Adventure

June 1st

Published twice a month

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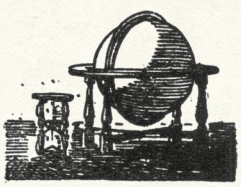

Adventure

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Arthur Sullivant Hoffman
EDITOR

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Decorations by ROCKWELL KENT

Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.

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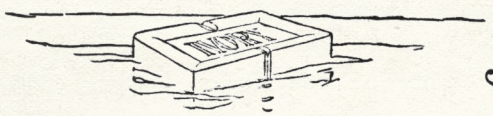

Always in sight

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Advertising section continued in rear of book

CHANG CHUNG CHANG

By Henry Herbert Knibbs

I SAW red wings in a red war sky.
I saw little men, little men go by,
And I heard the click, clack, click of feet,
All day long down a winding street.
I saw a throng on the temple stairs,
And fluttering hands and fluttering prayers,
And no one wept and no one sang
As a big gong bellowed Chang Chung Chang!
The big bronze gong in the war-god's hand
Boomed Chang Chung Chang in a wondering land.

The little men trod a way that wound
Past empty field and burial mound;
Filled were the furrows of hoof and wheel
With flowerless reeds and thorns of steel,
And The Great Blue Dragon writhed and rolled
On a war-torn flag of wavering gold,
While from Hong Kong City to Sin Kiang
The big gong bellowed Chang Chung Chang!
The big bronze gong in the war-god's hand
Boomed Chang Chung Chang in a wondering land.

Little men North and little men South
Marched and marched to the dragon's mouth,
Thrust and fell in withering flame,
Vanishing winrows, on they came,
And sank from sight in the purple tide
That poured from the dragon's wounded side;
And over the doom a challenge rang.
The big gong bellowing Chang Chung Chang!
The big bronze gong in the war-god's hand
Boomed Chang Chung Chang in a wondering land.

Little men, little men, ask not why
One shall live and a million die.
Tomorrow the grass, the flowers, the grain
Will cover the fields in the springtime rain,
And fluttering hands and fluttering prayers
Will throng again on the temple stairs,
Forgotten the shattering clash and clang,
And only a memory, Chang Chung Chang.

One shall reign and a million die . . .
Little men, little men, ask not why
The big bronze gong in the war-god's hand
Boomed Chang Chung Chang in your far-away land.

Red Symbols

By

HARRY G. HUSE

NO, SIR, it won't take no time at all, now 'at he's got the insides out of the carbureter and can work at them over at the bench there.

You can come in the office and set down, if you're a mind to. I got chairs in there to set down, and a ladies' rest-room.

At that, I guess it's cooler out here where the breeze gits a sweep through that back door there and out the front. It's cooler out here all right, as you say. Anyway, the seats in a fine big car like this are more comfortable, I guess, than the chairs in the office there. Only I thought it might be kind of dusty out here for the lady.

Yes, sir, I can understand your bein' in a hurry. I told him to make it as snappy as he could. It's natural, I guess, for you to be in a hurry. I don't know as I can blame you. Most ever'body drivin' up to the Park hurries through here 'thout stoppin'. They don't stop 'less it's for gas or oil, or they have some trouble like you done.

I often say to my mechanic there—"Deef Smith" I call him—I often say to Deef Smith, only he can't hear me, but I talk to him just the same when they ain't no one else to talk to, I say to Deef Smith that you can't hardly blame the tourists for not stoppin' here and spendin' more money with us.

You can't blame them, I tell Deef Smith, for wantin' to git into the mountains where you can see somethin' green and growin'. Sometimes we git kind of tired of lookin' at nothin' but dry bunchgrass and sagebrush ourselves, and we're used to it, as the feller says.

Last year we fixed up the tourist camp across there for folks to stop and spend the night, if they're a mind to. Maybe you noticed it when you come by. We cut all the sagebrush off that piece of ground there and put up that sign "Free Tourists Camp" and that water barrel that we fill up with water when anybody wants to camp there.

It took us two-three days to do it. I thought maybe you noticed it when you come by.

We fixed it up to git people to stop and camp there, and maybe buy oil or gas or a new tire. But they don't no one hardly ever use it. They was a few at first who'd drove all day and couldn't make the last fifty miles to the mountains. We filled up the water barrel and tried to make them feel to home. Only it seemed like Deef Smith kind of scared them, him bein' part Indian and scarred up thataway.

It'll take him 'bout twenty-five to thirty minutes. My guess would be not more than twenty-five to thirty minutes. You couldn't git the job done no faster anywhere than Deef Smith there will do it. No, sir! Not even in a big city garage, where I guess you're used to havin' your work done on a toney, high-priced car like this here.

No faster or no better, no, sir, though I do say it myself as shouldn't. That sign tells the truth even if it does put it in a kind of humorous way. That big sign up on the front of the garage I mean. I thought probably you noticed it when you drove in.

Most ever'body that stops here notices

Of a latter day Indian who went to war

that sign and kind of jokes about it. That is, they joke about the words bein' kind of humorous thataway. I take the credit for it 'though I can't exactly claim it's original with me. One time when I'm up to the Falls I meet a tourist that's come out to the Park in a Ford from Ohio and he tells me 'bout seein' a sign like that back in South Dakota, or maybe it was Indiana. Some one of those States back there anyway.

He tells me about it, as I say, when he learns I'm in the garage business, and we have a good laugh together.

I thought it was so good I put it right down on the back of a letter I had in my pocket, and when I git back I give it to Deef Smith, him bein' handy at ever'-thin', and wrote down on the little pad he carries 'round with him what I wanted, and give him a brush and a can of red paint and he painted it up there. I thought probably you noticed it when you drove in.

I didn't tell him to paint nothin' but what was on the back of the letter, and underneath it "Garage" and "Virgil L. Kimes"—that's my name—"Proprietor." But after he gits done with the letterin' he goes right on absent-minded-like and paints all them funny-lookin' little things in the blank spaces on each side. I thought maybe you noticed them, 'though they don't show up so plain now they got

faded. Some of the tourists say they give the place atmosphere.

As I was sayin' he started out paintin' them like he didn't hardly know what he was doin'. It would of give you the creeps to see him. Yes, sir, it would of give you the creeps like it done me. He had a look on his face just like a feller I used to know down in Texas that was what they call a—well, a sleep-walker. A man that walks in his sleep, that is. He was lookin' at them little pictures like he didn't know where they come from. Like they was just runnin' out of the end of his brush, and he was as surprized to see them as anybody else.

But pretty soon he waked up and got wild-lookin' and worked away like he was mad. He'd got some of the red paint on his face where he tried to wipe off the sweat, a big streak like a knife cut clean 'cross his forehead and another down his cheek and under his chin where he's already got a bad scar.

I wanted to tell him to quit and come down, but he looked so fierce-like I didn't hardly dast to. I tell you there for a while it give me the willies. It sure give me the willies, as the feller says.

I just let him go, and I'm glad now I done it. Folks that stops here says it gives the place atmosphere. I 'member one woman 'specially with her husband from Terre Haute, Indiana. She says they're ever so cute, Mr. Kimes, and they give your place here atmosphere.

You see them's gen-you-ine Indian picture writings, and they tell a story. Yes, sir, they're gen-you-ine all right. They was a professor stopped here that makes a study of such things. He makes a study just of Indian writings and weapons and things like that. He spent a whole day lookin' at them pictures. He said they was as good as any the Railroad Company's got on the walls of the big hotels up to the Park. Only these of mine was more interestin', he says, because they had to do with modern events.

He wouldn't believe at first Deef Smith done them. He said he was too civilized. He tried to git him to make some more while we was watchin'. But Deef Smith just shook his head.

As I told the professor there wasn't no reason why Deef Smith shouldn't of done them. He's really Indian, as I guess you noticed. That is, he's part Indian. I'd say at least a half. What we call a "breed" out here, anyway.

Deef Smith ain't really his name. Deef Smith's just what I call him after the county I was born in down in Texas. It seemed kind of humorous, as the feller says, to call him Deef Smith, him bein' deef thataway. He don't mind, 'cause he can't hear me. I guess probably he ain't got no name—that is, no real name like a white man. Though at that they must of called him somethin' in the Army.

You had a long ways to come to git all the ways out here from New Jersey. I see you was from New Jersey before you drove in the door. I see the license plate. I got so I can tell the different license plates far as I can see them. Tell what State they're from, that is.

You wouldn't hardly believe it now but there ain't a State in the Union that ain't been by here since the Park opened this season. No, sir, not a State!

I often say to Deef Smith that you wouldn't hardly believe it. You wouldn't hardly believe they ain't a State that ain't been by. But I'm keepin' track out front there on a board. You can look at the board and see for yourself if you're a mind to. We had a Arkansas last week Sunday and a Rhode Island day before yesterday evenin' and that finished the count.

We git a lot of New Yorks and New Jerseys. We git folks from ever' place since all the magazines been printin' stories 'bout the Park. Give them time and ever'body in the country'll go by here, I tell Deef Smith.

I really tell him, that is. "You might as well be here as any place," I write down on his pad when he's fixin' to move on ag'in and I can't git no other mechanic that's willin' to stay here. "Give the feller time, whoever he is," I write, "and

he'll come along. You'll find him here quick as any place."

For a little spell I'm worried I shouldn't of told him. That's when he started lookin' sharp in the men's faces that come along. It kind of give me the willies. Some day the right feller might come along. He ain't looked in yours yet, has he?

You'd know it all right if he had. Sticks his face 'most into yours and looks sharp like he'd look clean through you. He's kind of got over it a little, though, lately. Some days he won't hardly look at nobody at all.

I understand one of these here cars costs a lot of money. It costs a lot of money to buy, I hear, and a lot of money to run. Times must be pretty good back there where you come from?

I guess maybe you're a big business man back there in New Jersey where you come from, out this way to see the country?

Maybe a professional man then, out here on a vacation? That's really what I thought in the first place. He's a professional man, I say to myself when you first drive in here. A lawyer, maybe, or an architect—or maybe a doctor? He might be a doctor, I says to myself when I first looked at you. Only I thought you was a big business man when I see the make of car you was drivin'.

It's a nice car, ain't it, madam? I guess you must enjoy ridin' 'round in a nice car like this. We don't see cars like this out here very often. I drive a Ford myself.

We ain't never done no work in here before on a car like this. Mostly we work on Fords and Dodges and Chevrolets and Buicks.

But you don't need to worry 'bout the kind of a job we'll give you. No, sir, you don't need to fret. Deef Smith's worked on every car they is, I guess, and airplane motors too, when they was givin' him vocational trainin'. After he got out of the War and they give him vocational trainin'. They give him trainin' 'cause he come out of the War deef. He was stone deef. His eardrums was busted.

You must be a sportin' man, mister. That is, you must like huntin'. I see you got a rifle slung up there back of the seat. It looks like one of these here twenty-two high-powers. It's one of these here twenty-two high-powers, ain't it?

I guess maybe you brought it along to take a shot at coyotes. That's a good gun for coyotes all right. I see a feller over to Square Butte pick off a coyote with a gun just like that a good three hundred yards away. You should of seen him roll him.

It's a good all 'round gun for anythin', I guess, shootin' them soft-nosed bullets. You could of put your two fists into the hole this feller's gun over to Square Butte tore out of that coyote on the far side from where it went in. Yes, sir! Both your two fists! You wouldn't believe a little bullet like that could make so big of a hole!

A gun like that's a handy thing for a man to have along with him on a trip, I always said. Drivin' along through this country he'll git a lot of shots at coyotes if he's sharp and keeps the gun ready loaded so's he can shoot in a hurry if he has to.

Some folks I know is dead set ag'in carryin' a gun loaded in a car like that. Afraid it will go off accidental-like. But that's a good safe place to carry it up there back of the seat.

Yes, sir, that sure is a nice little gun! You watch sharp after you git into the foothills and maybe you'll git a shot at a bobcat. A gun like that's as good for bobcats as it is for coyotes. It's a good gun for anythin'. A man feels more comfortable to have a gun like that in the car in case he runs into any trouble along the road.

Only they ain't no trouble out here no more but engine trouble. They was a feller from Ioway come along and sprung that one on me and we had a good laugh. No trouble but engine trouble! I thought that was pretty good.

You're dead right, I tell this feller from Ioway when we had got through laughin'. You'd never think they used to

fight Indians all along this trail. They's three white men, they tell me, buried in that little piece of cottonwood timber back there where you crossed the Marias. White men that was campin' there 'bout fifty years ago and was shot by an Indian. They'd been drunk, I hear, in to Fort Benton, and got to shootin' and shot an Indian in the leg.

They was so drunk, I hear, they didn't even know they shot him. But the Indian follered them out of town a couple of weeks later and killed them when they was camped for the night there in a little patch of brush.

He shot them and scalped them and then run off their horses.

I guess they used to have some high old times, as the feller says, along this trail. But them days, as the feller says, is gone forever. They ain't nothin' ever happens nowadays.

I often say to Deef Smith there that they ain't nothin' never happens. You'd never think, I often say, that white men used to shoot Indians and Indians used to kill and scalp white men all along this trail. They ain't even no more Indians here no more, 'less it's here and there a part-Indian like Deef Smith!

Funny thing how the Indian blood'll show up in a half-breed. You take Deef Smith there, for instance. I told you somethin' 'bout him already.

You take him out there in front on the scaffold that time, with red paint smeared on his face, paintin' them Indian pictures. Or you take him evenin's in that little coal-shed he's got fixed up to live in, in back there of the shop. He stays back there in that little coal-shed.

You take him there evenin's sometimes, as I say, like when I've peeked in the cracks to see what he's doing in there talkin' and mutterin' to hisself. Well sir, you wouldn't think he had any white blood in him! No, sir, to see him like he was one time, with his clothes all off and streaks of red and yeller on his body and feathers in his hair you wouldn't think he'd been to Hoboken, New Jersey and to France and had got vocational trainin' in a school in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. You wouldn't believe he was the same feller that's workin' quiet and handy-like over there at the bench.

It took me quite a spell to figger out what was the matter of him. I was over there peekin' and listenin' 'most every night. I got things put together pretty well my own self, hearin' ever'thin' he was sayin'. Then the professor come along and read them picture writin's. He was a smart feller all right, that professor. His name was Hinsdale, L. E. Hinsdale—maybe you know him. He works for some big college back there in the East. Comin' from the East I thought you might of happened to of met him some time.

He was sure a smart feller, that professor. He reads them pictures and then I tell him what I already seen and heard, and we figgered the thing out together. Him and me together. We find out who Deef Smith's lookin' for and why. We'd been real worried if they was any chance he'd ever meet him.

Them pictures start back quite a ways and tell a little 'bout his parents. His mother's a full-blood Blackfoot. His father's a worthless white man. At least the pictures show him drunk all the time. The kid's scared of his old man and sticks close to his mother. She starts with him early, I guess, and fills him plumb full of Indian stuff. They ain't nothin' to show he ever herded much with white people.

He's down south of here somewhere workin' for a cattleman when the draft gits him. He's workin' on a big cattle ranch there, ridin' fence. That's a good life for an Indian, as I tell Professor Hinsdale, ridin' fence there on a ranch. It's better'n layin' 'round on the reservation or walkin' 'round all dressed up in feathers for the tourists to look at up there to the Park.

He's got a horse and a saddle and a pair of angora chaps and a rifle, and he's ridin' fence, as I say, so he's mostly off by hisself. He's not bothered by the other cowpunchers and he's happy.

He's ridin' all day long, and sleepin' out

nights, and he's enjoyin' it. The professor says the picture writin' 'bout that part of his life is almost what you would call poetry. He's ridin' through foothills and mountains where his mother's folks have come and hunted in the old days, and he's seein' sights and hearin' sounds that he likes.

Hearin' sounds 'specially. The professor says he's got a lot of that down in the pictures—coyotes howlin' on hill-tops, and singin' birds in the service-berry bushes, and wind in the pine trees. He's happy all right and ain't got a grudge ag'in no one in them days, the professor says.

Then the War come along and the draft must of got him. I guess he don't know what it's all about. I guess he ain't never been to school and ain't never heard of the French or the Roosians or the Germans. He's herded on a train with a bunch of other fellers and put in a camp and give a gun and a bayonet.

He likes the bayonet 'cause he shows it a lot in the pictures. You could see the bayonet real plain in his hand in a lot of the pictures before they kind of faded. Red paint don't seem to hold its color much out here.

He's there in camp and then the officers start doin' somethin' to him. Not his reg'lar officers but the ones I hear him callin' the medicine-men. I hear him talkin' a lot about them nights and I tell the professor and he says it must of been the doctors and these here inoc'lations they give all the soldiers so they won't take the small-pox or the typhoid fever.

You know what I mean—where they shoot somethin' into your arm so you won't git the typhoid fever?

You know all about that?

Well that's what it was, all right—inoc'lations. The medicine-men, I hear him say, jab little poisoned spears into him. He tries to fight them off but some other soldiers hold him. They're tryin' to kill him, he thinks, 'cause he's an Indian. He knows the spears are poisoned 'cause his arm swells up like a rattlesnake had bit him and he is sick. He is very sick and would of died from the poisoned spears the officers jab in him, only he makes big medicine with some things in a medicine-pouch his mother's give him before she died.

Well, after that he's afraid of the medicine-men, as he calls them. Then he sees somethin' that makes him more afraid. One day he sees inside a big building in the camp where the medicine-men are always goin'. He sees a lot of soldiers layin' sick in long rows and a medicine-man stoopin' over them and then he sees some soldiers carry out a man that's dead.

'Course if any one took time to explain things to him he'd of knowed that was a hospital and them doctors was there to help men—not to kill them. But no one talks to him much, me and the professor figger, him bein' an Indian thataway, and silent. He's so silent-like they don't know what's goin' on inside his head.

Just like now, you never know to look at him what he's thinkin'. You can't never tell what's goin' on inside an Indian's head.

Well, next thing we know he's in a new camp where the medicine-men don't seem to bother him. He's learnin' how to shove his bayonet through bundles of branches and jerk it out ag'in, and how to burrow in the ground like the prairie-dog and the gopher, and how to throw what he calls the "little iron ball that makes the great thunder," and how to creep through barb-wire fences that are like all the fences he has rode in Montana all tangled into one.

Only all this is make-believe, like the make-believe of Blackfoot war-dances.

Then pretty soon he's moved ag'in and crosses the water in a boat with a lot of other soldiers. You can still see that plain out there on the sign. He crosses the water, but before they git on the boat the medicine-men come and walk along in front of them and look them all over sharp-like, and he knows they've made some new kind of bad medicine 'cause later, on the water, an evil spirit enters into his body and the other

soldiers' bodies too, and they are all very sick. Seasick, you understand.

Well, he gits over that like he did over the inoc'lations by makin' medicine with his medicine-pouch, and pretty soon he's burrowin' in the ground ag'in and creepin' through more barb-wire fences. Only now it ain't no longer make-believe.

They've give him somethin' he likes better than the bayonet, a shorter thing with three edges, all sharp, which slips into a man more easy and ain't so apt to stick comin' out, and has a thick band of steel over the knuckles all covered with sharp points like a war-club so he can smash in a man's face with one blow of his fist. He's drawed that real big and life-like on the sign out there and put a lot of death-marks by it.

Now and ag'in he sees medicine-men doin' things that scares him. They's some of them in deep caves in the ground, with knives, cuttin' and cuttin' at the bodies of wounded soldiers. He sees a lot of soldiers carried out of these caves dead after the medicine-men have been a-cuttin' them.

But the medicine-men don't even look at him and he thinks they don't know that he's there. Mostly he stays in his own burrow in the daytimes and don't only go out at night. He goes out when it's dark, with some others, and creeps through the barb-wire and crawls into trenches and machine-gun pits and kills the Germans he finds there and comes back. Once he finds one with hair long enough to scalp.

I guess maybe that's too strong for the lady. I mean I seen you kind of shudder, madam. Yes' ma'am, the same Deef Smith you see workin' over there at the bench. I guess maybe you don't want to hear the rest?

Well, pretty soon when he's creepin' through the barb-wire a bullet comes and hits him in the arm. But he don't tell no one and the medicine-men don't ever know it. He makes medicine with the medicine-pouch his mother's give him, and for a spell his shoulder is stiff so he has to creep slower and kill the Germans with his left hand instead of his right. But after awhile he gits all well ag'in.

Then they ain't in the trenches no more, but back where it is quiet and they ain't no fightin'—only what he calls a big war-dance—make-believe fightin' on empty trenches all laid out like the German line. And then when they got their war-dance finished a great war-party sets out 'long all the roads in ever' direction far as you can see, In front and behind and on both sides far as you can see.

Pretty soon he is fightin' ag'in, but different fightin' now from what he done before when he was creepin' and crawlin' and killin' quiet-like, in the night.

Now he is fightin' in the daytime, out in the open, with big thunders all 'round tearin' men to pieces, and machine-guns like the poundin' of all the war drums in the world. Now there's men screamin' all 'round him and smoke and blood and bad smells so that he has to put on the war-mask that hangs 'round his neck and makes a man look more fierce and more terrible than the war paint.

And then he's down on the ground in the mud, with blood tricklin' from his legs and four holes in them where the machine-gun bullets have caught him. Before the pictures faded you could see them bullet-holes real plain. I see the scars too, one time, on his legs.

Well, he can still drag hisself a little and he's hitchin' along, tryin' to keep up with the others and keep away from the fellers that picks up the wounded soldiers and carries them back to the medicine-men. Then the shrapnel gits him. Two pieces tears him across the face where that scar is now and another goes through his coat and hurts him bad inside.

