be ill and makes inquiries, regardless of the misinterpretation of her concern. Craig is aboard and warned by Warrington. Warrington ceases to avoid Elsa. Craig stirs up evil gossip. Elsa tells Warrington of the hatpin incident and he hunts up Craig, on a murder bent, only to find him stretched out drunk on deck. Warrington turns the hose on Craig. He tells Elsa that he is a man under a cloud and to be avoided, but Elsa refuses. She gets the cut direct from society passengers.

## CHAPTER XI—Continued.

For years Martha had discharged her duties, if mechanically yet with a sense of pleasure and serenity. At this moment she was as one pushed unexpectedly to the brink of a precipice, over which the slightest misstep would topple her. The world was out of joint.

"I wish we had gone to Italy," she remarked finally.

"It would not have served my purpose in the least. I should have been dancing and playing bridge and going to operas. I should have had no time for thinking."

"Thinking!" Martha elevated her brows with an air that implied that she greatly doubted this statement.

"Yes, thinking. It is not necessary that I should mope and shut myself up in a cell, Martha, in order to think. I have finally come to the end of my doubts, if that will gratify you. From now on you may rely upon one thing, to a certainty."

Martha hesitated to put the question.

"I am not going to marry Arthur. He is charming, graceful, accomplished; but I want a man. I should not be happy with him. I can twist him too easily around my finger. I admit that he exercises over me a certain indefinable fascination; but when he is out of sight it amounts to the sum of all this doddering and doubting. It is probable that I shall make an admirable old maid. Wisdom has its disadvantages. I might be very happy with Arthur, were I not so wise." She smiled again at the reflection in the mirror. "Now, let us go and astonish the natives."

There was a mild flutter of eyelids as she sat down beside Warrington and began to chatter to him in Italian. He made a brave show of following her, but became hopelessly lost after a few minutes. Elsa spoke fluently; twelve years had elapsed since his last visit to Italy. He admitted his confusion, and thereafter it was only occasionally that she brought the tongue into the conversation. This diversion, which she employed mainly to annoy her neighbors, was, in truth, the very worst thing she could have done. They no longer conjectured; they assumed.

Warrington was too strongly dazzled by her beauty tonight to be mentally keen or to be observing as was his habit. He never spoke to his neighbor; he had eyes for none but Elsa, under whose spell he knew that he would remain while he lived. He was nothing to her; he readily understood. She was restless and lonely, and he amused her. So be it. He believed that there could not be an unhappier, more unfortunate man than himself. To have been betrayed by the one he had loved, second to but one, and to have this knowledge thrust upon him after all these years, was evil enough; but the nadir of his misfortunes had been reached by the appearance of this unreadable young woman.

"You are not listening to a word I am saying!"

"I beg your pardon! But I warned you that my Italian was rusty." He pulled himself together.

"But I have been rattling away in English!"

"And I have been wool-gathering."

"Not at all complimentary to me."

"It is because I am very unhappy; it is because Tantalus and I are brothers."

"I wish I could make you forget."

"On the contrary, the sight of you makes memory all the keener."

He had never spoken like that before. It rather subdued her, made her regret that she had surrendered to a vanity that was without aim or direction. Farthest from her thought was conquest of the man. She did not wish to hurt him. She was not a coquette.

After dinner he did not suggest the usual promenade. Instead, he excused himself and went below.

They arrived at Penang early Monday morning. Elsa decided that Warrington should take her and Martha on a personally conducted tour of the pretty town. As they left for shore he produced a small beautiful blue feather; he gave it to Elsa with the compliments of Raja; and she stuck it in the pugree of her helmet.

"This is not from the dove of peace."

"Its archenemy, rather," he laughed.

"I wish I had, the ability to get as furious as that bird. It might do me a world of good."

"And how long is it since you were here?"

"Four years," he answered without enthusiasm. He would not have come ashore at all but for the fact that Elsa had ordered the expedition.

There was no inclination to explore the shops; so they hired a landau and rode about town, climbed up to the quaint temple in the hills, and made a tour of the botanical gardens.

"Isn't it delicious!" murmured Elsa, taking in deep breaths of the warm spice-laden air. Since her visit to the wonderful gardens at Kandy in Ceylon she had found a new interest in plants and trees.

She thoroughly enjoyed the few hours on land, even to the powwow Warrington had with the unscrupulous driver, who, at the journey's end, substituted one price for another, despite his original bargain.

