

HOLTON OF THE NAVY

A STORY OF THE
FREEING OF CUBA

by Lawrence Perry
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Illustrations by
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SYNOPSIS.

Lieutenant Holton is detached from his command in the navy at the outset of the Spanish-American war and assigned to important secret service duty. While dining at a Washington hotel he detects a waiter in the act of robbing a beautiful young lady. She thanks him for his service and gives her name as Miss La Tossa, a Cuban patriot. Later he meets her at a ball. A secret service man warns Holton that the girl is a spy. Senior La Tossa chides his daughter for her failure to secure important information from Holton. She leaves for her home in Cuba. Holton is ordered to follow her. They meet on the Tampa train. Miss La Tossa tells Holton she is a Cuban spy and expresses doubt regarding the sincerity of the United States. Holton is ordered to remain at Tampa to guard the troop transports. He receives orders to land Miss La Tossa, who is considered a dangerous spy, on Cuban soil. At sea he is overtaken by another warship which takes Miss La Tossa aboard and Holton is ordered to return to Tampa. He saves the transports from destruction at the hands of dynamiters and reports to Admiral Sampson for further duty. Holton is sent to General Garcia's command in the guise of a newspaper correspondent to investigate Cuban plots against the American troops and to learn the plans of the Spanish navy.

CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

"Nevertheless," persisted his inquisitor, "I ask you what you would do. Come, come." Holton recognized by his manner a personage of some authority in the Cuban cause—"it would be so easy for you to say that until Cuba is absolutely free no drop of blood in your body is your own."

"It would be easy to say that," was the sad response, "but I have shed my blood. I am old. I have struggled and suffered for my country. In the intervention of the United States I see the answer to all my struggles and to all my prayers. I am like a man who has come to the end of a long journey. I see the brightness ahead, the load is eased from the back. God's hand is now at work in this island. And as his hand moves, so will I abide. He has sent the Americans here and he will send them away in good season after their work is done. If not, then so be it."

For a moment there was silence. Then Garcia spoke again.

"You have nothing to fear. It is my thought that unless our American friends make a speedy ending of this campaign they will be routed by disease, and if they do not fly they will die, surely and certainly. And thus even if I agreed with you in your contentions, I should still advocate leaving the matter to God."

"Time will tell. And now you must sleep, general. Who was that American," he added, "who remains with you?"

"An Englishman, a newspaper writer," was the reply.

"He is not English; he is American." "Admiral Sampson vouched for him. But at any rate, suppose he is an American? He might be that and still be a writer for the English press."

General Garcia arose decisively. "As you suggest," he said, "I must sleep. There is yet much before me."

"There is much yet before us all," grumbled the officer. "Good night, general."

As Garcia turned to his tent the man walked to the fire; he leaned down,



A Powerful Arm Was Thrown Across His Throat.

seized an ember and lighted a cigarette. The flames shone full upon his face.

With a half gasp Holton arose in his blanket, and then, as the fellow straightened up, he sank back upon the boughs. But his eyes never left the man's face.

At length, with quick motion, the Cuban turned toward Holton, who had just time to close his eyes. Thus he lay tense, listening for the sounds that would have caused him to spring to his feet—the sounds of the man's footsteps approaching him.

But the sounds did not come. As Holton at length opened his eyes he saw the man writing by the light of the fire upon a small pad lying on his knee.

"You are indeed a good waiter, my friend," muttered Holton to himself,

and rising from his blanket he walked noiselessly toward the fellow he had first seen in the dining-room at the New Willard.

So deeply was the man engrossed in his writing that Holton's movement was unnoticed by him. And for this Holton thanked him sincerely before he had gone two steps.

He acted upon impulse in rising from his blanket, and without any definite intention save that of accosting the man. But now the futility of doing this in the camp, with Garcia not yet asleep, and without any well-informed plans for dealing with him appealed to him forcibly. He stopped suddenly in his tracks and then stole back to his bed of boughs.

Holton's mind was in sore quandary as to what to do. Unquestionably this man held a high place in the esteem of Garcia, who just as certainly had no idea that he was a Spanish spy.

As to the conversation, Holton believed he had the key to that; the spy was engaged in the process of poisoning the minds of Cuban leaders against the Americans, a plot which, if carried forward successfully and rapidly, might seriously affect the present campaign, and at the same time have a decided tendency to give point to certain relations already strained with several powerful foreign nations.