He can't crawl no more now. He just has to lay where he is. But he manages to git that three-edged knife of his handy where he can use it when they take him to the medicine-men.

Then big shells start fallin' near him and then comes the big thunder which is the last thing he hears. Professor Hinsdale and me, we figger out that was when his eardrums was busted.

Next thing he knows he's in a cot in a big room with his legs and his body all bound up. There's a white squaw wipin' away blood from up 'round one of his ears where the doctor—the medicine-man he always calls him—is stickin' somethin' sharp into his flesh and pullin' a string through the holes to torture him.

He ain't got no strength but he tries to fight off the medicine-man just the same. He's so weak they don't have no trouble holdin' him. And then when he's had to give up and lay there and let them go on with the torture it comes to him what the medicine-man has really done to him. He can see the white squaw talkin' to the doctor and the doctor talkin' back to her and their lips movin' but he can't hear nothin' they say and he ain't never heard nothin' since. The medicine-man, he figgers, has jabbed him in the ears and sent him into the big silence.

The big silence, that's what he calls it. The big silence! He ain't never goin' to hear no more! And he's too weak to do anythin' but lie there. The medicine-man comes in ever' day and does some more work on him. Deef Smith tries to figger out some way to kill him, but he's weak and besides he ain't got nothin' to do it with.

Once he manages to break a glass and put a big jagged piece of it under his pillow. He figgers that when the doctor stoops over he'll grab his neck with one hand and cut his throat with the other. He's learned there in the trenches how easy it is to kill a man. But the white squaw finds the glass and takes it away from him.

I guess maybe it makes you kind of nervous to think of him lyin' there that-away waitin' to kill the doctor when he bends over him. Well, he's still waitin' to kill him if he gits a chance. That's why he's lookin' in people's faces. The doctor gits transferred before Deef Smith can do anythin' to him. At least he don't come to the hospital no more. And when Deef Smith gits out he can't find him nowhere. He's been lookin' and hopin' to find him ever since.

I guess it makes you fidget to look at him workin' so quiet and easy over there at the bench and to re'lize he's still got murder in his heart. I don't know as I blame you, mister. It made me and Professor Hinsdale fidget, too.

Mostly, you see, Deef Smith's as mild a feller as you'd meet up with anywhere. And he sure is a good mechanic. It was lucky for me when he come wanderin' along like he did and I got him to stop and work for me.

But he's got it in for that doctor. You see that little machinist's hammer he carries 'round there in that loop on the leg of his coveralls. It's a natural 'nough thing for him to carry. He uses it a lot about his work. But he's got the round end ground down on the emery-wheel, sharp-like. He carries it 'round with him all the time, usin' one end on his work and keepin' the other ready for that doctor if he ever meets him.

Yes, there was a while there it kind of made me nervous. It still scares me when he looks sharp in people's faces. They ain't one chance in a million, Professor Hinsdale says, of his ever findin' the doctor. Still you can't never tell. They was a tourist come through here one day that lived right next door to my brother down in Texas. It's a small world after all, as the feller says.

No, sir, I don't know what kind of a lookin' feller was this doctor. No, sir, I ain't never heard Deef Smith say. But he'll know him all right even if he meets him twenty years after. That's the kind of a thing an Indian don't forgit.

No, sir, he won't make no mistake. He studies that doctor's face close all the time he's layin' there weak and helpless. He studies it close so he won't forgit. He don't never know his name, not bein' able to hear nothin'. But names don't mean much to an Indian anyway.

No, sir, I ain't got no idea at all what the doctor looked like. No, sir, he ain't never said nothin' 'bout how he looked. I hear him tell plenty 'bout what he's goin' to do to him when he finds him. When I'm peekin' and listenin' I hear

him tell how he's goin' to hit him with the hammer and stick a knife into his ears. But I ain't never hear him say a word of what he looked like.

I wisht I did. I and Professor Hinsdale both wisht we knowed what he looked like. Or that we could find out his name and where he lived. We wisht we knowed so's we could write him.

We figgered out the doctor ought to be told about this. Probably he ain't got no idea they's an Indian looking for him. He's as bad off as them three fellers I told you about, buried in that patch of brush along the Marias. Workin' on so many fellers that was wounded over there in the Army the whole thing would be a big surprize to him. Like as not he couldn't even remember this partic'lar feller.

No, sir! As I say before, they ain't no way of tellin' what he looked like. He might be any doctor that was in the Army and went to France. Deef Smith don't mention the place where the hospital was located or even where it was he was fightin'. I guess he never took the trouble to find out.

Yes, sir, we thought of that. But you couldn't tell nothin' 'bout how he looked from them pictures. You couldn't even tell when they was fresh and bright. Them pictures are just sym-somethin' or other—symbolical, that was what Professor Hinsdale said. They just got two marks for legs and two more for arms and a round head. Up over them's a sign that shows the doctor's rank.

Yes, sir, I 'member what it is.

Yes, sir, it's an oak leaf. You're pretty good at guessin'. Or maybe you noticed the sign when you come in.

That's what it was, an oak leaf standin' for a major. That's what it was all right. I 'member. A major. That's what Professor Hinsdale said. But that ain't enough information to work on. They must of been a coupla thousand doctor majors in the War.

It's 'bout time he had that finished. I guess you're nervous and frettin' to git gone. If you'll excuse me a minute I'll go over and see how he's comin'.

He's 'most through. He's got the valve fixed and he's just waitin' for the solder to set there on the float. He'll be over here in 'bout a minute. It won't take him more'n five minutes to finish you all up.

I guess you misunderstood what I was sayin' 'bout your maybe gittin' a shot at a bobcat. I didn't mean 'round here. I meant thirty or forty miles further along, after you hit the foothills.

I thought maybe you misunderstood, seein' you gittin' your gun ready. It always makes me kind of nervous seein' a man handlin' a gun in a car like that. I'm like the feller says—I figger a gun is dangerous 'thout lock, stock or barrel. A man'll git to frettin' sittin' still for a half-hour with nothin' to occupy your hands or mind. I guess maybe you feel better monkeyin' with that gun.

Well, he's comin' now. It won't be much longer.

You can see how Indian he looks now'at he's faced this way.

See that scar I told you 'bout, there on his face. If he'd look up now you'd see where it runs clean down under his chin. Looks like it must of pretty near took his head off.

I bet that doctor had a time sewin' it up. I'd like for him to look up now so's you could see it. You'll see it when he looks at you before you go.

Yes, sir, you can pay now and be ready to go soon's he's finished. It'll be about a dollar. Much obliged to you. I'll have to slip in the office and git the change outa the safe. I don't carry that much 'round with me. That's a sweet-soundin' motor you got all right. Jest a minute. I'll be back time he gits a piece of waste over there and wipes off the grease he got there on the hood.

HEY, Deef Smith, he's backed out already! He's in a hurry. Come on outside here with that waste!

Hey, mister!

Well, what do you know 'bout that? He's goin' right off 'thout even waitin'. He see me comin' too, 'cause he was lookin' back just as you come out the

door. That car sure's got a quick pick-up. Hey, Deef Smith, you plumb fool, what do you think you're doin'? That fool Indian must be plumb crazy runnin' after that car like he thought he'd catch it.

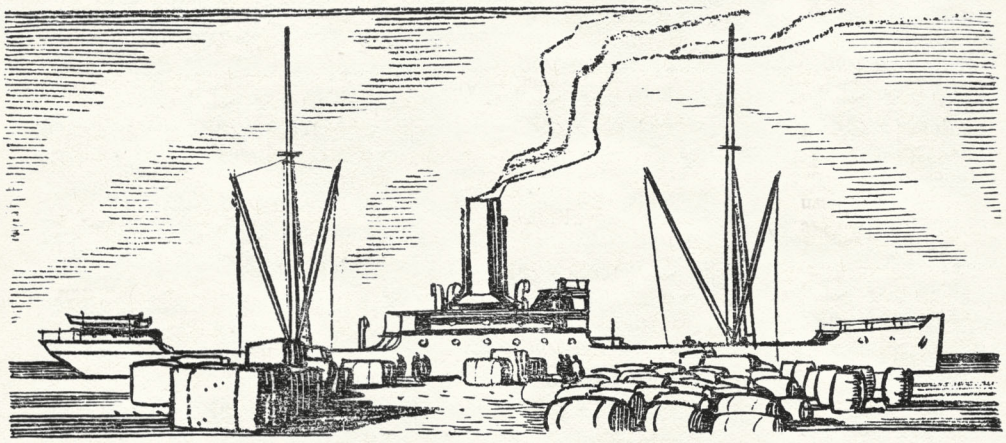
You plumb fool, you might as well come back!

YOU might of knowed you couldn't outrun an automobile! What's the matter of you?

You left your hammer layin' between his fender and his hood?

Well, set down and git your breath and don't worry 'bout your hammer. Here, let me write it on your pad.

We can afford to lose the hammer. That fellow sure was in a hurry. He went off and left me nineteen dollars change.



The mate seeks a souvenir of Lisbon

Green Jade

By W. TOWNEND

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

THE S. S. *Rose of Araby* lay alongside the quay, discharging cargo at Ste. Apolonia which is on Lisbon waterfront.

The third mate had toothache and went ashore to visit a dentist.

His tooth having been extracted, without gas, he proceeded to tramp aimlessly through the streets until such time as the ache in his jaw might be appeased.

And so he climbed the steep Rua de Dom Pedro V and sat on a bench in the Praza Rio de Janiero where there is a garden with a statue symbolic of the Portuguese Republic and a medallion on rock to Franca Borges, and an open-air free library under a tree and green lawns fighting gallantly against the rays of the sun, and masses of flowers and palm trees, and a pond and fountain.

A girl with red hair approached slowly, and the third mate caught his breath and stared at her in surprize and delight.

She was immature in her build and almost painfully thin, but in a simple, childlike way beautiful. She walked with a strange air of aloofness as if in her own mind she were alone. Her soft gray eyes gazed straight ahead of her. Apparently she was quite unconscious of the open admiration of the men and the equally open hostility and criticism of the women. Her clothes were poor. She was dressed in a plain frock of some lilac cotton stuff, with white thread stockings and rather clumsy black shoes. She was straight-backed and taller than most Portuguese girls, which alone would have made the third mate look at her, but she was also bareheaded and she had the most glorious red chestnut hair imaginable, bobbed and tossed in disorder back from her small oval face. Her complexion was pale, but from her thin cheekbones right up to her eyes was a soft rose

color; her features were delicately modeled; her lips, too large perhaps in view of her short, straight nose, were their own natural coral.

The third mate continued to watch as she drew near. Her youth and her beauty affected him strangely. Any man who imagined that a girl's looks were any index to her character or disposition was a fool. Nevertheless he was convinced, against all logic, that this girl was the one girl in the world whom he wanted to know. He would have liked to stop her and ask her to talk to him. This, he acknowledged with a sigh, was impossible. He knew not one solitary word of Portuguese. What was more, the girl was a nice girl, and no decent man had a right to try to force his society on her. It wasn't done. He was indignant that these foreigners—in a foreign land *they* were the foreigners, not himself—should dare ogle her.

As she passed the bench where he sat, a cigaret dangling from his fingers, she glanced in his direction with an abstracted, far-off expression in her eyes, and it seemed to the third mate, dazzled by her looks, that the color in her cheeks had deepened. She lifted her chin and, without increasing her pace, walked deliberately on.

Once again the third mate sighed.

A man in a blue suit with the jacket cut well in at the waist, and narrow trousers, yellow gloves, white spats, brown shoes and a soft gray hat, came sauntering down a side path. He snapped his fingers at the girl and whistled. To the third mate's amazement she halted and permitted the man in the blue suit to paw her shoulder affectionately and whisper into her ear. She listened for a while in silence and then suddenly she shook her head and tried to move on. The man, however, caught hold of her by the arm and swung her about.

The third mate, conscious of a tightness in his throat and hot anger, heard little bursts of laughter and ejaculations of interest from the benches near him, and rose to his feet. Before he could decide on any adequate course of action, the girl had freed herself and had turned and was hurrying away. The man in the blue suit settled his hat firmly on the side of his head, pulled at his yellow gloves, squared his wide shoulders that contrasted so oddly with his thin, spindly legs and made off jauntily in the direction of the Rua de Dom Pedro V. The third mate caught a glimpse of a large, pallid face, slack, sensual lips and a cleft chin, dark, shifty eyes with pouched lids and knew that here was a man who was unwholesome and unclean and not to be trusted.

An overwhelming desire to follow the girl swept over him. The man in the blue suit, whoever he might be, was dangerous. He conceived it his duty to shield her from harm.

A hoarse voice broke in on his reflections.

"Hullo, Mr. Rotherwick!"

Briggs, the *Rose of Araby's* chief steward, a man he particularly disliked, stood by his side.

"What did you make of that feller with the spats and the red-haired girl, eh? Bad lot, that man! I could tell you some things about him that would surprize you! Good-lookin' girl, though!"

Briggs smacked his lips appreciatively and the third mate's dislike became hate.

"I don't know anything about the man, but there's nothing wrong with the girl, anyway."

"Oh!" said Briggs. "Well, Mr. Rotherwick, how comes it she's friends with a bloke like him? You listen to me and I'll tell you."

"I can't," said the third mate. "I've got to be going."

Without saying another word he made off in the direction of the Rua de Palmeira.

Presently, on the Rua de San Marcel, he saw the red-haired girl some distance ahead of him.

THE Rua de Boa Vista is a waterfront street paved with stone. On either side are tall buildings that present at sight an indefinable appearance of decay

and poverty, as if prosperity had long since departed. The shops are small and dark and quite unlike the shops in the Rua Aura or the Rua Augusta and the more fashionable shopping centers of the city. Narrow side streets and flights of stone steps slope up to stuffy tenements; courtyards populated by sleeping babies and young children, women gossiping and sewing, and lean and hungry cats, open out from the crowded sidewalks.

And yet there is much money made on the Rua de Boa Vista. The hardware stores, the ironmongers and machine shops, the ship chandlers and provision merchants, are busy. Men in overalls load and unload merchandise. Pasty-faced clerks bend over their ledgers in dingy offices. Salesmen and customers talk prices across counters piled high with goods. Shabby looking shopkeepers, as shabby and as prosperous as the street, stand at the doors of their shops and have long and intimate discussions on politics and business with their friends.

It is difficult to move with any freedom; difficult to hear oneself talk above the uproar. Clanging trolley cars on double tracks, taxicabs as large and as luxurious as privately owned limousines elsewhere, their horns honking furiously, clattering motor lorries, white with dust, accommodate their speed to creaking mule-carts laden with barrels from the quays or sacks of cement or loads of timber or produce fresh from the country outside Lisbon.

The atmosphere is tainted with the odor of hot machine-oil, gasoline, salt codfish and tarred rope.

The thin young girl with the bobbed red hair made her way slowly through the throng. Johnny Rotherwick followed at a distance of perhaps a dozen yards. He had no real hope of ever having the privilege of knowing her or even of speaking to her, but he was within reach if she needed his help.

Vaguely he realized that no Lisbon girl was likely to appeal for help to a stranger, even if that need for help should arise. This, however, made no real difference.

He held in mind the picture of the man with the white, sensual face and the spindly legs, and had visualized himself as the red-haired girl's rescuer, when she halted and after a quick glance over her shoulder entered a small shop on the corner of a side street.

Johnny Rotherwick reached the shop and he, too, halted.

He saw in the window a miscellaneous collection of articles for sale, such things as he might have seen in the window of any waterfront shop in any port in the world; things that would tempt sailors to buy in the vain hope that at last they were getting the bargain that had so persistently eluded them.

There were necklaces of pink coral and mother-of-pearl and imitation amber and beads of many colors, cameo lockets, brooches, silver bangles, quaint looking stringed musical instruments, an African war drum, bronze trays and bells, knives with ornate carvings on their blades, swords and rapiers and stabbing spears and assegais, old flintlock muskets, flintlock pistols, revolvers, a knobkerrie, two little models of ships, shark's teeth strung on wire, silver wrist-watches, alarm clocks, large pink shells, lumps of mineralized rock, a tray of semi-precious stones, a row of old books with leather bindings, faded and dusty, a ship's bell of brass, a half dozen old engravings of sea fights and portraits of Lord Nelson, Vasco da Gama and Marco Polo, an ivory statuette of an elephant, another of a Japanese warrior, a small plaster cast of the Venus of Milo.

And in one corner was the little green jade figure, Chinese apparently, of a deity, seated in an attitude of contemplation, hands folded and knees crossed.

A printed notice in the window announced that English was here spoken.

Johnny Rotherwick hesitated no longer. A sudden impulse drove him through the open doorway.

It was very dark after the glare of the sun in the Rua de Boa Vista. Two wide

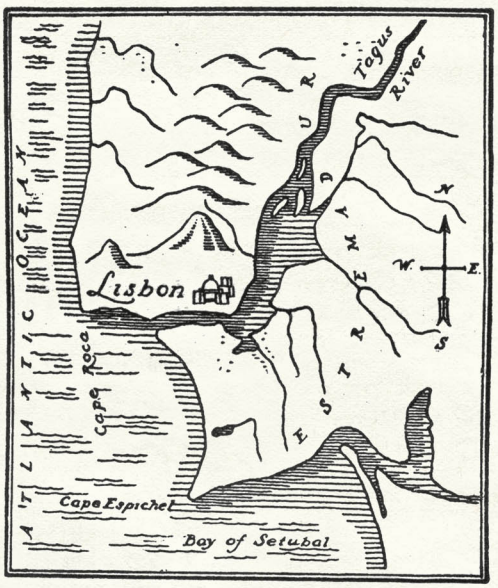
steps led up from the ground floor to the back of the shop, where in the obscurity, surrounded by every conceivable kind of junk, the red-haired girl whispered across a counter to a dark, sallow-faced young man with sly eyes.

For some moments Johnny Rotherwick stood and watched.

And then an old man in black with a hooked nose and faded eyes and a gray beard and mustache shuffled toward him and spoke to him in Portuguese.

Johnny shook his head and said—

"In the window—you speak English!"



"I speak him," said the old man. "*Ja!*"

"Well, then," said Johnny.

Quite uncertain what he should say next, he was aware that the girl had broken off her whispered conversation with the dark, sallow-faced young man and was looking at him.

"What can I show you, sir?" said the old man. "You have come to buy—no?"

"There's a little green jade figure in the window—an idol, it looks like," said Johnny. "May I see it?"

The old man turned away. The red-haired girl and the sallow-faced young man with the sly eyes were once more whispering. Their heads were close together. The young man was smiling fatuously.

"You will buy him," said the old man. "Ver' good!"

Johnny Rotherwick took the small green jade figure from the outstretched palm. The interest that he had pretended became genuine. There was on the exquisitely carved face an expression of benign calm. He was charmed. The craftsman who had labored to make the tiny features lifelike had been a true artist.

"It's very good, yes," said Johnny. "But it's imitation jade, of course."

The old man looked grieved.

"Ver' good. Genuine. Look, sir, jade! So beautiful! You look, you feel! See? Chinese! He sell me such a lot of money, I buy, and I keep here so long a time. You understand? Him I value possession to beautify my window."

Johnny slid his hand into his pocket.

"I'll have to get some money changed."

"I take him English money, I take him American money."

"How much do you want?"

"Ten pounds. Ver' good bargain."

"For you, yes," said Johnny dryly. "Not for me, though. I'll give you three. Understand! Three pounds!"

"I take him," said the old man promptly.

Johnny Rotherwick knew from his tone of voice and his haste to accept his offer that he had been swindled. Three pounds was two pounds more than he should have offered.

He paid over the money in Treasury notes and while the old man was rubbing the green jade idol with a soft cloth he was watching the couple at the back of the shop. Were they sweethearts? he wondered. Was the man making love to the girl, or what?

She looked tired and sad. Her shoulders drooped.

All at once she held out her hand to the sallow-faced young man, who bent forward and kissed her fingers. She stepped back from the counter, her cheeks flaming. She did not speak. The young man,

seemingly not in the least ashamed, leered at her and slid something into the hand that she once more held out to him—money, Johnny Rotherwick was certain. The sallow young man made another attempt to kiss her fingers, but the girl snatched away her hand, nodded her head, turned and descended the steps.

The old man wrapped the little jade idol in paper.

"There is nozzin' more?" he asked.

"Nothing more," said Johnny.

The girl passed him, as if unaware of his existence, her cheeks still flaming, her face set, her eyes staring stonily ahead of her.

The sallow-faced young man called to her in farewell. She did not answer.

Johnny Rotherwick followed her out into the street. He was angry with himself for being so helpless.

And yet, what could he have done? How, when he did not speak the language or know the cause of her agitation, could he have gone to her aid? Moreover, the sallow-faced young man had given her money. Money for what?

His mood puzzled him. His complacency and self-esteem had gone. He felt uncomfortably young and uncommonly foolish. Was he, he wondered, in love? He did not know. But what man in his senses would fall in love with a girl at sight? It wasn't possible.

The girl had turned to the left on leaving the shop and was walking once more with her long, free strides toward Black Horse Square and the center of the city. She held her head high; her bobbed and flaming hair became for Johnny a kind of beacon, to be kept in view at all costs, but for no other purpose now save that he must learn where she lived, who were her parents and why she should be in appearance and bearing and manner so different from any other girl he had seen in Lisbon.

The idol he would keep always as a memento of a passing madness.

And then, as the girl drew near the Camara Municipal, the pale, flabby man with the wide shoulders and the spindly legs strutted out of a side street and, glancing first to the right and then to the left, hurried after her.

Johnny Rotherwick, sickened by the eagerness and rapacity in his dark and shifty eyes, was furious. This contemptible old cad who was old enough to be the girl's father needed a lesson.