As they waited for the tender that was to convey them back to the ship, Elsa observed a powerful middle-aged man, gray-haired, hawk-faced, steel-eyed, watching her companion intently. Then his boring-gaze traveled over her, from her canvas shoes to her helmet. There was something so baldly appraising in the look that a flush of anger surged into her cheeks. The man turned and said something to his companion, who shrugged and smiled. Impatiently Elsa tugged at Warrington's sleeve.

"Who is that man over there by the railing?" she asked in a very low voice.

"He looks as if he knew you."

"Knew me?" Warrington echoed.

The moment he had been dreading had come. Someone who knew him! He turned his head slowly, and Elsa, who had not dropped her hand, could feel the muscles of his arm stiffen under the sleeve. He held the stranger's eye defiantly for a space. The latter laughed insolently if silently. It was more for Elsa's sake than for his own that Warrington allowed the other to stare him down. The flame passed, leaving him as cold as ashes. "I shall tell you who he is later; not here."

For the second time since that night on the Irrawaddy, Elsa recorded a disagreeable sensation. It proved to be transitory, but at the time it served to establish a stronger doubt in regard to her independence, so justifiable in her own eyes. It might be indiscreetly leading her too far away from the stepping-off place. The unspoken words in those hateful eyes! The man knew Warrington, knew him perhaps as a malefactor, and judged his associates accordingly. She thus readily saw the place she occupied in the man's estimation. She experienced a shiver of dread as she observed that he stepped on board the tender. She even heard him call back to his friend to expect him in from Singapore during the second week in March. But the dread went away, and pride and anger grew instead. All the way back to the ship she held her chin in the air, and from time to time her nostrils dilated. That look! If she had been nearer she was certain that she would have struck him across the face.

"There will be no one up in the bow," said Warrington. "Will you go up there with me?"

After a moment's hesitation, she nodded. A moment after she felt the old familiar throb under her feet, and the ship moved slowly out of the bay.

"Do you know that that man came aboard?"

"I know it." The wide half-circle of cocoanut palms grew denser and lower as they drew away. "This is the story. It's got to be told. I should have avoided it if it had been possible. He is the owner of the plantation. Oh, I rather expected something like this. It's my run of luck. I was just recovering from the fever. God knows how

he found out, but he did. It was during the rains. He told me to get out that night. Didn't care whether I died on the road or not. I should have but for my boy James. The man sent along with us a poor discarded woman, of whom he had grown tired. She died when we reached town. I had hardly any money. He refused to pay me for the last two months, about fifty pounds. There was no redress for me. There was no possible way I could get back at him. Miss Chetwood, I took money that did not belong to me. It went over gaming tables. Craig. I ran away. Craig knows and this man Mallow knows. Can you not see the wisdom of giving me a wide berth?"

"Oh, I am sorry!" she cried.

"Thanks. But you see: I am an out-cast. Tonight, not a soul on board will be in ignorance of who I am and what I have done. Trust Craig and Mallow for that. Thursday we shall be in Singapore. You must not speak to me again. Give them to understand that you have found me out, that I imposed on your kindness."

"That I will not do."

"Act as you please. There are empty chairs at the second-class table, among the natives. And now, good-by. The happiest hours in ten long years are due to you." He took off his helmet and stepped aside for her to pass. She held out her hand, but he shook his head. "Don't make it harder for me."

"Mr. Warrington, I am not a child!"

"To me you have been the angel of kindness; and the light in your face I shall always see. Please go now."

"Very well." A new and unaccountable pain filled her throat and forced her to carry her head high. "I can find my way back to the other deck."

## CHAPTER XII.

### The Game of Gossip.

During the concluding days of the voyage Elsa had her meals served on deck. She kept Martha with her continually, promenaded only early in the morning and at night while the other passengers were at dinner. This left a clear deck. She walked quickly, her arm in Martha's, literally propelling her along, never spoke unless spoken to, and then answered in monosyllables. Her thoughts flew to a thousand and one things, futilely and vainly, in the endeavor to shut out the portrait of the broken man. What was he doing, of what was he thinking, where would he go and what would he do? She hated night which, no longer offering sleep, provided nothing in lieu of it, and compelled her to remain in the stuffy cabin. She was afraid.

Early Wednesday morning she passed Craig and Mallow; but the two had wit enough to step aside for her and to speak only with their eyes. She filled Craig with unadulterated fear. Mallow dragged along the gambler whenever he found a chance to see Elsa at close range.

"There's a woman, Gad! that beach-comber has taste."

"I tell you to look out for her," Craig warned again. "I know what I'm talking about."

Mallow whistled. "Oho! You probably acted the fool. Drinking?"

Craig nodded affirmatively.