One thing was sure, the moves of this man must be checkmated, and sharply. Just how was the question. Holton lay there deliberating what he ought to do for more than an hour, and still undecided when the spy settled things for him by slipping his pad in his pocket and walking toward his horse. He stood for a moment there, his head turned toward Garcia's little hut of leaves and grasses, and then mounting he rode off down the trail.

Holton now lost no time in deciding on his course. Obviously it was to the interests of his government that this man be watched, and so waiting for a minute until the bushes had closed behind the spy, he stealthily started in pursuit.

After leaving the lines, Holton quickened his steps, keeping well within the shadow of the bushes until he was within fifty feet of the rider. Presently the bottom of the mountain was reached, and the spy continued on through the mangia jungle. As he broke through into the open, Holton made a little detour and came out on the beach, crawling now, about seventy-five feet from where the man was standing, holding his horse by the bridle and gazing out over the bay, where could be made out the light of a dispatch boat.

As the officer watched him, the spy raised his hand, and a low but penetrating whistle broke the stillness of the night. A lantern waved from a craft in the bay, and in a few minutes the rattle of oars in their locks sounded.

As the boat came shoreward, Holton, now breathlessly interested, wriggled his way nearer the spy and flattened against the sand and shielded by small growths of chaparral, he awaited the arrival of the boat.

As it grated on the beach, a tall officer sprang out, and Holton had no difficulty in recognizing him as one of General Shafter's aids.

"Well, Montez," said the latter, "I thought you were never coming."

"I thought so, too," was the reply. "There was difficulty in getting out of the camp, but now I am here and I have information the general wishes."

"All right. What is it?"

"Callixto Garcia is not your friend. He is one of the leaders in a plan to attack you once you have rid Santiago province of the Spaniards. I can give you proof." The spy drew from his pocket the pad upon which he had been writing and, tearing off a sheet, handed it to the officer, who read it by lighting a match and holding it in front of the paper.

"That is a copy of a letter which General Garcia wrote tonight to General Castillo and General Rabi."

"Are you sure of this?"

"Absolutely. But I will say this much: The message, as I have it, is not word for word. I read it after he wrote it, for he showed it to me; after he fell asleep I wrote it from memory."

"Very well. Have you anything else to tell me? Will Garcia carry out the arrangements made with General Shafter this afternoon?"

"Oh, yes; he will. You will understand that nothing which will hinder American success against the Spaniards will be done; Garcia and the other Cuban generals are looking to the future."

"Very well; I'll report to the commander-in-chief. What are your future intentions?"

"I should like to accompany you to the Segaranca. General Shafter may have some questions, and, in any event, I shall feel safer at sea just at present."

"You see," the spy added, "my role as one of the leaders of the Cuban

Junta, coupled with my supposed belief in the absolute integrity and disinterestedness of the United States as regards Cuba, sometimes lead me into danger. Garcia, who is my friend, believes in me, but Castillo, I have reason to think, is suspicious. Garcia meets Castillo tomorrow, and so—" he shrugged his shoulders and lifted his hands.

"All right," grunted the American; "jump into the boat."

Before the spy obeyed, he turned for a moment and repeated his whistle. Then, in a very mild voice, he said:

"It is time, senior, for your salad—with dressing."

Holton, knowing the words were addressed to him, was on the point of scrambling to his feet when a powerful arm was thrown across his throat, throttling him, while, at the same time, his hands and feet were seized and bound in a twinkling. A gag was then slipped into his mouth, and he lay there helplessly, regarding the four figures who stood over him.

"What is it?" he heard the officer say.

"Merely," was the reply, "an inquisitive soldier from Garcia's camp. They bother me so—you have no idea."

"Well," was the laughing reply, "you certainly seem to know how to deal with them. Now, come on, if you are coming."

"Thank you; yes."

He delivered a volley of commands in Spanish, speaking so rapidly that Holton could not understand a word. The men replied in kind, and then the officer and the spy stepped into the boat and were rowed offshore.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Grim Announcement.

The men, who proved to be three gigantic negroes and a white man, attired in the blue drill uniform of a Spanish officer, with a little cockade in his felt hat, jerked Holton to his feet, cut the lashings about his ankles and hurried him toward the trail.

Finally, as hints of dawn appeared overhead, the party arrived at a small clearing where were picketed some score of horses, with their riders, evidently a contingent of Spanish cavalry.