He shouted at him in English:

"Here, you! I want you!"

The man turned his head and looked back. Then he called to the girl and spoke a few quick sentences in Portuguese and waited for Johnny to approach.

Holding his anger in check, knowing that whatever happened he had no right to hit a man probably a quarter of a century older than himself, Johnny saw for the first time that the man's suit, though pressed and neat enough at a glance, was shabby and threadbare, that his brown shoes, partly concealed by the white spats, were worn and thin, that his collar, though clean, was frayed at the edges.

"Listen to me," said Johnny. "I've something to say to you." He broke off abruptly. "D'you speak English, by the way?"

The man's pale face crinkled into a friendly smile.

"Speak English!" he said. "Why, Mr. Rotherwick, of course I speak English. And I'm delighted to see you again."

Johnny was so amazed he could only stare stupidly and mutter a half-hearted—

"You know me, do you?"

The man bowed from the waist, his hands by his sides, his heels together.

"I had the honor of meeting you, Mr. Rotherwick, let me see—four months ago, or was it five?" He waved his hand.

"One meets many people, Mr. Rotherwick. You'll forgive me, I know. You're third mate on board the *Rose of Sharon*. No, the *Rose of Araby*. And where did I meet you? Was it at the Alhambra or Bristol or Maxim's? Or was it on board your ship? Candidly, I forget. One does."

His English, though his accent was foreign, was amazingly good.

"And you're quite well, Mr. Rotherwick?"

"Yes," said Johnny. "I'm very well, thank you."

The girl with the red hair, he noticed, had halted and was waiting, apparently for the man with whom he talked. They were friends, after all, then! His efforts to save her had been unnecessary.

And suddenly his cheeks were hot. He knew that he was blushing and he realized that ever since he had seen the red-haired girl in the Praza Rio de Janeiro he had been making himself ridiculous.

"Did you call me, Mr. Rotherwick? It was you I heard, wasn't it?"

"I'm afraid, funnily enough, I've made a mistake," said Johnny. "Matter of fact, I thought you were some one else. When I called, I'd no idea who you were." He hesitated and said rather stiffly, "I apologize humbly."

The man laughed.

"My dear Mr. Rotherwick, please! Why apologize? You have given me the opportunity of renewing our acquaintance. A most fortunate mistake. At present I happen to be pressed for time." He glanced, uneasily, Johnny thought, at the girl who still waited. "I have an important engagement, a matter of business. But some other time!" He raised his eyebrows and smiled. "This evening, perhaps. Mr. Rotherwick, suppose I do myself the honor of calling upon you on board your ship? May I be permitted?"

"Why, yes," said Johnny. "Why not?"

"Good!" said the man with the spindly legs. "Then, Mr. Rotherwick, I shall have the pleasure of continuing our extremely interesting conversation later on. My name, by the way, you must have forgotten—Devenden. Will you remember?" He chuckled. "Think of devil! And now I must run. My little daughter is waiting."

JOHNNY ROTHERWICK sat on his camp stool in his room on board the *Rose of Araby*. He was trying to write a letter home to his mother and he was not succeeding.

The mosquitos worried him. The night was close and airless. The dynamo was not working and the oil-lamp on the bulkhead between the bunk and the washstand had become a torment scarcely to be endured.

The third engineer, a lean young man in striped pajamas, sat on the settee smoking a pipe and talking.

On the bureau stood the small green jade idol.

"And how much did you say it cost?" said the third engineer.

Johnny groaned and laid down his pen.

"How the dickens can a fellow write if you keep cackling?"

"I'll give you half what you paid for it," said the third engineer.

"Funny, aren't you, Mr. Gregg!"

"So I've been told! But that green jade image now, it's a nice little thing and I like it. I'll take it off you if you want to get rid of it. At a reasonable price! They swindled you, of course. Own up, m'lad—how much did they rook you for?"

"I'll keep it, thanks," said Johnny. "It'll remind me of—" he thought sadly of old Devenden's daughter, the girl with the red bobbed hair and the madness that had possessed him—"it'll remind me of Lisbon!"

The third engineer seemed disappointed.

"Well, if you won't part with it, you won't."

Some one in the alley way said—

"Could you direct me to Mr. Rotherwick's room, please?"

The third engineer stood up.

"Some one to see you, Johnny. One of your aristocratic friends. I'm off!"

The green curtain that hung over the open door was pushed to one side and Mr. Devenden peered into the room.

"Mr. Rotherwick. Ah! May I come in?"

Johnny stared at him in amazement as he stepped over the high sill.

In the yellow glow of light from the lamp his face looked even pastier and more unwholesome than in the daytime: there were tiny beads of sweat on his

forehead and on the high bridge of his nose; the pouches under his dark eyes were pink and inflamed; on his right cheek bone there was a purple bruise; his lower lip was cut; a small trickle of blood had reached his clefted chin. His clothes were dusty and crumpled, but he still wore his yellow wash-leather gloves and held in his hand his soft gray hat.

"What on earth's the matter?" said Johnny. He sprang to his feet. "Sit down, Mr. Devenden, do. Are you hurt?"

Mr. Devenden placed his hat and gloves on top of the bureau and sank on to the settee with a sigh.

"Hah! I've had rather a distressing experience, Mr. Rotherwick. I was hurrying along the quayside just now when I had a—a fall. In the dark, you understand. I feel somewhat shaken." He seemed to have a difficulty in drawing his breath. He put his hand to his heart and looked frightened. "Not so young as I was once. The least emotion. It unsettles one."

Johnny opened a locker under his bunk and drew out a bottle of whisky.

"You need a bracer," he said.

Mr. Devenden sighed once more.

"Thank you, Mr. Rotherwick. Not too much water. Medicinal, you know. The merest suggestion." He drank and set down the empty glass on the washstand. "Hah! I feel better already—much."

For some time he sat with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. Presently he straightened himself up and stretched out his arms and smiled.

"It's that wretched old heart of mine, Mr. Rotherwick. Sorry for giving you all this trouble." He took a cigaret from the box on the bureau. "Hah, English! You can't imagine, Mr. Rotherwick, the agony one endures from having to smoke those miserable Portuguese cigarets!"

"Gosh!" said Johnny. "Mr. Devenden, all this time I've been thinking you were Portuguese!"

He thought of the tall, thin girl with the red hair and smiled.

"My dear sir!" said Mr. Devenden. "My very dear sir!" He raised a soft white hand and smoothed his dark hair back from his broad white forehead. "Mr. Rotherwick, I'm a stranger in a strange land." He leaned forward and spoke in a low voice. "Mr. Rotherwick, I'm going to confide in you. I came here, to Lisbon, thirteen, fourteen years ago, to take up an appointment with a business firm. An opportunity in a thousand. Good pay, good prospects." He waved his hand and blew out a cloud of cigaret smoke. "I need scarcely tell you, Mr. Rotherwick, that one doesn't, after having lived as I've lived, sink—I use the term advisedly—sink to a career of petty trading, shall we say, without periods of depression. Putting it plainly, things are not as they were. The firm that employed me failed. What was worse, my savings were all swallowed up in the crash.

"I began again, with no capital but hope. I obtained another appointment, which I lost—again, through no fault of my own. A Portuguese firm, and they preferred to employ one of their own countrymen; nor could I have blamed them had the man they engaged in my place been worth his salt. He wasn't. That rankled.

"But I won't weary you, Mr. Rotherwick. Mine's a common enough story—poverty, disappointment, hard work, exile from home. At the present time, to be candid, you find me in a state of financial embarrassment. But one has hopes, always. Times are bound to improve. In the meantime, one works. Yes, Mr. Rotherwick, if I may, another drop of whisky. The merest taste. Thank you."

"Do you like Lisbon?" said Johnny.

"Lisbon is a city for the rich man, Mr. Rotherwick, not for the pauper. Speaking candidly, I despise and detest the place."

"Why don't you go home, then?" said Johnny.

"Mr. Rotherwick, were I unfortunate enough to have no one depending on my efforts, I shouldn't hesitate for one

moment. As things are it's impossible. I stay in Lisbon because it's my duty."

He sipped his whisky and stared mournfully across the room.

Johnny tried to see in his appearance any likeness to the red-haired girl and failed. He studied his shabby clothes and frayed linen and thought of the girl's lilac frock and the white thread stockings and the clumsy shoes and her slim beauty and her freedom of carriage and her walk and the way she had passed through the crowded street as if unaware of the people watching and smiling, and he wondered once again with a feeling of anxiety what errand had taken her to the little corner shop on the Rua de Boa Vista where she and the sallow-faced young man had had that whispered conversation and the sallow-faced young man had kissed her hand and given her money.

He was aware that the girl's father was talking in a low, confidential tone of voice, leaning forward and watching him intensely.

"You know the saying, Mr. Rotherwick: When needs are the devil drives. My case exactly. I have a constant struggle to keep my head above water. I succeed, yes; but at what a price! I come in contact with men who regard me as a social parasite, who laugh at me and despise me and take advantage of my good nature. They even suggest, too, ways of making money that no gentleman would tolerate for one instant. And yet in spite of everything, Mr. Rotherwick, I have preserved my self-respect. And that's something to be proud of, isn't it? And now, Mr. Rotherwick, I have no further excuse for lingering. Thanks to you, I've recovered from my faintness sooner than I otherwise should have done." He rose from the settee. "My dear wife has been very ill. If I'm away from home too long, she worries."

"I'm sorry to hear that Mrs. Devenden's ill," said Johnny. "But I hope it'll only be a short time before she's quite well again."

"She'll never be well again, Mr. Rotherwick. It's for her dear sake I live in Lisbon. She needs the sun and the warmth."

"That's tough on you, Mr. Devenden."

Mr. Devenden held up his hand.

"Mr. Rotherwick, you do me an injustice. If I could bear my poor dear wife's sufferings, I would, gladly. Such bravery, such patience! One doesn't talk about one's private affairs, naturally, but I'd like to tell you this, Mr. Rotherwick: The love we have for each other is stronger and deeper now than when we were first married and had health and strength and youth and not a trouble in the world. My wife's a saint. I'm a happy man, Mr. Rotherwick, in spite of my sorrows. Not once during her long illness has my poor dear wife said a harsh word to me—no, not once! I only wish I could feel I was worthy of her."

Johnny had an uneasy feeling that Mr. Devenden was on the verge of tears. Poor old chap, he thought. And his poor wife! But what an existence for the pair of them! And the red-haired girl! What kind of life was hers?

"Isn't there anything I could do to help you?" he asked.

"No, Mr. Rotherwick, not that I'm aware of." A slow, mournful smile crossed the pale face. "I suppose, since you've spoken, I couldn't interest you in any of the lines I'm handling on commission, could I? Shoes, razors, scissors, cameras, suits, overcoats, hats, perfumery, ladies' silk stockings and so on. Anything, almost, you'd care for."

"I don't know that I want any of the things you've mentioned, Mr. Devenden! Haven't you any other suggestions?"

Mr. Devenden stroked his chin.

"I'd be the last man in the world to persuade you against your own judgment." He felt in the inside pocket of his tight-waisted jacket and produced a fountain pen of black vulcanite with two broad gold bands. "I notice you use an old-fashioned pen and ink, and it's just struck me, Mr. Rotherwick, that for a ship's officer something like this—a sample I happen to have with me—would be particularly handy. I don't mind telling

you, as a secret, that I'm prepared to let you have this pen at considerably less than you could buy it at in any store in Lisbon."

"How much?" asked Johnny.

"I'm offering it at the —hah!—ridiculously low price of ten shillings, English money!"

"I'll take it. It's a sound article, I suppose."

"Mr. Rotherwick, I won't deceive you. This is the best pen on the market. Look! The maker's name is a guarantee of that."

Johnny paid over the ten shillings and Mr. Devenden smiled his thanks.

"You've been a good Samaritan to me this evening, Mr. Rotherwick. I wonder whether you'd think me insufferably presumptuous if I asked you to accept this as a memento?" In his right hand he held a small sandalwood box. "It's nothing much, I know. It's intrinsic value is nil, but as a token of my gratitude it is beyond rubies."

Johnny, who had been ready to refuse the gift, changed his mind. The melancholy in Mr. Devenden's eyes touched him.

"Thank you, Mr. Devenden, very much. It's most generous of you."

He wanted to ask about the girl with the red hair but could not put into words the questions that came to his mind. He wanted to say that never had he seen a girl like her. He wanted to tell the father how beautiful a daughter he had. He wanted to say that it wasn't right that a young girl should be permitted to wander around Lisbon by herself. But that, he was ready to admit, was absurd. What else could she do?

Mr. Devenden picked up his yellow wash-leather gloves and held out his hand.

"Good-by, Mr. Rotherwick. No need to come with me, please. Not a step, I beg of you! I know my way."

He settled his soft gray hat on the side of his head, said good-by once more and withdrew.

The curtain dropped in its place after him.

For some time after he had gone, Johnny did not stir. He stood in the middle of his room, listening to the footsteps dying away in the distance.

The story he had heard had moved him. The knowledge that any man of refinement should be forced to fight for a living as Devenden fought saddened him. And yet how brave he and that poor wife of his were! And the girl! He asked himself miserably what kind of future would be hers.

The third engineer once more thrust his head into the room.

"Has he gone?" he asked. His lean, saturnine face twisted into a grin. "Good! Thought it was him I saw on the gangway." He settled himself down on the settee. "So you know him, do you?"

"Who?"

"Old Devenden, of course."

"What made you run away like that?"

"Oh, dunno. Getting particular whom I meet, probably. Why didn't you chuck the old thief out of it and tell him to clear off the ship?"

"What the blazes are you talking about?" said Johnny. "A thief!"

"Why not? He's worse than that, m'lad. Has he told you that pack of lies about his poor sick wife yet?"

"He said his wife was sick, yes! She is, isn't she?"

"Shouldn't think so," said the third engineer. "If I'd had the slightest idea, Johnny, you didn't know what kind of a man Devenden was I'd have warned you. There isn't a bigger scoundrel on the waterfront."

"But that's ridiculous!" said Johnny.

"It is?" said the third engineer. "Ask the mate or the second engineer. Last year when I was fourth in the *Rose of Sharon* that old twister came on board and spun a long yarn about being hard up and his wife dying and lord knows what. He tried to sell me some of his old junk but I wouldn't bite. Then he asked me if I'd like to be shown round Lisbon, he'd take me. The miserable old beast! Matter of fact—" here he laughed—"they'd told me about him and I was ready. I said the Old Man wanted to see

him—old Robson—you never met him, did you? He's a terror. Devenden went off, hot-foot, and the Old Man just about half killed him! Had him slung off the ship neck and crop."

"Is that why you didn't stay?" said Johnny. "You were ashamed to meet him, then?"

"Ashamed! What of? Don't be an ass, Johnny! Needn't think I'm pulling your leg; I'm not. I'm speaking the truth. Devenden's no good. He makes money in ways I wouldn't accuse my worst enemy of. It's no use sticking up for him. He's a crook and that's all there is to it!"

Johnny frowned at the matting under his feet.

Devenden a crook! It wasn't possible. Wasn't he the red-haired girl's father? How could he be a crook, then?

"You didn't let him sell you anything, did you, Johnny?"

"Fountain pen, that's all." He nodded toward the bureau. "That's it there!"

"Hm! Not too bad," said the third engineer. "Rush you much?"

"Ten shillings."

The third engineer examined the pen closely.

"Ten, eh? Seems like a bargain. Bet you there's a catch in it somewhere!"

"Mr. Gregg," said Johnny, "I like to take people as I find them. So far as I know, old Devenden's genuine and he's in trouble and I feel sorry for him."

"How old are you, Johnny? Twenty-one! Well, you've time to learn, anyway."

Some one came clumping heavily along the alleyway.

"Where's young Rotherwick hang out?"

The curtain was swept aside. Mr. MacAlkin, the big mate of the *Rose of Seville*, entered the room, chuckling.

Johnny jumped to his feet.

"Good Lord! It's Mr. MacAlkin. How are you, sir?"

" 'Lo, young feller, it's a long time since we met, isn't it? How you've grown! Quite the man, eh, Johnny?"

They shook hands warmly.

The big man turned to the third engineer in his striped pajamas and uniform cap and laughed.

"Bless my soul, it's Mr. Gregg! How's the vacuum, eh?"

"Fine!" said the third engineer. "We were wondering if we'd see you tonight, Mr. MacAlkin."

"Biggest surprize in my life when I saw the old *Rose of Araby* alongside still. Thought you'd have got away yesterday. Matter of fact, I'm going ashore with the mate and the second engineer to the circus. Good show this week, they say."

"I've heard that," said the third engineer. "I thought of going. Why, what's wrong?"

Mr. MacAlkin was staring fixedly at the top of the bureau, a look of amazement in his brown, weather-beaten face, his eyes open to their widest extent.

"Johnny," he said, "where in the name of all that's wonderful did that come from?"

He pointed toward the little sandalwood box.

"That box," said Johnny. "Man I know gave it me."

"But, good heavens, it's mine! Lemme show you!"

Feeling dazed, Johnny read on the underside of the little box, neatly cut in minute letters, the name, John MacAlkin.

"Who gave it you, young feller?"

"Man I know. I bought a pen from him, and he gave me the box as a kind of keepsake."

"You bought a pen from him! What kind of a pen?" said Mr. MacAlkin in a tone of suppressed excitement.

Johnny showed him the fountain pen.

"But, my heaven, Johnny Rotherwick, this is mine, too—one that was stolen from me this afternoon! Look here!" And again, on the lower of the two gold bands, was engraved the proof: J. MacA. "And you bought it?"

"I did," said Johnny. "I gave ten shillings for it."

"Oh, did you? All I can say is, young feller, you're a —— good hand at striking

a bargain. I bought that pen the day we left Liverpool and it cost me two pounds. I've scarcely used it. Two pounds and you got it for ten shillings!"

He wagged his head, almost, it seemed, in admiration.

The third engineer plucked at Johnny's sleeve.

"Listen, Johnny, isn't this what I was saying?"

"How do you mean?" said Mr. MacAlkin.

"Who stole the pen and the box, sir?"

"Who! That's the everlasting —— mystery. I've got my suspicions, of course, but no actual proof. This evening, soon after tea, a man came on board the *Rose of Seville* and asked to see me. I took him to my room and found all he wanted was to get me to buy something on commission—boots, hats, jewelry, silk undies for my wife, silk stockings, anything!"

"Devenden, of course!" said the third engineer.

"Aye, Devenden," said Mr. MacAlkin. "That was the name. Was he the man who sold you this pen, young feller?"

Johnny nodded.

"How did you happen to let him get away with it, Mr. MacAlkin?" said the third engineer.

"The bosun wanted to speak to me in the alleyway. I wasn't gone for more than a minute. When I got back to my berth I told this Devenden man I was sorry but I couldn't oblige him, and I slipped him five shillings—that's the honest truth—because he'd come down in the world and I bid him good evening. Aye, it was old Devenden who stole my pen and the little box. The rotten, lying old hypocrite!"

Johnny roused himself from his coma.

The red-haired girl's father was a thief! And the girl—was she a thief, too? He shuddered. Why had she accepted money from the man in the shop? It was money, he was sure.

"The pen's yours, Mr. MacAlkin," he said. "You must take it back."

Mr. MacAlkin shook his head.

"No, young feller, that wouldn't be right."

"But you must! Good lord, sir, you bought it and some one pinched it off you! It's not mine at all. No more is the box. They're yours, both of them." He frowned and considered. "You don't think, sir, it's possible that one of the crowd on board stole the pen and the box and sold them to Devenden, do you?"

"I don't!" said Mr. MacAlkin.

"I'd have trusted Devenden anywhere," said Johnny.

"I warned you, Johnny," said the third engineer.

"I wish some one had warned me," said Mr. MacAlkin.

"You've not been to Lisbon before, sir?" said Johnny.

"Not for ten years or so. Devenden's new since my day."

"Johnny," said the third engineer, "you haven't lost anything yourself, have you?"

Automatically, as it were, without pausing to think, Johnny Rotherwick opened the top drawer of the bureau to see if the little jade idol was safe.

He stood for a moment gazing at the jumble of collars, handkerchiefs, socks, ties, cigaret packets and old letters, and remembered suddenly with a feeling of relief that the idol had not been put into the drawer at all but stood on the top of the bureau.

He closed the drawer softly.

The idol was not on the top of the bureau. The idol had disappeared.

From the alleyway there came the sound of the mate's voice asking for Mr. MacAlkin.

He called, "Coming!" and turned to Johnny.

"I've got to be going now, young feller. You keep that pen. I'll take the box—my wife gave it me."

Johnny found it difficult to speak.

"I can't keep the pen, sir. I'll go and see Devenden tonight and get the money out of the swine. Please, I'd be obliged if you'd do as I say."

"Righto, Johnny. I'll see you in the

morning and hear what happened. If Devenden doesn't come across with the money, we'll talk business together! Good night. Night, Mr. Gregg."

As soon as Mr. MacAlkin had gone Johnny pulled open the other drawers of his bureau. He tore aside the mosquito netting that screened his bunk and groped under the pillow. He opened the lockers under the bunk and the cupboard under the washstand. Almost sick with anxiety, he lifted the top of his settee and peered into the locker beneath. He searched among his sticky oilskins and working clothes that hung in the wardrobe.

And all the time he was conscious of the third engineer's mocking scrutiny and his lop-sided, cynical grin and his alert eyes watching him.

The idol had gone! The idol that he had bought that afternoon in the corner shop while the red-headed girl—Devenden's girl, —— her!—was whispering across the counter with the sallow-faced young man who had given her money!

He put his hands to his head and thought.