"Thought so. Even a Yokohama barmaid will fight shy of a boozer. I'm going to meet her when we get to Singapore, or my name's not Mallow."

Craig laughed with malice. "I hope you will. It will take some of the brag out of you. Say, let's go aft and hunt up the chap. I understand he's taken up quarters in the second cabin."

"Doesn't want to run into me. All right; come on. We'll stir him up a little and have some fun."

They found Warrington up in the stern, sitting on the deck, surrounded by squatting Lascars, some Chinamen and a solitary white man, the chief engineer's assistant. The center of interest was Raja, who was performing his tricks. Among these was one that the bird rarely could be made to perform, the threading of beads. He despised this act, as it entailed the putting of a blunt needle in his beak. He flung it aside each time Warrington handed it to him. But ever his master patiently returned it. At length, recognizing that the affair might be prolonged indefinitely, Raja put two beads on the thread and tossed it aside. The Lascars jabbered, the Chinamen grinned, and the chief engineer's assistant swore approvingly.

The parrot shrilled and waddled back to his cage.

"Fine business for a whole man!"

Warrington looked up to meet the cynical eyes of Mallow. He took out his cutty and fired it. Otherwise he did not move nor let his gaze swerve. Mallow, towering above him, could scarcely resist the temptation to stir his enemy with the toe of his boot. His hatred for Warrington was not wholly due to his brutal treatment of him. Mallow always took pleasure in dominating those under him by fear. Warrington had done his work well. He had always recognized Mallow as his employer, but in no other capacity; he had never offered to smoke a pipe with him, or to take a hand at cards or split a bottle. It had not been done offensively; but in this attitude Mallow had recognized his manager's dis-

approval of him, an inner consciousness of superiority in birth and education. He had with supreme satisfaction ordered him off the plantation that memorable night. Weak as the man had been in body, there had been no indication of weakness in spirit.

Occultly Warrington read the desire in the other's eyes. "I shouldn't do it, Mallow," he said. "I shouldn't. Nothing would please me better than to have a good excuse to chuck you over the rail. Upon a time you had the best of me. I was a sick man then. I'm in tolerable good health at present."

"You crow, I could break you like a pipe stem." Mallow rammed his hands into his coat pockets, scowling contemptuously. He weighed fully twenty pounds more than Warrington.

Crow! Warrington shrugged. In the East crow is a rough synonym for thief. "You're at liberty to return to your diggings forward with that impression," he replied coolly. "When we get to Singapore," rising slowly to his height until his eyes were level with Mallow's, "when we get to Singapore, I'm going to ask you for that fifty pounds, earned in honest labor."

"And if I decline to pay?" truculently.

"We'll talk that over when we reach port. Now," roughly, "get out. There won't be any baiting done today, thank you."

"Cockalorem!" jeered Mallow. Craig touched his sleeve, but he threw off the hand roughly. He was one of the best rough and tumble fighters in the Straits settlements. "You thieving beach-comber, I don't want to mess up the deck with you, but I'll cut your comb for you when we get to port."

Warrington laughed insolently and picked up the parrot cage. "I'll bring the comb. In fact, I always carry it." Not a word to Craig, not a glance in his direction. Warrington stepped to the companionway and went below.

Craig could not resist grinning at Mallow's discomfiture. "Wouldn't break, eh?"

"Shut your mouth! The sneaking dock-walloper, I'll take the starch out of him when we land! Always had that high and mighty air. Wants folks to think he's a gentleman."

"He was once," said Craig. "No use giving you advice; but he's not a healthy individual to bait. I'm no kitten when it comes to scrapping; but I haven't any desire to mix things with him." The fury of the man who had given him the ducking was still vivid. He had been handled as a terrier handles a rat.

"I tell you he's yellow. And with a hundred thousand in his clothes, he'll be yellow still."

A hundred thousand. Craig frowned and gazed out to sea. He had forgotten all about the windfall. "Let's go and have a peg," he suggested surlily.

Immediately upon obtaining her rooms at Raffles hotel in Singapore (and leaving Martha there to await the arrival of the luggage, an imposing collection of trunks and boxes and kitbags), Elsa went down to the American consulate, which had its offices in the rear of the hotel. She walked through the outer office and stood silently at the consul general's elbow, waiting for him to look up. She was dressed in white, and in the pugree of her helmet was the one touch of color, Raja's blue feather. The consul general turned his head. His kindly face had the settled expression of indulgent inquiry. The expression changed swiftly into one of delight.

"Elsa Chetwood!" he cried, seizing her hands. "Well, well! I am glad to see you. Good gracious what a beautiful woman you've turned out to be! Sit down, sit down!" He pushed her into a chair. "Well, well! When I saw you last you were nineteen."