There was a short conference, and then the gag was taken from Holton's mouth and he was lifted upon a pony. The cavalcade took up the trail which ran alongside the mountain, below the camp of Garcia, in the direction of Santiago.

As the sun rose, a halt was called in a little valley, and preparations were made for what Holton believed would be a stay of considerable duration.

It was then that for the first time a word was spoken directly to Holton. An officer—not the one who had figured in his capture, but the man in charge of the detachment—confronted the American as he sat on the ground, and, releasing his hands, placed a guard over him.

"You will have opportunity for two hours' rest," he said, bowing. "Then we shall proceed at once to Santiago."

"But why have I been captured?" protested Holton. "I am a non-combatant."

He produced his credentials as correspondent of the London Standard. The officer examined them carefully. Then he placed them in his pocket.

"I am convinced you are lying," he replied simply. "Our information concerning you is exceedingly accurate. For your sake I trust the papers may be found correct. For otherwise—" he shrugged his shoulders—"you are a spy."

A chill passed over Holton. He had not thought of that before. A spy! And in war time they had a summary way of dealing with such.

After a very meager breakfast, the men threw themselves upon the

ground, chatting and smoking, and Holton did likewise. He felt in its fullness the relief of having his hands free, and, in large measure, despite the guard standing over him and the men all about, he became possessed of greater confidence in his ability to meet this situation, the most dangerous that had ever confronted him.

Fearing, no doubt, the proximity of Garcia's men, the soldiers did not move until late afternoon, and then with great stealth, all talking in the ranks being rigidly silenced. Holton had had opportunity for several hours' sleep. He was thereby greatly refreshed, and, under reaction, his fears for himself were considerably lessened.

Dusk fell, and still the march continued. On through the night went the men, and without a stop until dawn, when camp was made in a clearing which had been cut where two of the mountain trails met and crossed. Here, as the heavens grew bright, fires were lighted, and a meal prepared, after which sentries were posted. Then the camp settled down for sleep.

Holton had no idea how many miles had been covered since his capture, but felt it must be a great many. Standing up he could now see far away over the hills the twinkling lights of Santiago, and these he could not help viewing with dread.

At nightfall the march was again taken up, and at dawn the force was within a few miles of the city. A squad was sent on ahead to report to General Linares, but came flying back in a few hours with messages to the effect that the soldiers were leaving for El Paso, and that the troops of the United States would shortly advance from Siboney.

There were other matters, too, in the papers brought by the messenger, and one of them seemed to concern Holton, for the officer, while reading it, glanced at him with a troubled face. At length he came up to Holton and drew him to one side.

"I am sorry to inform you," he said, "that I have orders here to hang you at once."

Holton stepped back as though he had been struck in the face.

"Hang me at once!" he cried.

"Those are my orders, signed by the commander-in-chief of this province."

"But there must be some mistake," Holton went on, "I am not a spy; but even if I were I certainly have done nothing to justify an act so unfair, inhuman and outrageous."

"I do not see how any mistake could have been made," came back the answer. "Here you see the warrant signed by Muller, the general's aide."

"Then General Linares did not sign that warrant?"

"No. It reads General Linares 'orders,' and is then signed by Muller."

"But surely—" Holton began.

"There is no time for argument, my brother. We are ordered to Guisamas and have no time to waste with you. I am sorry, but—" the fellow shrugged his shoulders and pointed to the order.

Holton's mind worked like lightning. The men were engaged in breaking camp and the one who had been guarding Holton had turned aside at the officer's approach, and now, with his back toward the two, was extracting a clip of bullets from his Mauser. Behind Holton was an apparently impenetrable jungle of mangia.

The muscles of his body grew tense, and then with all the skill and all the sureness of direction of the champion middleweight boxer at Annapolis, he sent his fist swiftly and silently into the officer's jaw. Without a sound the man crumpled to the ground. Holton stepped back into the thicket, was blocked a few feet from the trail, but exerting all his power, forced his way into the depths of the jungle.

During a full minute silence reigned in the camp. It was all of that period before the prostrate officer, hidden by the long grass, was discovered by Holton's guard. Then his outcry sounded through the clearing, and in another instant loud commands were being uttered and bullets were cutting branches of mangia on all sides of the fugitive American. Then followed the crashing of bodies through the maze of underbrush.

As he worked his way along a little lane, apparently formed by nature or by the deer that used to inhabit that section, opened before him, continuing for a clear quarter of a mile. This he took with the speed of one of the former denizens of the jungle, never letting up until he had traversed its length and had broken once more into the bushes.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

In France last year the births exceeded the deaths by 35,000.