Devenden had robbed him. After all he had tried to do to help him and encourage him, Devenden had robbed him. His sympathy had been wasted.

Never before had he experienced such a revulsion of feeling as now swept over him.

He hated Devenden. He hated his daughter.

"What's he taken?" said the third engineer. "Out with it, m' lad!"

"The green jade idol," said Johnny.

The third engineer whistled softly.

"My sacred aunt!"

"If I knew where the old thief lived," said Johnny, "I'd go and see him this minute. I would, Mr. Gregg. I'd go and see him and I'd talk to him as no one ever talked to him in his life! How can I find him, eh?"

"Ask the steward—he may know!"

Johnny went to the door and called:

"Steward! Here a minute, will you?"

Briggs appeared, grinning owlishly.

"What's to do now?" he grumbled.

"Steward, do you know that man Devenden?"

"Devenden!" Briggs rolled his eyes first at the third engineer, then at Johnny. "Course I know him. I was talking to him this afternoon jus' after you left me, Mr. Rotherwick. Up in that there Rio de Janeiro place!"

"Did you tell him my name or anything?" said Johnny sharply.

"Well, what if I did? He seen me an' you together, didn't he? Why not?"

"He said he'd met me," said Johnny. "I meant to ask him about it, but forgot. He was lying, of course!"

"In trouble again?" said Briggs.

"He stole something belonging to Mr. Rotherwick," said the third engineer.

"Ah, did he now? I ain't surprized. Mr. Rotherwick, didn't I try an' warn you against him only this afternoon? I did. You know I did. You wouldn't listen, neither. Mr. Gregg, d'you know what I heard Mr. Lynn, the third engineer of the *Rose of Seville*, telling the fourth engineer just now? He said Devenden was chased off that Portugee steamer layin' astern of us by the mate for tryin' to pinch a ring he'd laid on his washstand. He fell over a bollard or somethin' but before the mate could reach him he'd give him the slip in the dark. That's the truth. Mr. Lynn said he saw it with his own eyes. He knows Devenden well, too. Lost money to him when he was fourth in the *Rose of Gloucester*. He come on board, Mr. Gregg, to find you. Shall I tell him you'll be along?"

"One second, Steward," said Johnny, "do you know where Devenden lives?"

"I do. I got the name of his street an' the number written down in my notebook somewhere, in case I should want his advice, like, in pickin' up bargains. He's not the kind of man, old Devenden ain't, I'd care to be seen walkin' aroun' with by daylight, but if it comes to knowin' the ins an' outs of buyin' an' sellin' in Lisbon, why he's got every one else skinned a mile. But he's crooked all right. He'd sell the false teeth out of his dead

brother's mouth if you'd give him a chance an' think nothin' of it."

"You go find that address, Steward, quick! I've got to see him to-night."

"What are you going to do with him?" said the third engineer.

"I'd hammer the life out of the swine if he was younger, but I can't. He's too old and he's too flabby. I'll tell you what I will do, though. Just as soon as I know for sure he stole the idol I'll have him run in. I'll fetch the police. I'm through with being kind-hearted and sloppy. When I think how I listened to that hard-luck tale of his and paid him money for something he'd stolen from some one else, why, I'm ashamed of myself."

"Comes of a good family, too," said the steward. "I've heard him say he's got relations at home that are rich. But he's an awful liar, that Devenden. I bet he ain't spoke the truth more than twice in his life of his own accord, neither."

"Johnny," said the third engineer. "I'm coming with you. Freddy Lynn must wait till some other time."

Johnny shook his head.

"You can't come in pajamas, Mr. Gregg, and I can't wait till you change. It's my funeral, anyway. I'd rather be by myself."

A CHINK of yellow light in the blackness of the landing marked the door of a room.

Johnny Rotherwick paused. This, on the right of the top flight of stairs, would be where, according to Briggs, Devenden lived.

The murmur of voices came faintly, but the thin and jingly music of a guitar from the lower part of the sordid, shabby old house, echoing up the well of the stairs, made it difficult to hear distinctly what was being said or what language was being spoken.

Johnny hesitated, afraid that even now there might be some mistake, and that unless he took care he might find himself in the midst of strangers.

He moved cautiously toward the chink of light and felt for the handle of the door.

A woman was speaking and in English.

"Didn't you make anything more today than this, Claude?"

A man—Devenden, of course—mumbled a reply.

"I did my best. I wasn't able to sell very much, but the things I bought, Eleanor, ought to bring us a profit when I resell. I got them cheap."

"Cheap!" said the woman bitterly.

Johnny turned the handle and pushed open the door and stalked imperiously into a large room, very hot and untidy, with a sloping ceiling, lighted by one oil-lamp and, at a glance, as crowded with old and dilapidated furniture and odds and ends of clothing as any junk man's or second-hand storekeeper's.

The change from the pitch darkness of the landing was so sudden that for the moment it was impossible to see clearly.

Mr. Devenden stood opposite the door by the side of a table that was laid for supper with a white cloth, knives and forks and cups and plates. Between the table and a small decrepit looking stove stood a little, gray-haired woman in a print frock and wearing a big apron. In one hand she had a coffee pot and in the other a milk jug.

Johnny Rotherwick did not speak.

Mr. Devenden backed slowly toward a low sideboard.

The woman set the coffee pot and milk jug down on the table and stared at Johnny with a look of somber dislike in her pale eyes. Then she said—

"What brings you here?"

Johnny frowned. This, he gathered, was Devenden's wife, the sick wife of whom he had spoken in such glowing terms.

"Is it your general practise," she said in a soft, level voice, "to enter a lady's room without knocking?"

"What's that?" said Johnny. "What's that you say?"

He had right on his side; he had been swindled and made to look foolish; he had come to obtain justice; and yet there was in the woman's demeanor and her faint smile something that daunted him

and made him feel that he had intruded and had no cause even for resentment.

"I asked you a question," she said. "Are you going to answer or not? Who are you and what are you doing here? Haven't you made a mistake?"

Johnny glanced across the table at Mr. Devenden.

"*You* know why I'm here, don't you?" he asked.

There was no reply. The man's face was the color of old sailcloth; the bruise on his cheek was purple; he looked as if at any instant he would collapse through sheer terror.

"Well, Devenden," said Johnny, "why don't you say something?"

"Claude," said the woman, "is anything wrong? What is it?" She was frightened. "Claude, what is it? Can't you tell me?"

"No," he said, "it's nothing. Nothing at all. This—this gentleman is a—a friend of mine. An intimate friend."

"Is that any recommendation?" said the woman under her breath. She sighed. She spoke once more to Johnny. "Hadn't you better go? It's late. And I'm not accustomed to visitors. You wouldn't like me to call the police, would you?"

"Eleanor," said Mr. Devenden, "Eleanor, dear girl, please! I owe this gentleman a debt of gratitude for a—a kindness he did me!"

"A kindness!" she said. "What kindness have you ever received, I'd like to know? What use are friends, except to spend your money and waste your time? Would we be living here, in this place, but for your friends? Would you be working yourself to death, day in, day out, if the friends you talk of were worth their salt? You wouldn't, and you know it!" An expression of unutterable weariness crossed her thin, pale face. She put her hand to her forehead and stood for a moment motionless, her eyes closed, and her teeth pressed down over her lower lip. "I'm sorry," she said.

"Eleanor," said Mr. Devenden, "you'll tire yourself."

As he spoke he moved nearer his wife at the foot of the table and Johnny saw on the sideboard in front of which he had been standing the little green jade figure.

"I've come for that little idol," he said coldly. "I'm in a hurry!"

Into Mr. Devenden's shifty eyes there shot an abject appeal for mercy, and Johnny realized as surely as if he had been told in so many words that the gray-haired woman in the print frock believed in her husband's honor.

"The little idol," said Mr. Devenden. "Why, of course. Take it, Mr. Rotherwick, by all means. I promised it you, as a slight memento of our friendship, didn't I? Take it, do."

Johnny held out his hand, but the woman was too quick for him.

"Claude," she said, "are you mad or what?" She turned to Johnny, the idol hugged to her bosom. "My husband can't give away things like this. He bought this idol, spent good money for it, too, and now he wants to give it away!"

"Eleanor," said Mr. Devenden hoarsely, "for God's sake, don't!"

"What do you mean?" she said. "Didn't you buy it? Didn't you pay good money for it? How do you think we're going to live, if you throw away chance after chance like this?" She turned once more to Johnny, her little thin face flushed, her eyes hard. "If you want this idol, Mr. Rotherwick, if that's your name, you must pay for it! It's a blessing I'm not like my husband, isn't it? You wouldn't think he'd a living to make, would you? Do you want the idol?"

"Yes," said Johnny. His lips twisted into a smile of grim amusement. "As a matter of fact I'm going to have it."

"Going to have it!" said the woman slowly. "Why, that you're not. It's as much mine as my husband's. You'll take no presents out of here!"

Johnny stifled a sigh of impatience. The interview with the Devendens had so far not been going quite as he had anticipated. At the back of his mind he knew

that nothing would induce him to destroy the little gray-haired woman's faith in her husband. It was weak of him, no doubt—a proof, possibly, of his inexperience and lack of wisdom in dealing with the unexpected. Nevertheless the fact remained. Devenden he could have tackled. Against the woman he was helpless.

"I want that idol," he persisted.

"Will you buy it?"

And at that naïve request he was forced to smile.

"How much do you want?" he said.

"How much will you give?" said the woman.

Her pale blue eyes were very bright in the light of the lamp. She smiled and waited for him to answer.

"Suppose I offer you ten shillings," said Johnny flippantly.

She laughed.

"I'd call it an insult! Listen, Mr. Rotherwick, that little idol's valuable. It's got an interesting history attached to it. Hasn't it, Claude? It came from China hundreds of years ago, didn't it?"

Johnny glanced at Mr. Devenden. His face was stricken. He tugged at his collar as if choking for breath and said hoarsely—

"What brings you back so soon, eh?"

Johnny, puzzled by his change of expression, realizing that he was no longer gazing miserably at his wife, turned his head and saw that the girl with the red bobbed hair had entered the room and was closing the door.

For a moment she did not move from the shadows. Johnny knew that she was studying him, asking herself why she should find him here, in the same room as her father and mother.

Very slowly she advanced into the circle of lamplight and stood by the table, very thin and straight and strangely, elusively beautiful. She gazed at the gray-haired woman gravely. All the color had left her cheeks. She looked like some child that has received its first insight into the shifts and trickeries of a grown-up world. She still wore the lilac frock and the white thread stockings and the clumsy shoes.

"We don't want you here now, Delia," said the man. "Go into the other room!"

"Mother," said the girl, "what made you say that little green jade idol came from China hundreds of years ago?"

"Why not?" said Mrs. Devenden. Her thin face was now flushed and she looked anxiously toward her husband who dropped into a chair and sat with his chin sunk on his chest and his hands gripping the edge of the table. "Why shouldn't I say it? It's the truth. Your father bought it from a man who told him its history. Isn't that what you said, Claude? The man who sold it him told him an old Chinaman had given it him, in return for some service he'd done him."

The girl began to speak to her father in Portuguese but her mother cut her short.

"Delia, talk English! Do you hear? I don't want to have to mention it again! And now, Mr. Rotherwick, make me an offer."

Johnny was troubled. The girl's clear gray eyes surveyed him with a kind of despair. It flashed into his mind that she had already guessed why he had come and was begging him for her sake and for the sake of her father to make no more trouble but to go at once. She knew that her father had stolen the green jade idol, but her mother did not know and never would know, if he would do as she wished and would keep their secret inviolate—hers and her father's.

But Johnny still wanted the green jade idol. It was his by right. He would treasure it all the more now that he had again seen the girl and knew what kind of home she had and what kind of father had brought her up.

"Mrs. Devenden," he said gruffly, "I'll give you a pound. But that's my limit."

"That's absurd," said the woman. "That would be less than my husband paid for it. One has to be sensible over a business deal, Mr. Rotherwick." She stared at him with her lids half closed. Then she said: "Mr. Rotherwick, you may have it for two pounds."

"It's not worth it," said the girl.

"It's not jade, Mother; it's imitation! Isn't it, Father?"

He bowed his head.

"Yes, Delia, imitation."

There was a long silence. The woman looked first at her husband, then at her daughter, then back at her husband again.

"I don't understand. Claude, a short time ago you told me this was genuine jade. You've not been out of the house since, yet now you say that it's imitation! And you, Delia, what right have you to express an opinion and say that it's not real?"

"Haven't I seen it before?" said the girl.

"Seen it before!" said the woman. "It's not been in the house more than an hour or so!"

"Others like it, I mean."

"You must be out of your minds, the pair of you," said the woman. "You'd think, Mr. Rotherwick, that my husband was doing business just for the fun of it. Honesty's all very well, but the fault with him is he's too honest! He'll buy whatever he's asked to buy and asks no questions; then when it comes to selling again he has doubts. He's afraid. Suppose what he's bought isn't all that he thought it was, and so on! Do you wonder I'm desperate? How's it going to end? We buy high and we sell cheap."

"I've done my best," said the man sulkily. "It's not been easy. Let's have no more of it."

"Easy, Claude! It's been easy for me, though, hasn't it? I don't often talk like this, do I? But what kind of a life do I have, living in this place, in Lisbon, among strangers? Easy! Oh, it's been easy for me all right, hasn't it? Do you think that I'm blind, Claude? You can go out and about and enjoy yourself, with money to spend in your pocket, and where you get it lord only knows! But it doesn't matter about me, does it? I'm only your wife! You married beneath you, didn't you? You keep reminding me! I dragged you down, didn't I? You've said so! I oughtn't to grumble, ought I?

"Look at the girl, then! Your daughter. Granddaughter of a lord. Look at her clothes! What kind of a life does she have? If it doesn't matter about me—what about her? You never worry about that, do you? No! Why should you? You're happy enough! You'll go on day after day, dragging around, making a little money, spending more than you should, pitying yourself and not sparing a thought to us!

"Claude, I'm tired of it! Mr. Rotherwick, when I married my husband I was the prettiest girl in the prettiest chorus in London! He married beneath him, of course. I'm not saying he didn't. I was proud of him. But look at me now! I'm forty and I might be sixty! I'm an old woman, Mr. Rotherwick, broken-hearted and faded and useless!"

"Mother," said the girl in a low voice, "don't, please! It doesn't do any good. It can't!"

"You'd stand up for your father, child, wouldn't you? And why not? It's in you! Mr. Rotherwick, give me two pounds ten for this jade idol and it's yours!"

Johnny, feeling that he had lost all will power, paid over the two pounds and the ten shillings and took the little green jade idol into his hands.

Mr. Devenden began to laugh feebly.

"Ironic," he said. "Ironic! But it's gone far enough. Quite far enough." He groped in his pocket and produced a worn leather wallet. "Mr. Rotherwick, it's not fair. The idol is yours, nach'rally." His speech was thick and not very distinct. "But I'm going to pay you back the two pounds ten. I must."

"Claude," said his wife, "are you crazy?" She stared at him in wild and incredulous anger. "What on earth are you doing? You mean you'd let him keep the idol and give him the money back as well? What for? Mr. Rotherwick, why did you come here and say you wanted the idol? How did you know we had the idol? Why should my husband want to pay back the money you paid for it? Tell me!"

Mr. Devenden, his face a kind of bluish-gray color, was still fumbling in his wallet; his hands were shaking; he seemed to have a difficulty in drawing his breath.

"Your money, Mr. Roth'wick," he muttered. "Your money! Your jade idol, un'stan'? Don' lis'en that wife of mine—doesn't un'stan'." He raised his eyes and stared vacantly at Johnny, as if he did not remember him. "Jade idol, o' course! Bought it from feller got it in China. Hun'reds of years old. Im'tation."

He rose to his feet shakily and supported himself against the back of his chair.

"Been in prison, Mr. Roth'wick. Bad! Don' want to go to pris'n 'gain, do I? Tha's why I don' go home. Can't! Don' wan' to go to pris'n. They pay me to stay 'way! Un'stan'?"

He swayed on his feet and sank limply into the chair.

"Claude!" said Mrs. Devenden. "Claude!"

"Forgive me, Eleanor," he said. "Not fit to live. Didn' mean to be cruel to you, El'nor, ol' girl. I'm a thief, El'nor, an' you know it."

Mrs. Devenden dropped on to her knees by his side.

"Claude, dearest! Claude!"

He choked.

"I can't breathe. What's happened? Eleanor, hold me!"

All of a sudden he toppled over sidewise. The little gray-haired woman caught him in her arms and cried out his name in terror.

"Claude! Claude!"

For a time no one either moved or spoke. And then the girl whispered—

"Mother!"

Mrs. Devenden was staring with eyes of horror into her husband's pale face.

Johnny approached softly, almost timidly.

"I think he's dead," he said.

LATER, when the doctor had gone and there was no more to be done till morning and the women of the house had been driven out of the room, Johnny and the girl stood in the quiet street and talked in low voices.

"What's going to become of you?" he said.

"I don't know," she whispered. "There's nothing to keep us in Lisbon any more."

He gazed at her delicate profile outlined against a dark mass of shadow.

"Will you be going home?" he asked.

She nodded and smoothed the red hair back from her forehead with a gesture that reminded him uncannily of her dead father's.

"Poor mother hasn't had much of a chance," she said. "It's been hard on her, of course. They never told me, but I guessed. I couldn't help guessing. She hated Lisbon and fretted, but she did her best. She wasn't clever like father."

She spoke in a controlled, quiet voice with no trace of either regret or sorrow.

"It's rather terrible about that little jade idol, I know. He stole it from you, didn't he? It's not a bit of use your shaking your head. He did. Though I never knew exactly what made him leave England and come to Lisbon, I knew perfectly well how he was earning a living—one of the ways, at least—I've known for a long time. He used to give me things and tell me to sell them. I used to pretend that I didn't know where they came from. But I did know, of course. It was wrong of me, wasn't it? But there were times, Mr. Rotherwick, when we'd scarcely enough to eat, mother and I, and she isn't strong.

"I got better prices than father did, and I couldn't refuse to do as he asked. I did at first. And mother told me it was my duty to help her and father. What right had I to be too proud to sell the things that father had bought? You see, Mr. Rotherwick, mother believed in him. That was the queer part of it! He'd been in trouble at home, in prison, and when he came out he told her he'd never go wrong again and she believed him. She thought he was good and honest and true."

Johnny wondered. He had his doubts but he said nothing.

"He was rather a trial, poor father was. I didn't blame mother for being hard on him. She'd had a lot to put up with. But he wasn't quite all bad, Mr. Rotherwick. He was kind to me always!" She broke off with a little sigh. For a time she was silent. Then she said, "Don't think he always stole, Mr. Rotherwick. He didn't. But the people in the shops where I used to sell things thought that he did. That made it worse for me, didn't it?"

Again she was silent. She raised her eyes and looked up at him.

"Life hasn't been easy, Mr. Rotherwick. That's what mother said, wasn't it? I've been frightened sometimes I'd grow up like father. But I won't. One doesn't have to do things that are wrong, does one?"

There was a lump in Johnny's throat and he did not answer.

This adorable child! he thought. This angel!

His heart was thumping unsteadily.

"I've not been happy," she said. "Ever."

"I knew that directly I caught sight of you," said Johnny.

"When was that?"

"In the Praza Rio de Janeiro, and then in that shop where I bought the little green jade idol. You didn't know, but I followed you."

She uttered a faint laugh.

"But I did know. I knew it all along. At first I was frightened."

By the light of an arc-lamp he saw her pale lips twitch into a smile.

"Are you frightened now?"

"Of course I'm not. I know you."

"May I see you again?" he said.

"If you'd care to."

He caught hold of her thin arms.

"Will you write to me, Delia? Will you? We sail tomorrow!"

"Yes, I'll write to you."

"Promise!"

"I promise."

WHEN Johnny reached the *Rose of Araby* once more, he found his friend, the third engineer, seated on the after deck, smoking a pipe.

"Not turned in yet, Mr. Gregg?"

"No, m'son, I've been waiting for you. What happened? Did you get that green jade idol of yours?"

"Why, yes," said Johnny, "of course I did."

Editor's Note:—*It so happened that the author, having finished his story, was not wholly satisfied with the way it ended. Accordingly he wrote another ending for the same story, giving it a decidedly different coloring. The story, as you read it, has this second ending.*

When he sent us the story he inclosed with it the original ending and, however much it may shock conventions and custom, we are going to give you that original ending as well as the one finally adopted. It is generally rather interesting to have a look-in on a writer's working processes and in this case it seems particularly interesting to see how comparatively few touches can radically change the whole texture of a piece of fiction. Also it gives you your choice of two rather different stories. The following should replace the above story from top of page 26, line 4, onward:

A man—Devenden, of course!—mumbled a reply.

"I did my best. I wasn't able to sell very much, but the things I bought, Eleanor, ought to bring us a profit. I got them cheap."

The woman broke into a high-pitched laugh.

"Cheap! Are you crazy or what?"

Johnny turned the handle and pushed open the door and stalked into a large room, very hot and untidy, with a high sloping ceiling, lighted by one oil lamp and, at a glance, as crowded with old and dilapidated furniture and odds and ends of clothing as any junk man's or second hand storekeeper's.

The change from the pitch darkness of the landing was so sudden that for the

moment it was impossible to see clearly.

Mr. Devenden stood opposite the door by the side of a small table that was laid for supper with a white cloth, knives and forks and cups and plates. Between the table and a small, decrepit looking stove stood an enormously stout woman in black. In one hand she had a coffee pot, in the other a jug.

Johnny Rotherwick, faintly aware of some aromatic perfume, did not speak.

Mr. Devenden backed slowly toward a low sideboard.

