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The BLACK BOX

by
E. Phillips Oppenheim

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the train.
They galloped off into the distance.
The cowboys finished their breakfast
and went off to their work. Laura
stole out from her tent and started off
in rather a shamefaced manner for a
walk. Presently Lenora opened her
eyes. She, too, stretched out her
hand for her watch. Suddenly she
sat up in bed with a little exclamation.
On the table by her side was a small
black box. She took off the lid with
trembling fingers, drew out a scrap
of paper and read.

Fools! Tongues of flame will cross
Quest's path. He will never reach the
depot alive.

Lenora glanced at Laura's empty
bed. Then she staggered to the open-
ing of the tent.

"Laura!" she cried.
There was no one there. The cow-
boys had all gone to their work; Laura
had passed out of sight across the
ridge in the distance. Lenora stag-
gered to the cook wagon, where the
Chinese cook was sitting cleaning
plates.

"Listen!" she cried. "They are in
danger, the three men who have gone
off to the depot! If you'll ride after
them, I will give you a hundred dol-
lars. Give them this," she added
holding out the scrap of paper.

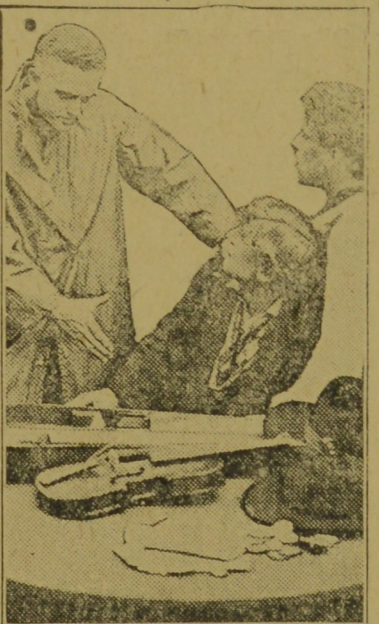
The Chinaman shook his head. He
glanced at the slip of paper indiffer-
ently and went on with his work.

"No can ride, missee," he said.
Lenora looked around helplessly.
The camp was empty. She staggered
across towards her own horse.

"Come and help me," she ordered.
The Chinaman came unwillingly.
They found her saddle, but he only
gazed at it in a stolid sort of fashion.

"No can fix," he said. "Missee no
can ride. Better go back bed."

Lenora pushed him on one side.
With a great effort she managed to
reach her place in the saddle. Then
she turned and, with her face to the
depot, galloped away. The pain was
excruciating. She could only keep



"In a Week From Today I Shall Ex-
pect You to Report at the Profes-
sor's House."

herself in the saddle with an effort.
Yet all the time that one sentence was
ringing in her head—"Tongues of
flame!" She kept looking around anx-
iously. Suddenly the road dropped
from a little decline. She was con-
scious of a wave of heat. In the dis-
tance she could see the smoke rolling
across the open. She touched her
horse with the quirt. The spot which
she must pass to keep on the track to
the depot was scarcely a hundred
yards ahead, but already the fire
seemed to be running like quicksilver
across the ground, licking up the dry
greasewood with indeed a flaming
tongue. She glanced once behind,
warned by the heat. The fire was
closing in upon her. A puff of smoke
suddenly enveloped her. She coughed.
Her head began to swim and a fit of
giddiness assailed her. She rocked
in her saddle and the pony came to a
sudden standstill, faced by the mass of
rolling smoke and flame.

"Sanford!" Lenora cried. "Save
me!"

The pony reared. She slipped from
the saddle and fell across the track.

CHAPTER XXXI.

There was a peculiar, almost fore-
boding silence about the camp that
morning when Laura returned from
her early ride. The only living person
to be seen was the Chinaman, sitting
on a stool in front of the wagon with
a dish of potatoes between his knees.

"Say, where's everyone?" Laura
sang out, after she had looked into Le-
nora's tent and found it empty.

The Chinaman looked up at her
malevolently.

"All gone," he announced. "Cow-
boys gone workee. Missee gone hurry
up and see Quest."

Laura hesitated, puzzled. Just then
the professor came cantering in with
a bundle of grass in his hand. He
glanced down at the Chinaman.

"Good morning, Miss Laura!" he
said. "You don't seem to be getting
on with our friend here." He added in
an undertone.

"Pshaw!" she answered. "Who
cares what a chink thinks! The fel-
low's an idiot. I'm worried, professor.
Lenora's gone out after Mr. Quest and
the inspector. She wasn't fit to ride
a horse. I can't make out why she's
attempted it."

The professor unsung some field-
glasses from his shoulder and gazed
steadily southward.

"It is just possible," he said, softly,
"that she may have received a warn-
ing of that."

He pointed with his forefinger. Laura
peered forward. There was something
which seemed to be just a faint cloud
upon the horizon. The professor
handed her his glasses.