THOR'S HAMMER STILL USED

English Fishermen Consider It a Charm Against Drowning—Some Other Peculiar Beliefs.

The fishermen of Whitby would never dream of venturing out of port without a little hammer-shaped bone, from the head of a sheep, known as "Thor's hammer," as this little object is a very special charm against drowning. The mole's foot is also a "sure" cure for toothache or cramp—according to locality. Amputated limbs are in some cases preserved so that the cripple may not be deficient in this respect in the next world.

At Scarborough an old peasant has come to be regarded as almost a wizard, for the country folks from round about come to him for relief from rheumatism. His "cure" consists of a copper bangle and ring, and on either end of the bangle two small-bore brass

cartridge cases are wedged. These charms are sold to the patient.

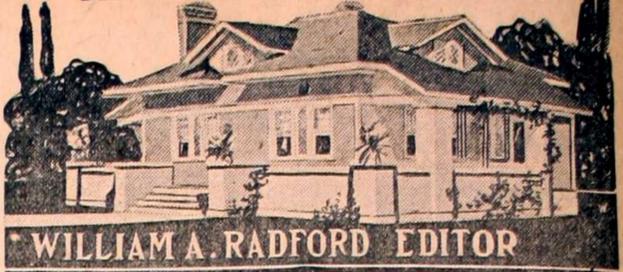
In Suffolk a girl always keeps her first tooth; then when she marries and has a child the tooth is suspended about the infant's neck during teething, as it is said to bring instant relief.

These superstitions mostly exist in the counties which are washed by the North sea. Doubtless they are survivals of the days of the bold Viking marauders.—Ireland's Own.

Nails Were Meant to Last.

F J Haskins of North Adams, Mass., has a collection of hand-made nails that were taken from an old house. The nails are all made of steel and are practically as good as when first driven into the wood. They are crude in shape and size and many of them have heads on only one side of the shaft. The nails have been in the building for forty years.

THE AMERICAN HOME



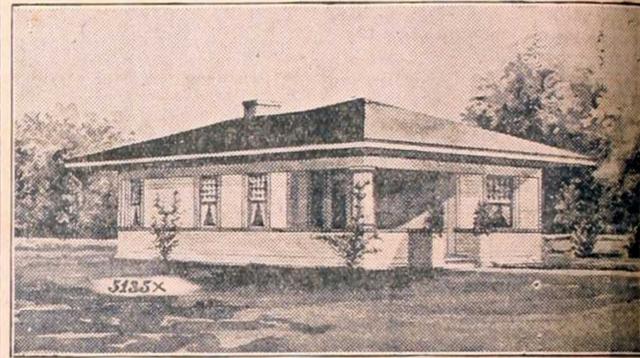
WILLIAM A. RADFORD EDITOR

Mr. William A. Radford will answer questions and give advice FREE OF COST on all subjects pertaining to the subject of building, for the readers of this paper. On account of his wide experience as Editor, Author and Manufacturer, he is, without doubt, the highest authority on all these subjects. Address all inquiries to William A. Radford, No. 1827 Prairie avenue, Chicago, Ill., and only enclose two-cent stamp for reply.

The first important work in building is the excavation for the foundation walls. All complete plans specify that trenches shall be left with natural bottoms, level and smooth for the reception of walls, piers, etc.

Not long ago a workman in digging a trench for a center wall in a large city block misread the directions and got the excavation a foot deeper than the specifications called for. The contractor called the owner's attention to it, as an honest man should, and offered to build the wall from the bottom up if the owner would pay the bare cost of the extra material; but this the owner refused to do. The contractor thereupon dumped the loose earth, the only thing he could do, and brought the bottom up to the depth required by the specifications. The building was completed and accepted by the owner. After a lapse of six months the center wall settled sufficiently to crack the plaster on every wall in the house clear to the third story.

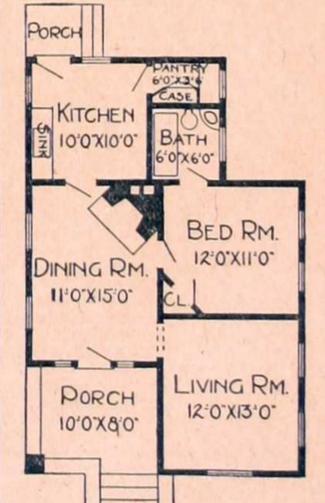
It was a block of flats occupied by six families. Three of the families moved out because they thought the building was unsafe to live in. This led to a lawsuit between the owner and the contractor. The contractor was able to prove that he went to the owner and offered to fill in from the



bottom, with masonry instead of dumping in earth. The court decided in favor of the contractor.