The fat woman in black set the coffee pot and the milk jug down on the table and put her hands on her hips.

"What brings you here, hey?" she said. "Get out!"

Johnny studied her in shocked amazement. She was gross and fat—that much he had already noticed—and tall and altogether coarse looking. She was dressed in black, a shabby black velvet evening gown, smeared with grease, cut much too low in the neck and with short sleeves that revealed fat, pink arms. Her hair was a faded auburn, streaked with gray, and was worn piled high on her large head and bound over the forehead with a strip of shabby green brocade. Around her throat, under the double chin, was a string of imitation pearls.

She was angry, and Johnny knew that she had been drinking. Her large, round face was flushed purple under the white powder that was smeared unskillfully over her flat cheeks and sharp, aquiline nose and dumpy chin. In her China-blue and slightly bulbous eyes was a look of almost insane resentment. Her lips were pink and sullen.

Everything about her seemed absurd, ridiculous, even laughable, yet who, seeing her, would laugh? One wanted to turn and bolt down those three steep flights of stairs into the narrow street, yet one stood stock still and waited and watched and wondered.

"I asked you a question," she said. "Are you going to answer or not? Who are you and what are you doing here? Is it your habit to enter a lady's apartment without knocking? You'll find the door behind you. Close it when you go out and be quick about it!"

The impression her way of speaking and her manner gave was that at any instant she would burst into screams of rage.

Johnny spoke in a voice that he scarcely recognized as his own.

"*You* know why I'm here, Devenden, don't you?"

There was no answer. The man's face was the color of old sail-cloth; the bruise on his cheek was purple.

"Well," said Johnny, "why don't you say something?"

"If that husband of mine," said the woman, "that dear, devoted husband who brought me to this —— of a country and can't get me out of it—if he was only half a man, which he ain't—isn't—he'd ask you what the —— and all you mean by coming here at this time of night without a word of apology. He'd throw you out. Other men would, I know. If I raised my hand like this—" she snapped her fingers—"they'd jump at the chance to do me a service. But there—" she shrugged her white, fleshy shoulders—"no woman is ever appreciated by her own husband, is she?"

Hidden beneath her scorn and anger there was apparent a kind of dreadful coquettishness.

"What are you, boy? A sailor on the look-out for a chance of a bit of trade, or what?" She lowered her heavy eyelids and looked mysterious. "What kind of trade, eh? Got anything to sell? Or is it buying? Or is it a guide you want to take you around and show you Lisbon by night? Or did you hope to find me here by myself?"

Johnny was shaken. Against his will, he knew that he was feeling sorry for the man who had betrayed his trust in him and was in consequence more coldly furious, more determined to have justice done, than when he had left the ship, even.

"Eleanor," said Mr. Devenden, "I owe this gentleman a debt of gratitude for a—a kindness he did me!"

"Rubbish!" said the woman. "What kindness did any one ever do you? I don't believe a word of it! Young man, did my husband ask you to come and see him and his home? He didn't, I know. He'd be ashamed to let any one know what kind of a kennel he keeps his wife in. A lady! Do you know the reason we live here? It's because he's jealous. He's afraid I'll attract the attention of other men and be popular like I was when he married me. That husband of mine is the meanest man in the world and the stupidest!"

"Eleanor," said Mr. Devenden, "don't say things like that, please! It's not being fair on yourself."

As he spoke he moved nearer his wife at the foot of the table and Johnny saw on the sideboard in front of which he had been standing the little green jade figure.

"I've come for that little idol!" he said coldly. "I'm in a hurry!"

In Mr. Devenden's shifty eyes was an abject appeal for mercy, and Johnny realized as surely as if he had been told that the woman believed in her despised husband's honor.

"The little idol!" said Mr. Devenden. "Why, of course, Mr. Rotherwick. Take it, by all means. I promised it you as a slight memento of our friendship, didn't I? Take it, do."

Johnny held out his hand, but the woman was too quick for him.

"Claude," she said, "are you mad or what?" She turned to Johnny, the idol hugged to her bosom. "It's mine, this little idol! I've had it for years. Do you want it?"

Johnny nodded. His lips twitched in a smile of grim amusement.

"Yes, I want it. As a matter of fact, I'm going to have it."

"Going to have it!" said the woman sharply. "That you're not! My husband gave it me on my wedding day. You can't have it—not unless you pay for it!"

"Eleanor, for God's sake, don't!" said Mr. Devenden.

He added a few words in Portuguese and she cut him short with a burst of shrill laughter.

"You'll excuse him, won't you? He's not quite right in his head. You wouldn't think he'd a living to earn, would you?"

She dropped into a big, high-backed chair and sat glaring at her husband with her teeth closed over her lower lip and her arms folded across her broad chest.

It was very hot and close. The air of the room was stale and exhausted. The aromatic perfume that had at first seemed pleasant, even indeed enticing, was now nauseating.

Johnny sighed.

For some reason or other the interview with the Devendens had not gone quite as he had hoped. He felt suddenly young and inexperienced. A wave of anger swept over him.

"I want that jade idol," he said shortly.

"Will you buy it?" said the woman. "Will you?"

And at that naïve request Johnny was forced to smile.

"How much do you want?" he asked.

"How much will you give?"

"Suppose I offer ten shillings."

The woman closed her eyes and laughed.

"He'll offer me ten shillings! A wedding present from my dear old father! Well, well! That's what we call having a sense o' humor, ain't it? Make me another offer, boy, and be quick about it! Gone dumb or what? Maybe it's because of my dazzling beauty—is that it?"

Her high-pitched, crackling laugh broke off abruptly. Into the pale blue eyes there shot a sudden look of dislike. Beneath the green bandeau her forehead wrinkled into a frown.

"Well!" she said sharply. "Well!"

Johnny, puzzled by her change of expression, heard light footsteps and turning his head saw that the girl with the red bobbed hair had entered the room and was closing the door.

For a moment she did not move from the shadows. Johnny knew that she was studying him, asking herself why she should find him here, in the same room as her father and mother.

Very slowly she advanced into the

circle of lamplight and stood by the table, very thin and slight and drooping, and strangely, elusively beautiful. She gazed at the woman seated in the big chair without speaking. Her face was very pale; all the color had left her cheeks. She looked like some child that has received its first insight into the shifts and trickeries of a grown-up world. She still wore the lilac frock and the white thread stockings and the clumsy shoes.

"We don't want you here now, Delia," said the woman. "Go into the other room!"

"What made you say the green jade idol was a wedding present, Mother?" she said in a husky voice. "It wasn't. You know it wasn't."

"Will you hold your tongue!" said the woman. "You interfering little cat! Do you want a beating or what?"

"Eleanor!" said Mr. Devenden. "For pity's sake!"

The girl began to speak in Portuguese. The woman stopped her with a screech.

"Shut up, will you! Shut up, I tell you! You talk like that to me, you hussy, and I'll turn you into the street!" She twisted her huge bulk round in her chair. "Now, Mr. Rotherwick! Now! A wedding present from my poor dear mother who died of a broken heart when she heard what I'd had to endure from my husband. Come, Mr. Rotherwick, make me an offer."

Johnny glanced at the girl. Her clear gray eyes surveyed him anxiously. It flashed into his mind that she had guessed why he had come and was begging him for her sake and for the sake of her father to make no more trouble but to go at once.

But he still wanted the green jade idol. It was his by right. He would treasure it all the more now that he had seen the girl again and knew what kind of home she had and what kind of mother had brought her up.

"I'll give you a pound," he said gruffly. "That's my limit!"

"That's absurd," said the woman. "My mother gave it me. 'Eleanor,' she said, 'keep this as long as you live. You'll be unhappy, married to a man like Claude. This will remind you of what you've lost.' She was right. It has. But, seeing it's you, Mr. Rotherwick, a nice looking young man like you, I'll let you have it for two pounds."

Mr. Devenden broke out hoarsely.

"It's not worth it!" he said. "It's not jade; it's imitation! Don't you understand?"

"You —— fool!" said the woman.

"Of course it's not jade," said the girl. "I know it's not. Haven't I seen it again and again?"

"Merciful heavens!" said the woman. "What have I done to be tied to a couple like this? Ain't they the limit, Mr. Rotherwick? Ain't they honest, the pair of them? My husband's too honest to live and the girl's a half-wit! Look at her! Did you ever see such a gawk? All legs and neck! And that hair of hers!"

She rocked to and fro, laughing.

"Eleanor," said Mr. Devenden, "you're making a bad impression."

"A bad impression!" she screamed. "A bad impression! And you, you're not, are you, you soft-headed dummy! You can go out an' enjoy yourself, with money to spend in your pocket, but it don't matter about me and the brat, does it? I'm only your wife. Look at that kid's clothes, too! Ain't she a scream? Granddaughter of a lord! Would you believe it, Mr. Rotherwick? It's the truth. Kicked out of home, he was, the poor dead-head! Couldn't be trusted, he couldn't! Look at him! Married me under false pretenses, he did, and brought me out here to this hole to live in a garret! When I married him, and lord only knows what I saw in the stiff, I was the prettiest girl in the prettiest chorus in London. The chances I had! And I married him!"

Tears were trickling down the powder on the stout woman's face.

"I did my best for you, Eleanor," said the husband. "It's not been easy!"

"Easy! ——! It's been easy for me, ain't it?"

"You know why we're here, don't you?"

"Know why we're here!" She swore at him. "You —— snitch! You drag out that lying —— story again and I'll swing for you, s'elp me God, I will! Here, you—" she turned to Johnny once more—"you make me sick, the lot of you! You give me two pounds ten for this jade doll and you can have it. Given me, it was, by a man with a title! He fell in love with me and swore to be true as long as he lived. Two pounds ten you said and two pounds ten it is!"

The silence was broken by the girl's laugh.

"Yes," said Johnny, "two pounds ten it is."

"Well, then, it isn't!" said the woman. "You'll pay me three. Three pounds or nothing!"

"Three!" said Johnny. "Very well, then, three, but not a penny more." He frowned. "Aren't you afraid I'll get it away from you and not let you have a penny?"

She met his gaze sullenly.

"No," she said, "I'm afraid of nothing. Not even of that husband I've got. Not even of that —— skinny girl. I wish to heaven you'd take her off my hands as well as the image! I'd throw her in and call it a bargain!"

By no change of expression did the girl show that she had heard.

Johnny, feeling that he had lost all will power and was incapable of opposing the fat woman in black, paid over the three pounds and took the little green jade idol into his two hands.

There was a moment's silence.

And then Mr. Devenden brought out a leather wallet and said:

"Mr. Rotherwick, it's not fair. The idol's yours, naturally— Keep it!—but I'm going to pay you back the three pounds. I must!"

"Claude!" shouted the woman. "Claude, are you crazy?" She stared at him in wild-eyed indignation. "What d'you think you're doing, you fool?" She rose to her feet. "Give it me back!" she croaked, thrusting out her hand. "Mr. Rotherwick, give me back that image! I won't sell it! Give it me back! Do you hear what I say? I'm going to keep it!"

"Mother," said the girl, "you said you'd sell. You must sell."

"You slut!" said the woman. She seemed all of a sudden exhausted. She put one hand to her heart and leaned against the table. Her face was a kind of bluish-gray color under the layer of powder. "You'll kill me between you!" she gasped. "Kill me! Get out o' my sight, the lot o' you! D'you hear me? Get out o' my sight!"

She swayed on her feet and sank limply into the chair.

"Eleanor!" said Mr. Devenden. "Eleanor!"

"Don't talk to me! I hate you! I wish you were dead. I do! If I had my way I'd leave you tomorrow!"

"Why don't you, then?" said Johnny.

"Why don't I?" She began to whimper. "How can I? If I go back home they'll put me in prison again! D'you think I'd stay here a day if I didn't have to, along o' him?" She burst into uncontrollable sobbing and bent forward, her hands to her face. "God help me! I'm a wicked, wicked woman! I'm not fit to live. I'm not. Claude, I can't stand no more of it!"

Mr. Devenden dropped on to his knees by her side.

"Eleanor, dearest! Eleanor!"

She choked.

"God! I can't breathe! What's happened? Claude, hold me! Claude!"

All of a sudden she toppled over sidewise. He caught her in his arms and cried out her name in terror:

"Eleanor! Eleanor!"

For a time no one either moved or spoke.

And then the girl whispered—

"Father!"

Mr. Devenden was staring with eyes of horror into the woman's pale face.

Johnny approached slowly, almost timidly.

"I think she's dead," he said.

LATER, when the doctor had gone and there was no more to be done till morning and the women of the house had been driven out of the room, Johnny and the red-haired girl stood in the quiet street and talked in low voices.

"What's going to become of you?" he said.

"I don't know." She sighed. "There's nothing to keep us in Lisbon now."

He gazed at her delicate profile outlined against the dark shadows.

"Will you be going home?" he asked.

She nodded.

"Was it because of your mother?"

"Yes," said the girl, "it was because of her. Poor mother hadn't much of a chance really! They never told me her story, exactly, but I guessed. She hated Lisbon and she fretted. And she wasn't strong. I'd never seen the best of her, of course." She spoke in a controlled, quiet tone with no trace either of regret or sorrow. "It's rather terrible, I know, about that little jade idol. Father stole it from you, didn't he? It's not a bit of use your shaking your head. He did. That's one of the ways he has of earning a living. I've known for a long time now. He gives me things to sell. I always pretend that I don't know where they come from, but I do know, of course. I'm not excusing myself, exactly, and yet I suppose I am.

"But there were times, Mr. Rotherwick, when we'd scarcely enough to eat, mother and I, and she wasn't strong. I get better prices than father, and I couldn't refuse to do as he asked. I did at first, though, and then mother got angry and told me it was my duty to help her and father. What right had I to be proud? If father was humble enough to buy things, I ought to be humble enough to sell them.

"You see, Mr. Rotherwick, mother believed in him. That was the queer part of it. She thought he was good and honest and though she wasn't kind to him, she looked up to him. I shouldn't like you to think he's all bad, Mr. Rotherwick; he's not. He's always been good to me, always!"

She broke off with a little sigh. For a time she was silent. Then she said:

"Don't think he always stole, Mr. Rotherwick. He didn't. I'm sure of it. But the people in the shops where I used to sell things thought that he did. That made it worse for me, didn't it?"

Again she was silent.

"Life hasn't been easy, Mr. Rotherwick. I've been frightened sometimes I'd get like mother; or if it comes to that, father! But I won't. One doesn't have to do things that are wrong, does one?"

There was a lump in Johnny's throat and he did not answer.

This adorable child! he thought.

"I've not been happy," she said. "Ever."

"I knew that directly I caught sight of you," said Johnny.

"When was that?"

"In the Praza Rio de Janeiro, and then in that shop where I bought the little green jade idol. You didn't know, but I followed you!"

She uttered a faint laugh.

"But I did know. I knew it all along. At first I was frightened."

By the light of an arc-lamp across the street he saw her pale lips twitch into a smile.

"Are you frightened now?"

"Of course I'm not. I know you."

"May I see you again?" he said.

"If you'd care to!"

He caught hold of her thin arms.

"Will you write to me, Delia? Will you? We sail tomorrow!"

"Yes, I'll write to you!"

"Promise!"

"I promise."

WHEN Johnny reached the *Rose of Araby* once more, he found his friend, the third engineer, seated on the after deck, smoking a pipe.

"Not turned in yet, Mr. Gregg?"

"No, m' son, I've been waiting for you. What happened? Did you get that green jade idol of yours?"

"Why, yes," said Johnny, "of course I did."

A letter from Mr. Townend points the differences and gives his reason for hesitation between the two versions:

London, England

I am doing something that isn't very usual, perhaps, and that is, sending two endings. The second ending, not attached to the rest of the story—the alternative ending, I should call it—was the one I wrote first, and in many respects it is the better version: the objection is, however, that it is rather sordid and that it leaves the girl with the red hair without a single decent parent, so that the reader might say—wrongly, I believe—that no girl with a couple of thieves as father and mother could be anything but a thief in embryo herself! You know what I mean, anyway: hereditary strain of crookedness, etc.

And so I rewrote my original ending and made the girl's mother, if not a sympathetic character, a decent woman with decent instincts, so that the red-haired girl isn't quite forlorn and hopeless. Nevertheless, I still think that the version where both father and mother are crooked is the better of the two.—W. TOWNEND.

Friendship by way of the strong arm

Three from the Deck

By EDWARD L. McKENNA

DO YOU remember 1917, that fantastic year when there was so much martial music and so much giving till it hurt, when there was an unbelievable number of prosperous young civilians buying bonds in the vaudeville theaters, and others were sent away with a smile, not to say a giggle? Many an alliance was formed in 1917 which since then has been broken, many a preposterous dollar borrowed, and many an old love kissed good-by forever.

Some of the partnerships did mean something, and persist even to this late date. For instance there were three young men; a Polack, a Jew and a native son of Bridgeport. The drollness of circumstance first brought them together on the decks of the U. S. S. *DeMave*, a tin torpedo-boat miraculously spared from the Spanish-American war. The Polack was called Nick Warcalonis. He hailed from Pittston, Pa. In private life he was what is variously known as a grifter, a gyp, a shillaber and a come-on, and he worked the street carnivals.

The Jew's name was Samuel Green. Brought up in New York, he described himself as a jewelry-engraver, but that was really only his side-line. He had been—well, not a lieutenant, but a sort of top-sergeant to a well-known man about town, now deceased, Big Jack Zelig. Know what that makes Samuel Green? Yes. A gang-man; gun-man, maybe—a gambler probably. A good fellow in a rough-and-tumble certainly. Sam was quiet and polite, and looked neat and trim even in a sailor's uniform. By some freak he was blond. Also he would give a friend the shirt off his back, which is not so uncommon a peculiarity among his race as Gentiles usually believe.

The Bridgeport boy was Joe Hawkes,

a professional photographer. He had been looking out for Joe ever since he was fourteen. The process had made him somewhat cynical. He'd had a studio in Norwich and one on the Bowery in Coney Island and one at Ravinia Park, and he'd been engaged to a chorus girl on the Columbia Wheel when he was nineteen. Joe had reached the point where he sneered at himself—he'd been sneering at the rest of the world ever since he had first learned to sneer.

Joe and the Polack got acquainted in the course of a game of banker-and-broker, when the ship was lying at the foot of Twenty-third Street, in the East River. Nick was banker, and Joe had bet half a dollar and was cutting the cards. As he did so, he ran his fingers casually along the edge of the pack; then he grinned and looked appraisingly at Nick.

Warcalonis looked back at him, his eyes cold and steady. Joe didn't say anything. He cut a nine and Nick cut a queen—and picked up the money. Again he looked at Joe.

"Doubles this time?" he asked.

Joe grinned.

"Nope. You're too good, Polack. I got enough."

That deck of cards, you see, had been pared along the edge with a razor-blade. "Strippers," they call them. They were Nick's cards. He was cheating—oh, yes, that's what he was doing. And he had an idea that Joe knew it, which was entirely correct. But Joe's ethical standards were peculiar. It had amused Joe; it hadn't made him indignant. Joe didn't cheat at cards, himself.

Neither did Sam Green. Sam loved to gamble. He'd bet on anything—on the relative speed of two flying birds, or of two tugboats, odds or evens on the numbers of bills. Chance fascinated him. He was full of superstition. He wouldn't lend his own father a nickel in a crap game. You couldn't get him to take a two-dollar bill. Sam would get the last penny out of a poker hand or a good run with the dice, but he didn't need crooked paraphernalia to help him.

He spoke quietly to Joe one night about Nick's poker game. He didn't like certain things, he said. What did Joe think? Joe shrugged his shoulders.

"Listen," Sam said. "You know your way around, Hawkes. I don't want a dirty thing like this all over the ship. Late tonight—see?—I think I'll call him up on the deck and tell him a couple of things. You can see that everything is O. K.—huh?—and so on."

"Just as you like," said Joe.

SO DURING the well known "graveyard watch"—that is, some time between twelve and four—Nick and Sam settled their differences in a quiet corner aft. The Polack had shown quality. He had listened to Sam's grievances with an immobile face.

"Only one thing to do about this," he said, and lashed out suddenly with his fist.

But Sam had been waiting for that, and it didn't hit him. And Joe had watched them with the delight of an expert. Finally the Polack slumped to the deck, licked.

"Get him a drink, Joe. Get some water from the galley."

"Now, see here, Polack," said Sam. "I ain't going to open my mouth about this, see? Only after this, if you play any cards on this ship, you'll play square, see?"

Nick rubbed his hand across his bleeding mouth.

"Listen," he said. "I had to get that jack. I got a dame over in Greenpoint. I had to have it. That's why I ran that deck in. I said to myself, 'They're only a bunch of apple-knockers, anyhow.' Then this guy here, I knew he was hep. But he didn't say nothing. All right. It's K. O. with Nick. Only listen, Green. I ain't in very good shape now. I been drinking too much. I been running around. I'm going to try you again some time."

Green nodded. But they never fought again with each other.

LATER on there was a little trouble with the cook. The cook was feeding the black gang heavy, but when the men up forward wanted seconds he offered to wrap them around their necks. Joe didn't care for the cook, but the cook weighed a hundred eighty-seven and was a former acetylene-welder.

Sam and Joe had a conference.

"Yeah. I think we'll have to send a committee to that cook, Joe. Let's see. You, me and—huh! Let's get the Polack. You know, Joe, I don't think the Polack is such a bad guy. He ain't yellow, anyhow. He made that little mistake—well, he wasn't brought up right along those lines, that's all— Hey, Nick!"

Nick, Joe and Sam went back aft and saw the cook. Joe did the talking, in a dry, nasty way he had.