"What a frightful memory you have! And I was going to my first ball. You used the same adjective."

"Is there a better one? I'll use it if there is. You've arrived just in time. I am giving a little dinner to the consuls and their wives tonight. You see, I've an old friend from India in town today, and I've asked him, too. Your appearance evens up matters."

"Oh; then I'm just a filler-in!"

"Heavens, no! You're the most important person of the lot, though Colonel Knowlton . . ."

"Colonel Knowlton!" exclaimed Elsa.

"That's so, by George! Stupid of me. You came down on the same boat. Fine! You know each other."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Living Down His Names.

Before he knew enough to object his mother named him Paul Mary Cesar Gerald. Had she been an English woman she might have named him Harold Francis Percy Algernon; but she was French. When he grew up he became a soldier and wrote her a charming letter, with his left hand, on the occasion of losing the right in battle with Germans. Today General Paul is—after Joffre—the war hero of France. The Paul Mary Cesar Gerald could not prevent him from coming to his own; nor could the loss of a hand handicap his indomitable spirit.

## VILLA CALLS ON TROOPS TO ASSIST

Bandit Chief, Badly Beaten At Celaya, Orders All Forces To Rush To His Aid

## QUITS SEIGE OF MATAMOROS

Ex-Outlaw Admits He Suffered Severe Losses At Hands of Carranza Lieutenant, Obregon

Vera Cruz.—"Five thousand of the enemy dead were counted during the movement northward from Celaya. Six thousand prisoners and forty field pieces were captured."

This is General Obregon's summary of the result of the fighting about Celaya, where he reported he had gained a decisive victory over Villa forces. The ringing of church bells and the parading of soldiers and citizens conveyed the news of the reported Carranza victory to the public.

### Besiegers Assist Villa

Brownsville, Texas.—A report that the 5,000 Villa troops which have been besieging Matamoros for more than two weeks had started for Celaya to assist General Villa in his campaign against General Obregon was received by Maj. Gen. Frederick Funston, in command of the United States troops here.

Advices from Mexico City said preparations had been made to move the capital of the Villa Zapata government to Chihuahua City.

Telegrams received from Villa explained that his abandonment of the Celaya attack had been caused by a shortage of ammunition. Villa admitted having received heavy losses in the fighting this week.

### BRANDS HUERTA AS LIAR

When Ex-Dictator Denied Connection With President Madero's Assassination

New York.—Asserting that he had nothing to do with the death of Francisco Madero, Gen. Victoriano Huerta, former provisional president of Mexico, issued a lengthy signed statement, setting forth what he termed his side of the Mexican question.

He declared he knew who was responsible for Madero's death, but that he was keeping it as a "professional secret."

### Calls Huerta a Humbug

Seattle.—"That's all humbug," said Col. M. Perez Romero, recently appointed Carranza minister to Japan, and brother of Mrs. Francisco Madero, widow of the late president of Mexico, when shown a copy of a statement issued in New York by General Huerta, former provisional president of Mexico, disclaiming responsibility for the death of Mr. Madero.

"I was an eyewitness to all the happenings of those tragic days," said Colonel Romero, "except for seven hours from ten o'clock at night until five o'clock in the morning when Mr. Madero was killed. At five o'clock I traced the automobile to the penitentiary and there saw pools of blood behind the prison and was told by persons coming away that there the president had been shot by the soldiers. These facts have all been gone over, time and again. It is useless for General Huerta to disclaim responsibility."

### BRITISH SEARCH AMERICANS.

American Pacific Steamers Will Be Searched For Germans, Say The British Authorities

Seattle.—American steamship companies operating between Seattle and Alaska ports and Seattle and San Francisco were notified by the British admiralty that all German, Austrian or Turkish passengers or members of the crews would be removed from any vessel calling at a Canadian port and held as prisoners of war.

As a result of the order the Pacific Coast Steamship company discharged ten German members of the crew of the steamship President, which sailed for San Francisco.

The Pacific Coast company announced that it would book no enemies of Great Britain on the President, which calls at Victoria.

### Thaw Returns To Asylum

New York.—Harry Kendall Thaw was ordered back to the state hospital for the criminal insane at Matteawan by the appellate division of the New York supreme court. In an opinion concurred in by all the judges, the court affirmed the denial by Supreme Court Justice Page of a motion to return Thaw to the jurisdiction of the state of New Hampshire, and ruled that the original order committing him to the institution was still valid. Plans are being formulated to take the case to the state court of appeals.