This incident is mentioned merely to call attention to the importance of showing a little common sense in the different parts of the building, from the foundation to the roof. It is not always best to stick hard and fast to every provision of the contract, especially when some accident arises that calls for the exercise of judgment. Of course a man does not want to be run over by anyone. Everyone in business finds out early in life that he must stand up for his rights or have them taken away from him. The old Bible admonition which instructed every man to accept a whack on both cheeks will not work in this country as society is organized at present.

One thing the owner needs to have an eye on is the excavation for foundation and drains. The workmen are not interested in the little details the same as the owner, and the health of the workmen and their families is not



Floor Plan.

at stake afterwards, as the escape of a little sewer gas here and there will not mean anything to them. You make a solid contract, and the contractor may live up to it; but you have no guarantee that he will do so, and you cannot get at the underground details after the trenches are filled. So the only way to know that a job is done right is to inspect it as the work goes along. Of course, you can hire a man to do this, and you usually depend on such a man especially if he is a stranger and does not know the con-

tractor. I prefer to have an inspector who is a stranger in the neighborhood, a man who is personally not acquainted with any man on the job. I am not a pessimist and have not lost faith in humanity; but there are so many details, vital details, about the building of a house that no one of them can be overlooked with safety.

Now, here is the design of a house that is a most pleasing one for a young couple just starting out. It has four rooms and a bath. The width is 24 feet 6 inches, and the length is 36 feet. It has an aspect of coziness and neatness, and appeals to the artistic sense. This house will cost very little; and when it is complete, it will look so neat that all your friends will be talking about it.

There is a little porch where you can sit out evenings, and this opens directly into the dining room. The living room is in the front, and immediately back is the bedroom.

This house should be built on a large lot; and if it is so constructed, there will be abundant opportunity for the display of shrubbery that will enhance the appearance of the place.

ELECTRICITY TO KILL RATS

City of Tacoma Very Up-to-Date in Its Efforts to Rid Itself of Wharf Pests.

Poetic and pictorial as the Pied Piper method of ridding a city of rodents may be, Tacoma, Wash., has decided that it is no longer possible to depend on it, and instead of an inspired stranger of picturesque presence who wields a strange power over



the rats and mice of the community it has set up a new kind of electric rat trap, especially invented for the purpose of exterminating the thousands of rats which infest the city wharves.

Mr. William Hall, dock superintendent of Tacoma, and Mr. Harry T. Abbott, city electrician, are the joint inventors of the new municipal rat trap, which they have refused to have patented because they think that it should be on the market at as low a price as possible, so that other municipalities may use it for the extermination of their wharf rats. It is of the greatest importance that the rats around the docks should be exterminated, because of their disease-carrying powers. One object of the city officials of Tacoma in the installation of the new traps is to stop up one more avenue whereby bubonic plague may enter the port.

The trap consists of a metal plate about ten inches in diameter, to which are attached two-inch uprights for holding the bait. The plate is raised above the floor level, and the rat rises on its hind feet and places its forepaws on the plate. This tips the plate, the tipping turns on the electricity and the rat is shocked to death.

The trap is placed below the floor, on the wooden girders, which are the favorite hunting grounds of the rats. In the baggage room above stairs a light burns when the trap is set. When Mr. Rat himself makes the connection which turns on the electricity which shocks him to death there is a little click in this upper room which shows that the deed has been done. It is not possible for the rat to get away with the bait or even to touch it without putting its paws on the plate, and its death is absolutely sure to follow its attempt to possess itself of the odorous rat dainties that are placed on the metal spikes.

London's Ancient Houses. One hundred years ago the custom house in London was destroyed by fire, and immense property and valuable records lost. The structure had been built to replace the one opened during the reign of Charles I, which was burned down in 1718. The first custom house in London on a large scale was erected as early as the year 1304. A yet larger one was built some 250 years later, and was destroyed by fire in 1666. The present edifice was built after the fire of 100 years ago and was opened in 1817. It occupies a commanding site fronting the Thames and is one of the most imposing public buildings in the British metropolis. Its total cost was about \$1,000,000. It was built throughout of so-called fire-proof material.