"You see, Cookie, you may think you're tough. Only, we're going to eat, see? We ain't going to the skipper. You may be tough. If you're as tough as the three of us, I don't mind saying you're tough. All you got to do is keep on like you are. That's all. And you'll be fighting three men. Who do you think'll help you? The black gang? Don't kid yourself. If you want protection, go holler your insides out to the skipper, or, if you think you're lucky, come up topside now and battle. We ain't had no pineapple now for two weeks. You guys in the black gang are sick of pineapple, you eat it so much. We don't get no seconds. We don't get no cocoa—"

It looked for a minute or so as if the cook felt lucky. Nick and Joe were standing, Nick a little to one side, ready, not to say anxious, to execute a flank movement. But Sam was sitting on the table, his legs swinging, and he wasn't looking at any one.

The forecastle had pineapple for dessert the next day.

THEN there was one time that Joe got drunk ashore and started a battle with four or five English sailors, and the local police interfered. They pretty nearly had Joe in the wagon. But Nick and Sam were in the Y. M. C. A. taking a bath at the time and somebody came in hollering, "All out, Yanks! Fight downtown! All out, Yanks!" and Nick and Sam were well up in the vanguard of the relief company. There were more in it than Joe by that time. The Polack pasted a cop and lifted Joe in his arms and ran back to the ship with him. As Admiral Sims said, there was much fraternizing between the Navies.

After that, the three of them used to go ashore together, and when one of them got a quart, he'd tell the other two.

FOLLOWED the armistice.

One day Joe met Sam at the corner of Sixth Street and Second Avenue. Sam had a diamond ring on his little finger and a big pin in his tie.

"Oh, yes, Joe, doing good."

"What you doing, Sam?"

Sam looked around.

"Working with—uh—'Kid' Banger."

Kid Banger. Let's see what he was doing. Protecting the Garment-Workers' Union? Or the Cutters? Or the chicken-pullers? Or the stuss-games? Something like that.

Oh, Joe was a photographer for the Daily Picture Looking-Glass Bulletin.

Sam's face clouded.

"A newspaper boy, huh?"

"Yeah. Might let me make a nice picture of you, Sam. We could run it after you get bumped off some night."

Sam laughed.

"All right, Joe. I know you're right. I needn't worry."

They had a tremendous lunch at Allaire's.

IN AUGUST, Joe was passing Broadway and Forty-First Street, when Nick Warcalonis threw his arms around him with many loud and hearty curses. Nick looked good, too. By and by it developed that looks meant nothing. Nick was just back from Saratoga. Cleaned, he said. Joe was broke, too, pretty nearly. He found two dollars for Nick, however. Then he thought a while, and

made an appointment with Nick for the next day.

The following morning Joe lounged into the Friendly Social Club, which is located within cannon-shot of the Lafayette Baths. Sam was there, all right.

"What, the Polack? Busted, huh? Tell him— No, that won't do. I got something on tonight. Here, Joe, here's fifty. Give it to him and tell him I sent it."

And Joe gave it to Nick at lunch time and Nick cried, the Polacks being a queer people, too. "What do you know, Joe? He sends this jack to Nick, huh? All right. Nick'll fix this, you wait and see. And listen, Joe. Two bucks from you is the same as half a yard to Sam. Listen, you don't expect to get your two bucks back, do you?"

Joe laughed.

"No, Nick, I guess not."

"Well, I tell you. Some time Nick is going to put two bucks on a long shot's nose, see? Some time when you don't expect it you'll get a letter from Nick, and you'll say to yourself, 'The —— Polack ——, he come through all right.' Get me? What's Sam doing, Joe?"

Joe cocked his head a-slant.

"Kid Banger," he said softly.

The Polack's neck seemed to stiffen.

"Ooh!—Ooh!" he said.

"Yep. I suppose, you thick Hunkie, I don't have to tell you—"

"Yeah. Listen, Joe. Let's go somewhere. We're going to eat, ain't we? —I—come on let's eat. Anywheres. This'll do. Come on."

And in a Childs' restaurant, in the interval while butter-cakes were cooking, Nick fought for his soul. And lost.

"Joe, I got to tell you. They're getting Kid Banger. Tonight. Nick just happens to know, get me. What we going to do?"

"They're what?" said Joe.

"They're—you heard me. Don't ask Nick. First time I ever sold out, Joe. But, gees, what can I do? I got Sam's roll in my kick. When they—uh—when this comes off, they'll be more than the Kid takes the trip, see?"

"Yeah."

And Joe took a turn at wrestling for his soul. And lost.

There was his paper. There were the pictures. He knew where, and when. A nice story. If he went he might be shot, of course. But that didn't enter into his calculations. Any more than he thought of going to the police or the district-attorney. The issue was clear to him—it was Sam or his paper, his yellow little paper, whose readers reveled in stories like the one about to break.

"We'll have to get a hold of Sam, I guess, Nick," he said at length.

It wasn't easy to get a hold of Sam. They tried the Pastime; they tried Brewers'; they tried the Friendly Social Club. The people from whom they inquired gave them chilly glances.

Perhaps Joe and Nick were closer to danger than they had been on the churning Atlantic. Because Nick had his quiet affiliations on the other side of the fence. And Joe was a reporter. And there was something doing that night.

Joe wondered whether he wouldn't have guessed there was trouble coming. He imagined he could feel it in the hot hush of the Friendly Social Club, that he could notice it, beneath the clamor of the Ghetto streets. Some time tonight a man was going to kill the king. A pinchbeck king, a leering, undersized king, but a king who had held his country fast and levied no small tribute from his subjects.

FIVE o'clock now. Sweltering hot along the Bowery. Still, crowds of girls coming chattering out from workplaces along Second Avenue. Weary slatterns sitting on the steps of flats. Dirty children, many of them beautiful as angels.

Six o'clock.

"Nope, he ain't been in. Try Jimmie's place."

"Yeah, that's right."

Seven o'clock.

"Hello, Sam."

Sam in a cap and without his jewelry.

"Hello, boys. Nick, you old son-of-a-gun, what do you say?"

"Been looking all over for you, Sam."

"Yeah? Well, this is my busy day. Too bad. Matter of fact, I got to blow now. Tomorrow night, maybe. If— Call me tomorrow night, boys. Sorry I got to run along. I—"

Got to run along? What for? Rumors, may be, that there was trouble tonight. Got to keep close to the king's side tonight. Was that a bulge under his coat, or was it just his chest? No, there was something under his arm.

Nick was voluble.

"Why, Sam, you can't leave Joe and the old Polack this way. We got to eat together. We been looking for you all day."

"Tomorrow night, Nick. Can't make it tonight. Late now."

"Where you bound for?"

"I'm going to meet the Boss. Up at—well, a little ways from here."

"Come on, let's get a taxi. We'll take you. Come on, you got to ride with us, ain't he, Joe? Now, where to, Sam?"

"To—well, listen. I'll ride up to Fourteenth Street and back with you. I don't want to drive where I'm going. Drive away from there, maybe — heh-heh. Fourteenth Street, cabby!"

"Sam, listen. I don't do this for fun." Nick touched his eyes, his lips and his heart with his fingers. "The Merciful, the Compassionate," he muttered. The old Arab sign, that has lost some of its sanctity through careless use; once it was a useful fraternity grip. "Sam, I'm asking you. Where you bound for tonight?"

Sam's eyes bored him with a steadiness equal to that of the automatic under his arm.

"I'm—going—on—business," he said.

Nick's lips trembled.

"Heavy business, Sam?"

"Yes. Heavy business."

"Sam—Sam, listen. Go with us tonight. Can't you? For old times' sake."

"You know I'd go if I could. I can't make it tonight. Tomorrow night, maybe."

"All right. Holy gee, what's that out there?"

Sam and Joe looked. It was while they were looking that Nick hit Sam with the black-jack. Sam crumpled like a tired child.

"Now, then. Don't look so sick, Joe, you cuckoo! What else could I do? I couldn't tell him. I—if I told him I'd queer it for—for other friends of mine. Here, now. I'll fix him."

And he produced an apparatus designed to give sleep to the weary, and used it.

"Hey, bud. Drive us back. Over the bridge. Going to Brooklyn."

By the time they got across the Bridge it was dark. They drove to a shabby rooming-house.

"Friend's drunk," said Nick. "Here, bud. Here's ten bucks. Drive home, drive a long ways away, get me?"

"Yeah. So long," said the driver.

When they had Sam safely inside and laid on a bed they looked at him. He was breathing heavily.

"He's K. O." said Nick. "Be all right tomorrow. Have a bad headache. Better than having a couple of bullets in him. Now—so long, Joe. This town is no place for Nick. Not no more. I suppose when Sam comes to, he'll be sore at me. Well, I can't help that. I don't see what else I could do. Good-by, Joe, old kid. Over the desert sands. I'm *done* in this town. I got to blow. Good-by for a long time. I done a lot of funny things in my time. This is the first time I ever tipped anything off. Well, what else could I do? Listen. You tell Sam, if you get a chance, that I didn't see what else I could do, will you?"

When he had gone, Joe lighted a cigaret.

Hope this Polack knew his stuff. Ought he to get a doctor. Gosh, he couldn't sit here and do nothing—

Suddenly he looked at his watch. Still time? He jumped up, put another pillow under Sam and went out the door.

Should he lock it? No. Out into the street and over to Fulton. Grabbed a subway car; made his furious way over to Fourth Street. Up to a certain café—

But there was a crowd outside it; and within, Kid Banger was lying under a sheet and two men beside him, and one was already on the table at Bellevue.

Joe got some some pictures and turned them in at the office.

Then he went back over the Bridge.

He wondered what Sam Green would say to him when he woke up, or what he would do. What he'd say when he found out that his leader was dead, and his own gun still in its sheath.

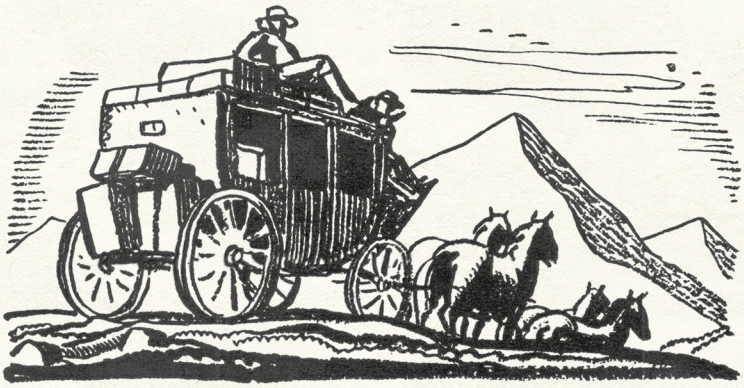
He wondered whether Sam would wake up at all.

Would it be the part of prudence to leave Sam to recover or not to recover, all by himself? Maybe so. But Joe wasn't feeling prudent tonight. He was feeling as he used to feel when he had had about five shots of 110 over proof and was walking up to a large English sailor and saying to him:

"Hy, Limey, who won the war? Ah, imagine you're a canary bird and take a flying jump at the moon."

And, in considering Joe and Sam and Nick, it might be recalled that there was a time when they were very useful. Perhaps it was one like them who first put a scarlet flower in his helmet and gave us all something beautiful to think of and to remember.

THE *Dedwood Coach Brakes Down*



Letters of a Wandering Partner

By ALAN LEMAY

Dedwood, June 1877

DEER BUG EYE,

I hav the feelin Bug Eye that I hav did a very keerless thing, an I feer you are goin to hav 1 of yer mad spells an get indigeschin agen, but try to remember Bug Eye that getin mad only makes you look mor foolish an gets you nothin. I say that fer yer own good Bg. Eye.

By this time you hav got my letters that I giv the old feller to take to you that was ridin tord Elk Mowntin, an you hav red all about how I got shut in the Hen Crick jale, an finly tore up the jale bildin, an found severil $1000 dolars under the roof, an wipped the entire town an left Hen Crick a welthy man.

An I told you in the letter how I aimed to giv this old feller a horse fer you Bug Eye an a mule lode of grub, to last until I cum. I reelize Bg. Eye I hav now ben gone upwards of 6 weeks, an I hav thot of littel else excep my pore pardner starvin to deth on Elk Mowntin with nothin but shot meet, an anksusly watin fer me to cum back with sumthin to eet.

An now cum to think of it I honestly beleeve I fergot to give that old feller any horse or grub at all, nothin but the letters Bug Eye, it is sernly a goke on me.

Try to be filsoficle, Bg. Eye, it was nothin but a oversite, an these things is bound to hapen to us all. It is a lucky thing I did not ferget to giv him the leters too, we must look on the brite side. Even tho you can not eet them Bg. Eye I noe you will be glad to get them, an find that no misforchin has hapen to yer pardner as you mite spose, an it shoud help you

bare up Bug Eye to noe that yer pardner anyway is now a welthy man an livin on the fat of the land, with plenty spoon vittles an good segars.

Keep a stiff uper lip Bg. Eye, an wat ever you do stay on Elk Mowntin, yer fucher forchin is at stake.

Yr. Obeedint servant,

Hank.

P. S. I will be held up a littel longer Bug Eye becaus I am cumin back to Elk Mowntin by way of Dedwood. You will say how can he cum to Elk Mowntin by way of Dedwood, Dedwood is in the other derection. Do not bother yer hed about that Bg. Eye, I will get back all rite, it will only take me 1 week or 2 weeks longer this way, an I expect me goin to Dedwood will be a grate thing fer both of us Bug Eye, I hav a plan.

I will giv this to the nex feller I see ridin tord Elk Mowntin, I hav my pore pardner consantly in mind, I never do nothin without I say to myself will this be the best thing fer Bug Eye in the long run.

Yr, Obeednt. servnt.,

Hank

Dedwood, sum days later.

DEER BUG EYE,

O gosh Bug Eye, you will die laffin, I hav made a munkey out of Dedwood. I hav also made a munkey out of the fellers at the Grand Eegil discuvry, an about 1000 gold roshers, an I do not noe whoo all Bug Eye, every time I think of it I hav to set down an laff an woop an holler.

Wel Bug Eye I was standin in a sloon in Dedwood eetin an drinkin to pass the time, wen a littel short feller cum up an bot a wisky. It is a funny thing Bug Eye, Dedwood is full of littel short fellers, I dunno wen I hav see a feller over 6 an ½ foot hi. I will be glad to see yer homly fase agen Bug Eye, if only becaus it is a reesable distance offa the ground.

This short feller had big floppy eers sumthin like yoors, I thot of you rite away.

He says are you the feller wat has the severil $1000 dolars, an I says I am the 1.

Well he looked all round an ther was not anybudy anyware neer, so he says I see by yer honest fase that you are not the kind of man that woud cheet a feller that is in trubbel, a man has sum rites even if he is in trubbel, dont you think so too. An I says yes I sernly do. An he says I am the richest man in the country bar none, all I need is a good pardner to make it a ded shore thing, an as soon as I seen yer honest fase I says this is the man.

I says are you perposin to be pardners with me, an he says yes, an I says no thanks, I can not see my way cleer. I hav alredy got 1 pardner I says an I sumtimes think he is 1 pardner too many. I woud be a carefree man today I says with plenty muney no worys but all the time I got to wory about this pardner starvin to deth on Elk Mowntin an how am I goin to get him word to cheer him up.

He says I am not that kind of a pardner he says if you will do wat I say I will not starve to deth no plase, an I sed that is sernly sumthin. Very well then he says, I will let you in on the secrut. Mebbe you hav herd about the Grand Eeegil discuvry. Well Bug Eye I had herd about it all rite all rite, an heer I hav ben wondrin how coud I get you an me in on it.

He says those fellers at Grand Eegil is jest foolin therselfs, they aint discuvered nuthin, I discuvered it all befor they got ther he says. The mane mine is about 6 mile back in the hills from Grand Eegil, an I own it, the other stuff aint nuthin but leeks he says frum this mine I got. It is so full of gold he says a feller can get rich jest pickin it out with his pockit nife, he says, an he showed me a littel peece gold about as big as a been Bg. Eye jest a meedjum size been.

Is that the best you coud do I says an he says I dident hav no nife all I had was this littel pin, isunt this purty good fer a feller diggin with nuthin but a littel pin. But I cant go back ther no mor he says, I got in a fite with a unreesable feller an I giv him a push with a littel peece rock, he says, an he died of hart diseese or sumthin. An I says that is too bad.

Well Bug Eye the upshot of it all is that I bot two 1/3rds of the mine at Grand

Eegil fer you an me, lock stock an barl, an I woud hav bot the rest of it but the severil $1000 dolars woud not stretch, an anyway Flop Eer wanted to keep sum of it fer hisself. An that was wat showed me it was all rite Bug Eye, his wantin to keep sum of it fer hisself. If he had wanted to sell it all I woud hav got suspishus, see wat I am getin at Bg. Eye.

Well Bug Eye you woud die laffin to see these fellers around Dedwood roshin round trine to find sum gold or sumthin an hurrin to Grand Eegil an 1 plase an anuther wen all the time you an me owns practicly all the gold in the hills alredy Bug Eye or anyway the grater part of it. It is sernly comickle.

I do not see how I can send you no grub Bug Eye, I spent all the muney on gold, but I will go to Grand Eegil rite away Bug Eye an soons I hav mined sum gold I will send a horse an grub. Jest take it eesy Bug Eye.

Yr. Obeedint servant
Hank

Dedwood, tomorrers Sunday.

DEER BUG EYE,

I am delaid Bug Eye I fergot to save out muney fer stage coach fare to Grand Eegil. Darn the luck anyway Bg. Eye. I will walk if I hav to, but mebbe sumthin will turn up. Nuthin is ganed by getin in a hury. If ther is 1 thing i lerned frum you Bug Eye it is never make a quik moove unless abslutely nessry. Be pashent Bug Eye.

Yr. Obeedint servant
Hank

Dedwood, Mundy, 1877.

DEER BUG EYE,

Halyloogy Bg. Eye a grate thing has hapened, an now I hav stage coach fare to Grand Eegil, an plenty grub an a carpit bag full of cloes an bullongins, all over an above the deed an titil to our mine at Grand Eegil, wich I hav put in the bottom of the carpit bag ware it will be hardest fer nosey fellers to get at. Luck turned in jest the nick of time Bg. Eye, I was pritty neer starvin.

In this case Bug Eye good luck took a very pecoolar form an wen it was over they was carrin out fellers rite an left, sum shot an sum nocked in the hed, I dunno how many is ded not any I hope but if so it is not my fault as you will say yerself Bug Eye. It is a strange world Bug Eye, but all rite fer those that can size up a sitchashun qwik. (Or has a pardner like me to do same for them.)

Well Bug Eye I was standin in the Hi Cat Sloon, an pritty neer starvin, it bein pritty neer noon an nuthin to eet. since mornin an I was beginin to envy you with yer shot meet on Elk Mowntin I giv you my werd fer it Bug Eye, an hope heerin this will help you see the brite side of yer perdicament, it coud be worse, beleeve me Bug Eye.

They was about 11 fellers playin faro with the deeler they had not gone to bed yet frum the nite befor I gess, wat a way to live Bug Eye. But I was not betin because I had not anythin to bet, I was jest watchin in hopes sumthin woud turn up. An pritty soon shore nuff, a chip rols on the flor, an I set my boot on it Bug Eye. It is always a good idee Bg. Eye to set yer boot on a rollin chip at 1nst befor sum feller makes a reech an gets his fingers steped on, I have notised it always causes trubbel wen you step on a mans hand.

Bimeby I picked the chip up Bug Eye an bet it, an wun, an it was not long before I had $47 dolars. $47 is 1 of my lucky numbers Bg. Eye so I says I thank you gentilmen I will now stop, an I trun to the feller whoo dropped the chip in the 1st plase an sed heer is yer chip I found on the flor it giv me my start I thank you. It always pays Bg. Eye to be plite an honest.

Well sir Bug Eye it was lucky fer that feller I had ben keepin his chip fer him, he had lost everythin he had but that 1 chip, if it was not fer me he woud of lost that too. But he was a unreesable feller, he made me think of you wen you got a mad on Bug Eye, he sed O is that so, lets hav the muney you wun with my chip an we wil devide it, an I sed that is jest ware you are mistakin.

He sed if you do not giv me my muney

ther will be a ded jint in this sloon, an I sed wat do you meen. But before he coud anser that 1 Bug Eye the faro deeler spoke up an says did you find that chip on the flore, O you did did you, in that case the $47 dolars gos to the house, all muney on the flore gos to the house he sed, you aint wun nothin.

I begun to see ware these littel short fellers in Dedwood is unreesable peepul, an I begun thinkin very sober of wippin the entire town, same as I done at Hen Crick Bg. Eye, ther is things no man has to stand fer Bug Eye even in Dedwood. But before I could hawl off Bug Eye the feller that lost the chip trun to the gambler an sed you will hav to keep out of this mister deeler the $47 dolar qweschin is between me an this big moos, the house dont figger in.

Well Bug Eye it was comickle to see ther fase. An the deeler an the chip feller looked tuff at each other an the deeler sed I will hav that $47 dolars an you will not stop me, an the chip feller sed I will hav that $47 dolars myself if it is the last thing I do, an the deeler sed Im boss heer, an the chip feller sed they will need a new boss in about 1 minnit, an anuther littel short feller steped in an sed I do not noe wat the argyment is but I am agenst the deeler, I will help see justis done, an anuther feller sed I am in the look out chare heer an will back the deelers play you cleer out befor I start in, an anuther feller sed the —— you will I did not heer the start of this but I will bet the house is cheetin sumbody an I am goin to help them, an anuther feller sed ther will hav to be less argyin heer, I am a speshul sherf an I hav a grate mind to fine you on the spot, in fack you are all fined $47 dolars, gimme the muney ware is it anyway.