"Why, it's a fire!" she cried.
The professor nodded.

"Just a prairie fire," he replied—
"very dangerous, though, these dry
seasons. The flames move so quickly
that if you happen to be in a certain
position you might easily be cut off."

Laura turned her horse round.

"Come on, professor!" she ex-
claimed. "That's what it is. Lenora's
gone to try and warn the others."

They rode to the very edge of the
tract of country which was tempo-
rarily enveloped in smoke and flame.
Here they pulled in their horses and
the professor looked thoughtfully
through his field glasses.

Laura gave a little cry and pointed
with her riding whip. About twenty
yards farther on, by the side of the
road, was a small white object. She
cantered on, swung herself from her
horse and picked it up.

"Lenora's handkerchief!" she cried.
The professor waved his arm west-
ward.

"Here come Quest and the inspec-
tor. They are making a circuit to
avoid the fire. The cowboy with them
must have shown them the way. We'd
better hurry up and find out if they've
seen anything of Miss Lenora."

They galloped across the rough
country towards the little party, who
were now clearly in sight.

From the center of one of the burn-
ing patches they saw a riderless horse
gallop out, stop for a moment with
his head almost between his forelegs,
shake himself furiously and gallop
blindly on again.

Laura would have turned her horse,
but the professor checked her.

"Let us wait for Quest," he advised.
The cowboy, riding a little behind
the two others, had unlatched his
lariat, swung it over his head and se-
cured the runaway. Quest galloped up
to where Laura and the professor were
waving frantically.

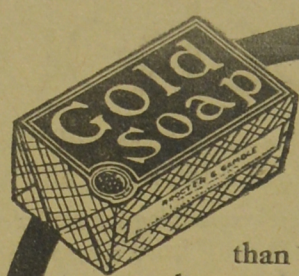
"Say, that's some fire!" Quest ex-
claimed. "Did you people come out to
see it?"

"No, we came to find Lenora!"
Laura answered, breathlessly. "That's
her horse." She started to meet you
She must be somewhere—

"Lenora?" Quest interrupted, fiercely.
"What do you mean?"

"When I got back to camp," Laura
continued, rapidly, "there wasn't a
soul there except the Chinaman. He
told me that Lenora had ridden off a
few minutes before to find you. We
came to look for her. We found her
handkerchief on the road there, and
that's her horse."

(To be continued.)



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Cabbage and Pimento Salad.

Drain and chop one small can of
pimentos, mix with shredded cab-
bage and serve with French dress-
ing and hard boiled eggs.

Cold Slaw.

Shred cabbage and pour over it
a dressing made of half cup cream,
two or four tablespoonfuls of vine-
gar and one or two tablespoons
sugar, pepper and salt.

Cauliflower-Tomato Salad.

Peel tomatoes, cut off stems and
scoop out seeds. Fill tomatoes with
bits of cold boiled cauliflower and
baste with French dressing. Put 1
tablespoon tomato catsup in mid-
dle of each and serve on lettuce.

Codfish Salad.

Soak one pound of codfish over
night, boil until tender and remove
skin and bones. Flake and mix
with diced boiled potatoes and two
chopped hard boiled eggs. Serve
on lettuce with mayonnaise.

TO REMOVE STAINS.

Grease or paraffin may be re-
moved by placing blotting paper
over and under the spot, and then
applying a hot iron. The grease is
absorbed by the paper. Fuller's
earth may be substituted for the
blotting paper and fruit stains for
the grease. Wax may be removed
with French chalk. Without using
heat white woollen shawls can be

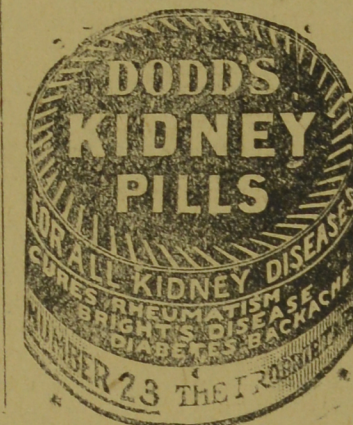
cleaned by sprinkling with potato
or rice starch, which absorbs the
dirt. Starch can also be used to
take out iodine. An old-fashioned
way of cleaning wall paper is to
treat it with dough. Painters use
bread as an eraser for charcoal
drawings; this is an absorption,
rather than a mechanical removal.
Velvet may be cleaned by sprink-
ling thoroughly with magnesia or
cornmeal, by covering and letting
stand twenty-four hours.

Finnan Haddie Salad.

Take a jarful of finnan haddie
and break into small bits. Mix
with green and red peppers. Serve
on lettuce with French dressing

HOUSEHOLD HELPS.

Woodenware which has any od-
or of the food that has been cook-
ed in it should be soaked in hot
water in which has been placed a
little soda.



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