With that Bug Eye they all begun talkin at 1 an the same time, I do not noe wat they was sayin I bet they could not tell therselfs but anyway Bug Eye they begun shoutin off the top of ther lungs, an severil guns went off an a feller begun screemin an the shandleer lamp fell down an bust an the bar upset an the winder broke out an wat with the gunsmoke an the hollerin I do not noe wat went on but a cupple fellers was fitin with chares an 3 fellers was rasslin over a nife, an a man coud not heer hisself think.

So I walked out on them Bug Eye, if ther is anythin I like it is peese an quite. But anyway heer is the $47 dolars or wat is left of it now I hav eet severil meels an bot a carpit bag an sum things to put in it, an I still hav enuff muney to get to our mine at Grand Eegil. So I do not giv a woop whoo wun the argyment, aint that the rite way to look at it Bug Eye.

Yr. Obeedint servant
Hank

On Dedwood Coach.
The follerin day.

DEER BUG EYE,

Heer I am on the coach Bug Eye, an I am havin a very dispeesful an unquite time, qwarlsum fellers seem to dog my boot steps Bg. Eye an sumtimes I feer I am goin to get in trubbel befor I get back safly to Elk Mowntin.

It is hard ritin on the Dedwood coach she giggles an bumps evry wich way an spoils a mans ritin you noe I take pride Bug Eye that I rite a exlint hand with a stub pensil, so make alowances Bug Eye if the wigly rode makes me make a few mislips in ritin an spelin.

I had no sooner set foot in this coach Bug Eye wen I begun to be picked on by these littel short fellers I am getin tird of it Bug Eye. Ther is 2 gards on the coach with sawn off shot guns, 1 rides with the driver the other sleeps on the seet that runs across the front of the coach, he has got a sachel of sumthin under his hed that they are all very perticler about it, it probly has likker in it Bug Eye.

Wel Bug Eye I had eet all I coud an went on the coach to sleep, an layed on the back seet. It is only a littel short seet Bg. Eye jest the width of the coach, but I can lay on it by hoopin my neck an bendin my nees an puttin my feet agenst the top of the coach.

1 of the fellers with a shot gun sed you can not sleep heer my hooge frend we do

not start fer 1 hour yet, go sleep it off an cum back in 1 hour. An I sed I will sleep it off heer an he sed the —— you will an I sed you will not stop me. So he starts climin in with the shot gun stuck out in front of him an I was perparin to take it frum him wen the other gard cum runin up an says Psst Fred do not start a ruckus you will track atenshun an spoil evry plan we got, leeve the big feller alone. So I started to go to sleep Bg. Eye, havin staid up to pritty neer 10 aclock the nite befor an I figgered to get cot up.

But it was not to be Bug Eye. In a minnit a littel short feller with side weel wiskers clum in an he was full of red likker Bug Eye an a unreesable man, an he sed get up offen ther you can not sleep in this coach an anyway the back seet is ware I am goin to sleep. I sed then I will sleep on the front seet, ther is only 2 seets Bug Eye 1 fasin front an 1 back, but he sed no, 1 of the gards sleeps ther, get the —— out you big lofer you.

I sed go soke yer hed, an he showed me a big star an sed I am a United State marshall, you got to do what I say or take the consikences an I made a grab an got the star an sed whoo is United States marshall now.

Well Bg. Eye it was comickle to see his fase. He pulled out a gun I bet it was long as his arm Bug Eye, an put it up to my hed an sed 1 werd mor an I will blow yer branes out an I sed no sech thing has ever ben done yet. An I hawled off to bang him 1 Bg. Eye, guns are no goke, I am not to be fooled with with guns.

I do not noe wat woud hav hapened Bug Eye, but I noe 1 of us woud have reseeved the astonishment of his life, but the gard that had butted in befor cum runin up an says Psst Harry do not kil him it will only draw flys, to say nuthin of a croud of lofers whoo will probly spoil our plans. An they begun argyin in wispers Bug Eye an finly Side Weel Wiskers sed O all rite hav it yer own way an leeve him stay I spose I will hav to ride on top, you fellers are always imposin on me an I am telin you sumday you will cary this too far an be sory. I never ferget he sed. So he clum on top.

No sooner had I layed down Bug Eye wen heer cum the gards back an the driver an they sed we are not startin fer a long time, havunt you fergot sumthin you woud like to go an get, an I sed no, an 1 of them he is a littel fat feller begun argyin an sed are you shure an I sed do not push yer fase at me like that, I do not like it, I hav a noshun to take a poke an see if it will brake.

Well Bug Eye they argyed amongst therselfs an finly they all clum on an the driver clum up qwik an drove off at a galp. An a lot of fellers cum runin out of sloons yelin Hay wate fer me hay you are leevin yer pasingers, an so on Bug Eye, it was very comickle. But the coach fellers drove rite on off, wat a way to run a coach line Bug Eye.

So ther is nobudy on the coach but Fatty with the shot gun sleepin on the sachel they got, an Side Weel Wiskers on top, an the driver an the other shot gun feller settin with the driver. But I hav not ben abel to sleep Bug Eye fer feer Side Weel Wiskers woud cum down an steel the deed an titil to our gold mine, I do not trust that feller Bug Eye. I hav the carpit bag under my hed, but you noe how hard I sleep.

I am ritin this Bg. Eye to show you that you are atchelly havin the best of it on Elk Mowntin, an I wil rite mor bad news later Bug Eye, I feel it my dooty to keep you cheered up.

Yr. Obeedint servant
Hank.

P. S. I hav a grate plan to defeet Side Weel Wiskers, I hav trade sachels with the fatty shot gun feller Bg. Eye. I figgered on it a long time an finly hit on a way to do it that worked perfeck. I touched Fatty on the sholder an he lep awake sayin wats up wats up, he is a very lite sleeper Bug Eye tho stedy an persistunt. I pointed down the mowntin an sed them injins will hit us if they keep on shootin, an he sed wat injins, ware, ware, an he leened mor than ½ out the winder, an I changed sachels with him. Then I

sed mebbe they was jest my imaginashun, an Fatty sed O —— an went back to sleep on the seet.

So now if Side Weel Wiskers tries to steel my carpit bag he will get the rong 1, wat a goke on him Bug Eye. A carpit bag dont look nuthin like a sachel, mebbe Side Weel Wiskers will deteck the diffrunce, but if he tries to get the carpit bag out from under Fatty he will probly get shot with the shot gun. That will be no afare of mine Bg. Eye, it will be a good goke on Side Weel Wiskers if he goes to work an gets hisself shot, aint that rite Bg. Eye.

Hank

Grand Eegil,
In the ded of nite Bug Eye.

DEER BUG EYE,

O gosh Bg. Eye a teribil thing has hapen, we are rooned men. You noe I always look on the brite sides, but this time ther aint any brite side an that is a honest fack.

Jest as it got dark an I was pritty neer asleep the driver an the gard on top an Side Weel Wiskers got qwarlin an woke me up agen. The driver says we are all in this together an we got to go throo with it an the gard says I do not like that eenormus ox that has wedge hisself in the back seet, we had better put off our plans to sum other time.

Side Weel Wiskers says he is sleepin as hard as a man can very well sleep, all we need to do is leeve the coach qwitely an nobudy will be the wiser, an if he wakes up we will shoot him. An the driver says wat is 1 merder mor or less, the coach company an the mine peepul will do ther worst anyway on acct. of ther gold, espeshully the coach company on acct. bein dubbel crossed by ther own men this way. An the shot gun feller sed I gess that is so.

With that they begun talkin in mumbels Bg. Eye, how I hate fellers that talk in mumbels, but I had herd enuff so I thot I saw throo ther game. I sed to myself they are goin to try to steel my carpit bag an the deed to our Grand Eegil clame. So I went to sleep qwitely Bug Eye noein full well that they woud get the rong sachel on acct. me swichin sachels with the gard, an I was dependin on Fatty to defend my carpit bag to the deth.

O gosh Bg. Eye that was ware I made my teribil mistake. How was I to noe that all 4 was trechrus raskals that woud as soon steel ther own sachel as sum 1 elses.

Wen I nex woke up the coach was standin still an it was dark, an I notised 1 thing Bg. Eye an that was the silents, an I thot now this is a very suspishus sine, but forwarned is 4 armed Bug Eye an I lay watin to see wat was up. An I soon deteckted that evry 1 was getin offa the coach, Side Weel Wiskers was jest sneekin out of the coach, an I coud not see the drivers boots an the gards was noplase to be seen.

So I sed I will look into this, Hay ware are you goin, an Side Weel Wiskers sed 1 mor werd an you are a ded man. Jest then Bg. Eye a hed stuck up over the side an sed you jackass are you goin to talk all nite, an Side Weel Wiskers sed our oversize pasinger has woken up.

At that Bug Eye they both cussed sumthin teribil an anuther hed stuck up an it was the other gard an he sed Bill we shoud otter kill that big ox. Now that I cum to think of it he sed I think we had better kill both of them, they are fixin to talk all nite.

The other gard sed fer 1nst you are rite, heer goes are you with me, an with that they both raises ther sawn off shot guns, an I seen ther was goin to be trubbel Bug Eye, an I thrun myself to the flore of the coach an grobe Side Weel Wiskers shot gun frum him all in 1 an the same moove, I am a qwik man Bug Eye as you hav lerned mor than 1nst to yer sorrer.

Side Weel Wiskers lep out the door an sed wate boys help wate I am with you help wate, an the 2 gards begun shootin up the coach but I gess they was pie eyed Bug Eye they shot all the winders out an practicly rooned ther coach but nuthin hit me excep 2 buck shot in the hine leg an a wood sliver throo my rite eer an part

of a waggin bolt cum plunk an lojed in my belt an sumthin that looked like a bullit made out of a tin can pritty neer tore my hat in 2 peeces. It is a crime the way they lode shot guns nowdays it is no wonder they dont hit nuthin an serves them rite, wat are we comin to Bug Eye.

All this time Bug Eye the horses was rarin an plungin an I gess they was tied Bug Eye or they woud not hav staid in such a plase long. But in a minnit the shootin stopped an 1 feller sed well we hav seen our dooty an we done it if the jint aint ded he otter be, shoot them rains loose frum the brake an leeve the cayuses woop it down the rode with the corps. An the other sed that is a good idee, bang, an with that the coach giv a grate leep Bug Eye an away we tore, an that is the last I hav seen of those fellers frum that hour to this.

I rared up Bug Eye an you noe I can wipe a fellers nose with a shot gun at 5ty pases only it was too dark to see so I jest let wham by ded reckonin you mite say, an wat with the coach leepin rite an left I spose it was a very bum shot but anyway 1 feller shroke out Yeow I am hit, an I gess he was hit all rite he sounded like he ment it Bug Eye at leest to me.

After that I clum on the drivers seet an I had ment to get the 6 horses under control but ther wasent no rains so I sat ther watchin them run away an thinkin wat I woud do nex. An I did not think of nuthin so at last I jest sed thats rite run you cowerds, an with that I put on the brake an went back in side to look fer my carpit bag.

O gosh Bg. Eye it was gone we are rooned men.

You remember I switched sachels with the gards I thot it woud be safer that way Bg. Eye I ment it all fer the best, how did I noe they was goin to steel ther own sachel Bug Eye an get mine by mistake.

I was so mad Bug Eye I flang ther sachel down the side of the mowntin, it wayed about 4 ton but I bet I flang it 1 mile, an with that Bg. Eye I am not ashamed to say I bust out cryin. An things went rite on goin frum bad to teribil, an the coach broke down, an the back weels cum off an went sum plase sepparate frum wat the rest of the outfit was goin, an the top of the coach fell off an in a littel wile ther was nuthin left but the driver seet an it bounsin so a man coud hardly stick on. An in that disgraseful condishun Bug Eye I arrove in Grand Eegil a rooned man.

A big croud gathered around the coach wat was left of it I meen an I bent my nees so I woud look like the rest of the littel short fellers an snuck away. Bug Eye I did not feel like argyin an if I had staid ther I noe I woud hav had to wip sumbudy, mebbe the entire town.

An heer I am ritin this in a very uncomfabil plase I have found under 2 buckbords in a waggin shed, ware at leest ther is peese an quite Bug Eye, an I can not sleep nor think of no plan, I sumhow hav the feelin that I hav practicly faled.

An now that I think of it it is all yoor falt Bug Eye, how can a man do his best wen he all the time has to wory about a hepless pardner starvin to deth on Elk Mowntin.

Wat a —— of a sope kettel you are anyway Bug Eye.

Yr. Obeedint servant
Hank

The Drums Roll

A farmer in the Yankee ranks at Germantown

By ERNEST HAYCOX

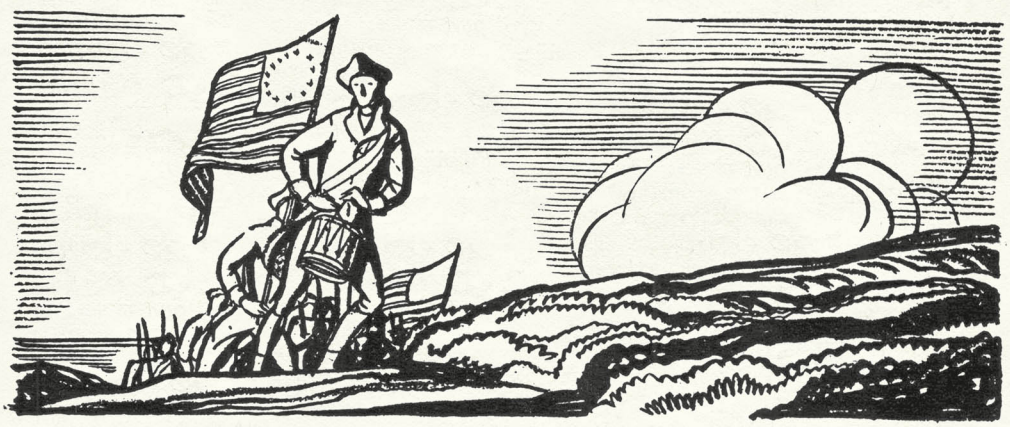
THERE was a rolling echo on the right of the division, as if a troop of horse had passed over a distant bridge. When Ira Parcel raised his eyes from the mess fire he saw the drummer lads of the regiment scurrying toward the colors, slinging their instruments into place as they assembled. A preliminary *rat-a-tat* and a dressing of ranks was ended by a sharp order, then the drumheads burst into a roar that lifted the hair at the nape of Parcel's neck. The challenge, taken up at a dozen quarters, ran swiftly through the brigade, jumped from division to division and ended in a crashing reverberation that shook the whole camp. Men stirred from the noonday lassitude and ran here and there to rejoin their commands. It was the beat of the general, signal for the army of Washington to strike tents.

Parcel held his seat by the fire; the five other men sprawled around the blaze made no move to rise. Indeed, a singular indifference pervaded the whole regimental street, a fact explained when the observer's eye, dizzy with row upon row of tenting, came to the bare foreground where not a strip of canvas was to be seen for two hundred yards. Somewhere a mistake or an accident had delayed the baggage wagons belonging to battalion, and the unlucky members of it had been compelled to sleep beneath the stars. Tod Barkeloo, stretched on the ground beside Parcel, grinned humorlessly.

"Let 'em beat as thunderin' long as they please," he muttered, stretching his arms until his great muscles pushed at the barriers of a torn cotton shirt.

A middle-aged Yankee with a thin, bloodless nose shook his head.

"Wal, if we hev went an' lost all our belongin's we ain't goin' to be fretted with packin' it airy time the army moves. Seems powerful queer. D'ye suppose the teamsters made off to the plagued British? Never saw the teamster yet I'd trust a broken bar'l stave with."



"*The Drums Roll*," *copyright*, 1927, *by Ernest Haycox.*

"Oh, they'll show up," rejoined Barkeloo, "after we take our death o' chills. Many's the day Tod Barkeloo's kicked himself fer a cussed fool not to jine the wagons er the horse. Beats marchin' all holler."

"Ye've fared a sight worse," said the Yankee, tweaking his nose. "When I come to think o' all the mud we hev cruised through this month past—"

"Aye, my mind's on it now. Come what please, Tod Barkeloo's nigh lost his taste fer war. Do'ee hear—I'm a man to want a bit o' fightin' now an' then."

Silence fell over the group. Parcel dragged a pan of melted butter from the edge of the fire and, while the group watched, stretched his right foot forward, rolled back the breeches' leg from a badly scarred knee and began to rub the butter greese into it, now and then flinching at the pressure of his palm. Barkeloo, covertly examining the scar, compared it with a bullet wound and found his curiosity rising.

"Fall an' cut it?" he demanded.

"Run a pitchfork through it on the farm," replied Parcel, dark face sharply fixed on his labor.

The brisk October wind fanned ashes around the circle. Confusion was abroad; staff officers galloped past and wagons groaned up the streets. Barkeloo absorbed the information with internal dissatisfaction. He belonged to that class of men who take personal offense at mystery and ever since Parcel's arrival in the company a week before he had been striving to reconcile the man's story with certain inconsistencies his sharp ears and eyes had noted.

He was not overly large, this Parcel, and when he had walked into the American camp one week before it had been with a stiff swaying gait to his right leg and clothing half rustic and half military. He admitted no knowledge of military life save what he had gained from service in county militia; yet to Barkeloo he carried himself like a Philadelphia macaroni, and when he spoke it was in a manner Barkeloo recognized as usually belonging to gentlemen. Many strange characters came and vanished in the course of a month's march, yet the big fellow, who was as shrewd as he was illiterate, sniffed at something hidden. The man was no farmer, he decided; and as for previous military experience, he had an opinion about that, too.

He rolled on his side, grumbling.

"Marchin' again. Ain't we been marchin' ever since Brandywine? First one way, then t'other. Back an' for'd like stray cows! My ——, I'm tired o' pluggin' britches deep in mud! Crossing an' recrossin' the river so many's the time that there ain't been a dry spot on me two weeks come this night! An' what's come o't?"

"Why," replied the Yankee, tweaking his nose, "it ain't right fer you ner me to say what's to come of it. That's the ginral's affair. We hev to walk er wade er crawl, accordin' to command."

Barkeloo sat up, blood rising to his cheeks. He was a tall creature with the sinews of a giant. When he moved his arms sudden ridges sprang across his chest, visible through the torn shirt. Nature had been kind to him up to his head, but there had done a hideous piece of sculpturing. The chin was square and protruding, the lips abnormally thick. Cheek-bones, very high and prominent, sloped the skin sharply toward a pair of deep eye-sockets, within which was a dull gray gleam. Somewhere in youth he must have been through a severe accident for the nose was flattened against the face and all around it were small white pits, giving him, rightly or wrongly, the air of brutality.

"What's to come o't?" he repeated angrily. "'Tis a man's right to ask. 'Twas the design to keep the English —— out o' Philadelphia. An' what happened? We goes forward, then we goes back. We dodges, an' swims a river, no sooner gettin' over than we swims back! ——, what a month 'tis been. An' for all o't, Ginral Howe takes the town with nary so much as a pistol shot. Oh fine!"

The Yankee gaped, displaying a set of broken teeth. His eyes sought the fire, and by and by he answered, mildly dogged—

"'Twas for a purpose, I vow."

Parcel, finished with the butter grease, set the pan away. Barkeloo stared at him with brooding eyes.

"Beyond my sight—that purpose. Ye may put it down there's been bad general's play sum'ere."

Parcel's eyes flashed and he scowled unexpectedly at Barkeloo. The latter had got thoroughly entangled in his grievance and could not clear himself. At last he came bluntly to the point.

"I'll fight so long's the next dandy when there's a fight to be found, but if you should ask me plain I'll tell you—Washington wants firmness. High time fer the great man to make way fer younger blood."

Parcel spoke gustily—

"I will not allow General Washington to be insulted in my presence, sir!"

Barkeloo's eyes widened.

"Eh? Hear ye! That be a poor way to speak to Tod Barkeloo! Insult?——! Let it stand then! High time, s'I, the great 'un sh'd retire to his Martha an' chase foxes. He wants decision. D'ye hear it, farmer?" Barkeloo thrust his chin out, putting undue accent on the last word.

The middle-aged man coughed; the rest of the group looked on with an intense interest.

"I could wish," said Parcel very slowly, "that you had some claim to intelligence. You are not fit to black that man's boots. His is a task you have no comprehension of, and never will. Sit down, yokel! You have bullied this mess quite long enough!"

The quiet man instantly touched the trigger of Barkeloo's rage. A movement brought the big one upright, lowing like a bull.

"——, I'll bash in yer ribs! Talk'ee to Tod like 'at?"

His foot shot forward, aimed at the reclining Parcel. All of a sudden the scene was shrouded in dust and ashes. Parcel had rolled, arms out. Barkeloo came to earth with a ringing cry in his throat. The Yankee, peering across the fire, blew through his bloodless nose and clicked his broken teeth hard together, almost snarling. The dust eddied in the wind and was whipped away, revealing both men upright. Tod Barkeloo stood with his bayoneted gun to the fore, the muscles of his neck snapping out like taut cables.

"Talk'ee to Tod like 'at? I'll bash'ee!"

"Vast there, feller!" moaned the Yankee, unconsciously ducking.

Parcel bent, hand stretching to the blaze. An oak limb, burning brightly at one end, flared through the air as Tod Barkeloo stabbed out with the bayonet. Gun and cudgel came together with musket-like report. Parcel's arm and shoulders moved. The musket flew from Barkeloo's hand and struck the ground. And, while the big man stood there, amazed, arms aimlessly apart, the cudgel leaped again and in one lightning slash on the cotton shirt left a smudged, diagonal track from shoulder to hip.

Parcel stepped back and let the tip of the cudgel fall to earth. His hat was gone and the string that held his hair in a club had given way, leaving it to ruffle at every puff of the October wind. The fine somber face was still sharpened by anger, and although he was dressed roughly and the cudgel in his fist smoked and smoldered, it took only a stroke of the imagination to make him out the fashionable young gentleman resting on his blade.

"Were this thing," said he, moving the cudgel, "a sword, friend bully, your bowels would be on the ground—deserved treatment for a man who fights with his feet! If other gentlemen chose to accept your manners, 'tis their own affair. But let me have civility. As for the general, he is too great and good a man to have fools drag his name into question."

Barkeloo's arms dropped. Parcel threw the cudgel in the fire and walked

off, the injured leg making a circle forward and outward. Within a dozen paces the anger had given way to self-reproach.

"What a —— fool, Jerry, my lad. Making a public display is the one thing you should be avoiding. ——! I must use discretion. I could wish that prying lout anywhere but in this brigade."

His progress was arrested by a voice.

"Parcel—a word with you."

Glancing up, he saw the captain of the company, a stout Jerseyman by the name of Throop, beckoning from an improvised seat on a stump. He turned his course reluctantly, composing his features.

"In signing you," said the captain, watching him with a sharp eye, "I neglected to ask the name of your closest people. Matter of record, you understand, in case you're put out of action."

"I have no people, sir," said Parcel, after a moment's hesitation.

"Then your own home, sir."

"It could be of no consequence," replied Parcel. "But I have a farm—in Monmouth County."

The captain nodded. Parcel stood obediently at hand while the officer ruminated. He spoke again, with more ceremony than usual.

"I was witness of the last part of your little affair, sir. Though I can not condone brawling in my company, yet I could wish Barkeloo had been tamed earlier. A most overbearing creature to his companions. What I wished to say is that I lack non-commissioned officers. Brandywine lost me a good many men and the recruits leave me little to choose from. It is my desire to make you a corporal."

Parcel moved in surprize.

"I have no training, sir."

"Gad, neither have the most of my men. But you have qualities that wear well with the tabard."

Parcel shook his head, displaying considerable agitation.

"I must beg to be excused."

"On what grounds, sir?"

"I have no taste for it."

The captain shrugged his shoulders and studied his man at some length.

"Well, it is your choice. The reason is unusual."

He dismissed Parcel, watching him limp away in such haste that the stiff leg dragged behind.

"I'll be bound," muttered Throop, "if he hasn't seen service somewhere and taken a most extreme dislike to authority. 'Tis his own affair. ——! there goes officer's beat again."

He slipped from the stump and went toward the sagging roof of the colonel's marquee, wondering how long it would be before the rheumatism would force Major Tinney from the service, thereby leaving open the road of promotion to a certain worthy senior captain—being no other than Throop himself. These reflections banished Parcel's case from his mind.

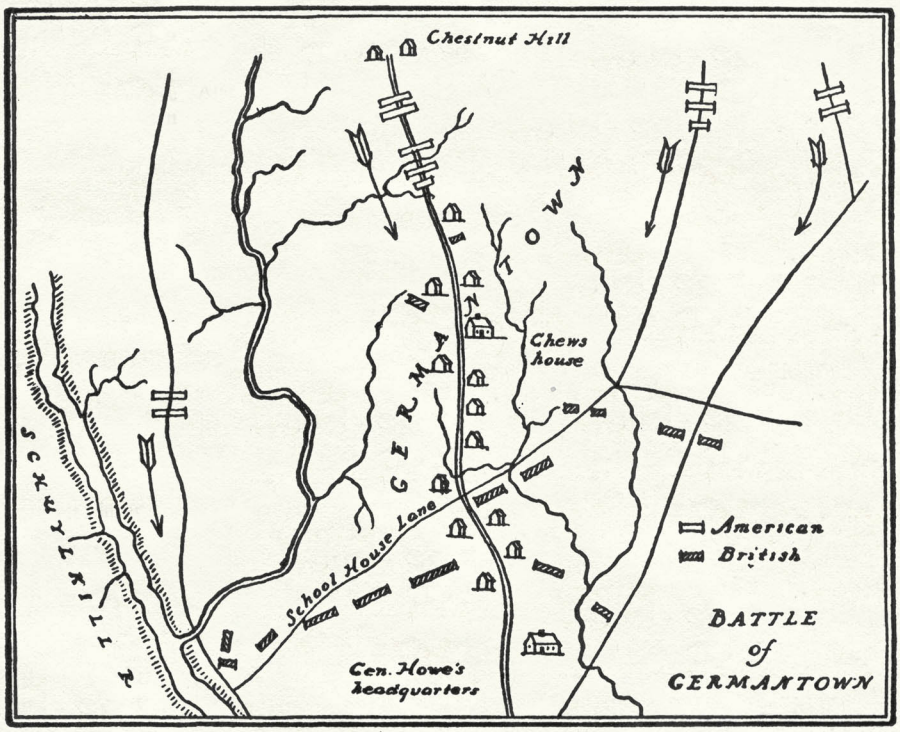
BUT Tod Barkeloo was of another mind. After the fight he wandered away from the mess-fire in a turbulent state, glowering at all whom he passed and not checking his pace until he found himself well beyond the limits of the brigade. Being an entirely emotional creature, he was thoroughly the victim of the incessant gusts of temper that left him unreasoning and half blind. Once he found himself stumbling into a work party, and an officer growled at him in a manner that made him swing around with raised fists. But a second glance bade him be cautious; he turned off to another part of the encampment, while his temper simmered and at length subsided, leaving him crafty.

"Eh, I may be a yokel, but I c'n smell a rat as well as any. How did that macaroni come to be so handy with a stick if it wa'n't for knowin' o' the world? An' if he be a farmer, how comes he by that knowin'? 'Tis a story that hangs poor. It may be he's no soldier, but old Tod's got proof t'other way. Takes a shrewd liar to bind the eyes o' Tod."

Squeezing his hand into a pocket, he brought forth a pewter button.

It was such a button as men wore on the coats of their regimentals, as large as

Tod's thumbnail and stamped with an anchor, representing the organization to which the owner had belonged. Barkeloo studied it through narrowed eyes. That button had fallen from some of Parcel's effects one evening, and Barkeloo, with instinctive guile had put a foot on it and retrieved it silently. Now, suddenly coming to a decision, he flipped the button in the air, caught it, and strode down a little valley, across a field toward a remote part of the camp.



"Seems like 'tis from a New England battalion. Well, Mister Parcel, if *that* be yer name, we'll pry a leetle. My notion is the word *spy* fits ye clost enough."

His path took him through the picket line where the earth was churned to mud beneath the hoofs of a thousand horses and mules. It was such a scene of apparent confusion as Barkeloo had never before witnessed and he stopped to view it. Harness brass glinted under a mild, ineffectual sun. Men swore so foully that Tod, foul-mouthed himself, was abashed. Out of the turmoil groaned wagon after wagon, laboring through the mire to every quarter of the area. Other vehicles, loaded, stood motionless in long lines. At every interval officers galloped by, and above the shouts of teamsters and the bray of mules and the grinding of brakes he heard familiar commands. The loaded wagon columns began to move. Tod felt the urge of time and went on.

It was a tedious chase, and only an extreme and unusual state of mind could have held the restless Tod to it, toiling from regiment to regiment and passing across the widely flung fires of the divisions. Thus, when he turned a street and came of a sudden upon a train of artillery standing in full readiness to move, guns hitched and the stalwart gunners standing by the long brass barrels, he triumphantly halted.

The members of the battery were not all dressed alike; for that matter few

organizations of the army boasted uniformity in dress that ill-starred autumn. Some wore red and blue, some plain brown and each man seemed to make it a point of custom to have at least one individual and unmatchable piece of apparel. But among these were five or six robust fellows arrayed in a splendid red, brown and buff uniform topped by a jacked leather helmet on which was pressed a golden anchor. And Tod's eyes, comparing his button with those anchors, knew his quest ended. He moved toward the foremost, speaking with an air of mystery—

"This button, now, 'tis of your own people?"

The artilleryman gave it a glance and nodded his gorgeous helmet. He was a true member of his corps and looked with some scorn on the shabby representative of the infantry. But Barkeloo was too busy with his deductions to notice the manner.

"Then, friend, did ye ever boast a gentleman by name o' Parcel?"

"Parcel—no."

"He'd be like to sport the air o' a gentleman. A swordsman o' parts, no doubt. A game leg, too, and a handsome rascal with a temper."

The artilleryman stirred.

"Hold. A fellow with a dark, sharp face? Snappin' black eyes?"

An officer galloped forward; men ran to their places at an order.

"Aye!" cried Barkeloo. "'Tis the scoundrel! Ye know him?"

"Lieutenant Jerry Caswell—" began the artilleryman and was summoned by a peremptory command.

Gunners sprang upon the horses and the pieces moved. The artilleryman dashed to his place, wasting no more words. Barkeloo cursed, watching the outfit rumble off, half inclined to follow after them. But he was checked by another beating of the drums. The sun stood half-way down the afternoon sky and all about him were signs of an impending march. Some outfits already were filing off to unknown destinations. A cavalcade, headed by a tall rail of a man with golden epaulettes, almost rode him down as he stood there dreaming. He flung himself back, spitting mud from his lips, hearing a command tossed upon his head.

"To your battalion, sir! 'Tis no time to be loitering!"

He was taken with the sudden fear that his company would be marching away without him, and though a rash braggart he had pride enough in his courage to abhor being considered a skulker on the eve of a march. Setting out at a brisk run, he traveled down one slope and up another, repassing the picket lines and veering toward his own quarter. Long before he arrived there he was badly winded, very hungry and tired of foot. But he had found a trace of Parcel's past and his suspicious mind fed on it with relish. Coming into his own regimental street, he saw men busy about the fires, and when he reached his mess he walked into a whirlpool of rumor and speculation. From it he found that orders were out for each man to cook and carry extra rations. Glumly he set about his chores, grumbling beneath his breath.

"'Tis another night march, then. Oh, ——, but I'm gettin' tired o' all this shilly-shally!" Across the fire he saw Parcel rolling his blanket and a sense of victory filled him. "I'll find the truth o' that dandy's past. T'morrer I'll find that artilleryman again. A spy, —— his soul! I'd lay lawful money on it! Else why sh'd he be desertin' one regiment fer another with nary a word to explain it? Going around lookin' fer information!"

The Yankee, between mouthfuls of salt beef, was explaining his premonition.

"Wal, I hev been to sea many a year an' I reckon I c'n smell foul weather comin'. Ye young uns with the vinegar in yer blood will hez it run out afore another night's come."

"What's it to be, Abner?"

"Battle, boy. Foul weather daid ahaid."

Laughter swept the circle. But Ira

Parcel reached for his gun and began polishing the stock with his palm, sober and incommunicative.

THE autumn day changed color. Without warning it was dusk, leaving a thousand fires to gleam fitfully beneath a very pale moon. As the shadows grew, a change came over the sky and a rack of clouds sailed beneath the clear light. On the right the drums muttered again and the waiting men fell silently into the ranks. The sergeant droned roll-call. Captain Throop appeared, a bulky shadow, in front of his company.

"This company will please to remember the general's instructions as to night marching. It is particularly requested that the ranks keep well closed. No one is to drop from the line on pain of extreme punishment. Gentlemen will strictly observe the rule of silence. The army advances toward the enemy this night."

Tod Barkeloo, standing beside Parcel, grumbled and shifted the weight of his body. The street rustled with tramping feet and the head of a column slid by, accoutrements clinking and slapping against trudging bodies. Captain Throop's company filed in behind and presently were closed by other companies. A warning passed down the column and it gave way to allow the passage of staff officers on horse. Ira Parcel inhaled the pungent odor of leather and stared wistfully at the vanishing group.

"Aye," mumbled Barkeloo, "they can ride while we tramp our guts out. Put some o' them macaronis afoot, s'I, an' see the starch melt."

The column turned, halted, started again. Ranks collided and stretched so that Parcel had to run a distance to close up. The regiment passed column after column resting in the ditch. A courier cantered past, leaving a wisp of information behind.

"Colonel Whatcomb, sir? Your regiment ahead. The general is waiting for you."

"Where we goin', boys?"

"South, I vow. 'Tis sixteen miles by this road to Germantown."

"Oh, God, do we march all night again?"

"Like a pack o' grave diggers," said Barkeloo. "I'd sooner fight by day."

"Well, ——, let's march an' quit this infernal fiddlin'. Abner, hold up your bayonet— I'm like to lose an eye."

Captain Throop's exasperated voice floated down:

"Stop that chatter! D'ye want the general's rebuke? Sounds like a pack o' gossipin' midwives."

Chastened, the company settled to a steady gait. The column passed the tangle of waiting brigades and had a clear road. Ira Parcel, silent thus far, spoke to the man on the outside file.

"Change places with me. I'll have to give this leg a chance to swing freer." There was a rift in the cloud racks and in the momentary gush of moonlight he saw the flashing of steel for half a mile ahead. It was a brilliant scene that carried his imagination far into the ensuing darkness. Into his mind sprang the quatrain of a poem he had learned long ago, words rolling out to the steady, rhythmic tread of feet:

> The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
> And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
> Awaits alike th' inevitable hour,
> The path of glory leads but to the grave.

"A fine piece, yet —— untrue. How could a poet know the satisfaction of a good fight or the high run of a man's blood that now and then need as little spillin'?"

"Eh?" grunted the adjoining soldier.

Ira Parcel shook his head, trying to recall the rest of the poem. Somehow the night put him in the mood for verse. The column halted five minutes and went on. Presently, as the road dipped into a valley, the night fog swallowed them. Rank by rank they marched into it and vanished. Parcel filled his lungs with the heavy air and was lost to the twinge of pain in his stiff leg. As from a great distance he heard subdued speech and occasionally the adjoining man stumbled

against him. But he was utterly detached from all the other ten thousand souls pressing ahead. The mist was all a shimmer in the pale light and heavy with the pungent odor of the wet woods. On and on went the column, struggling over the uneven road. A dog bayed, full-throated and mournful, from a farmhouse; in the remote distance a bell tinkled.

Parcel lost all sense of time. Somewhere around early morning when the chill was most crisp the column halted and the men scattered on the roadside to munch bread and beef. Ahead, a group of horsemen stood silhouetted on a rise of the road; cloaked and silent figures who seemed to strain for distant sounds. For a moment only they rested immobile, then dissolved in the outer darkness. The column sluggishly reformed and took up the march. So thick fell the fog that when Parcel moved into a bank of it, he saw the gray tendrils eddying around his shoulders.

The *slush-slush* of advancing feet resolved a grander chorus within him. All unconscious of the long night's breaking, he strove to find the song or verse that would fit his particular exhilaration and conned in his mind all the texts of his earlier education. If he had but a moment in the spacious library of Segonnet Hall again! He fell back to the plaintive Gray:

> Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
> Their sober wishes never learned to stray—

"—— why should that melancholy thing haunt me so? 'Tis unfit for a man when his heart swells as mine. Something in the major key, I want. Something that will make a man quiver, something like the drums beating the general. Something—"

A hand floated through the fog and rested on his arm. The inner world he had occupied the livelong night vanished and he found himself standing still in the road, very cold and, of a sudden, very hungry. A sergeant advanced along the column and stopped beside Parcel, cocking his head aside to hear. Day broke half-heartedly above the mist and the sergeant swore one short, livid oath. A burst of shots, sharp and decisive, echoed from the van. By and by an officer came rearward at the gallop, horse flinging the mud into the ranks. Captain Throop walked the length of the company.

"We will shortly be in action. Remember, we have never yet as an organization given ground, save by command!"

The column moved convulsively, and Parcel saw the head of his brigade falling over a hill, going at redoubled speed. The firing in the distance settled to a steady debate, growing stronger. The sergeant grumbled:

"Flushed their pickets, an' havin' trouble in dispersin' 'em. 'Tis Conway's brigade up there. Blessed poor outfit! Now if the Marylanders were up there—ah, that'd be a shorter tale. Lovely fighters!"

The sergeant, Parcel decided, was prejudiced.

When the company arrived at the top of the hill he had a view of the brigade foremost extending front and sifting through the gray veil. This arrangement left Throop's company at the head of the column. A general officer, crimson around the gills, took his place forward. Parcel could hear his profane plaint.

"The cursed fog! Can't see a pistol's shot ahead. The —— British may be all around my flanks for what I know! Where's that —— courier I sent forward? Colonel, urge your men along! I want to see some of this action before New Year!"

Parcel's legs responded to the lengthened pace. The fog thinned and for a moment the morning's sun shot through. But it was only a false gesture; in another fifteen minutes, while the troops toiled and slipped along the muddy Germantown road, it withdrew, hanging over the damp blanket cloaking the country, never to show itself again that sad, sullen day. The sergeant, not a young man, breathed heavily.

"We're a-pushin' 'em fast enow! Like to pile up against their line soon enough. Listen to that musketry. Cracklin' like thorns in a fire!"

Conflict bore up strongly. The column came upon men lying dead in the road, British jacket and American buckskin side by side. The brigadier, an old warhorse, spurred his animal into the mist and was lost. The column plugged doggedly after, determined to keep the pace. Presently he came galloping back a transformed man, minus his gallant hat and swinging his hanger above his head.

"File off to the right, Colonel! Push 'em along!"

Captain Throop, at an order, led his men from the highway at a run. They plunged through the wet grass of an orchard, stringing out to the right as other units followed. Parcel, bearing away eagerly, soon lost sight of his comrades and thought he was alone. But within a hundred yards there was a grunting and threshing at his elbow and presently Tod Barkeloo came abreast, working himself into a rage.

"Do'ee see ary redcoats? I'll show'ee how to spit un! A-walkin' all night! ——, but I'll take my pay fer 'at!"

Surmounting fences and jumping ditches, elbow and elbow, they overtook a weary rank of Conway's men and joined them in a dead gallop across a meadow strewn with evidence of a sanguinary struggle. They had not gone twenty yards before they were checked by a strong volley from a fence and stone house. Full half of the line went down. Parcel saw indistinct figures retreating through the mist, across an apple orchard. The Americans, reloading, clambered over the fence, dodged among the trees and came out upon a broad green lawn and there stopped. Directly in front was a solid stone mansion within which the British pickets had taken station and from the windows and doors of which they were pouring a well directed fire.

"Chew's house," said a ragged continental near-by. "Well, we'll bust it."

Parcel fired and dropped to his knee to reload. The pursuing battalions of Sullivan's brigade came up one by one, groping to right and left, confused as to the whereabouts of the enemy's main body and lost to their own ranks. The musketry swelled and the powder smoke, trailing into the fog, made it hard for Parcel to see beyond fifteen yards' distance. Through the turmoil he heard a command, "Cease to fire!" and held his ball.

The meaning of it was manifest in a moment. A tall young lieutenant bearing a white flag strode toward the door of the mansion, doubtless carrying a demand that the small company within should surrender. But in the confusion and the semi-darkness and the shifting of troops his mission was mistaken. A gun cracked and the lieutenant fell dead across the doorsteps.

"Oh, ——!" yelled Barkeloo, raging mad, "I'd like to have the —— who fired that shot! Knock the —— house down! 'Tis only the advance guard! Why does we parley?"

Sullivan's division opened with a sustained blast of musketry. Parcel and Barkeloo joined in with twenty others rushing toward the door, the upper half of which stood open. Now and then the guns from the mansion spoke and man after man fell on the clipped grass. Parcel heard Barkeloo baying like a bloodhound. As for himself, the rattle of bullets and the blasts of powder could not overhear the beating of his heart. Jostled and pushed, elbowing his way at every step, he charged the door, taking aim at the foremost Englishmen beyond the barrier.

His comrades crowded the porch, seeking to force a passage, a pitiful remnant of the group who had started across the bullet-swept area. They fired their charges and beat at the barred lower half of the portal, all in fruitless effort. They were swept back by another volley, huddled a moment and tried again. One French chevalier, gathering speed, leaped the barrier, half propelled by willing arms, and fell into the very arms of the defenders.

"Gad!" cried Parcel, "he's dead!"

But the Frenchman was not dead.

Wildly he reappeared, hatless, slashed in a dozen places, the only man in the American army who that day saw the interior of Chew's mansion. That piece of daring ended the assault. They broke, retreating across the lawn to shelter. Parcel dropped amongst the dead and dying, waiting for the next wave to rescue him.

The sky split and Parcel was plucked by the wash of a cannonball that smashed against the rock and masonry of the mansion.

"Knox comin' up!" he muttered. "Well, if we can't force this place we'd better push on."

His ears rang with the cannonade. Steadily, piece after piece went to work. Ball, shell and grape scarified the walls, rattled across the porch, riddling all the fine pieces of statuary scattered around the lawn. But as for the walls of the place, they had been built by a thorough hand. The artillery could not force a breach.

From the corner of his eye he saw another rush of men. This time they came compactly and bore between them a log battering-ram. Parcel jumped up as they came abreast and crossed the lawn. A gale of bullets met them. The ram battered against the wood of the lower barrier. Men dropped without a word, were trampled and forgotten. Others took their places and in turn died. Parcel had an obsession that kept him near the cornerpost of the small porch, trying to pick off a certain sweating English marksman who crouched inside the smoke-filled hall. He could see him through the open part of the doorway, loading and aiming with admirable coolness. One shot he, Parcel, had wasted in trying to bring the man down; he found himself muttering a phrase as he loaded and aimed again.

"—the boast of heraldry—the boast of heraldry—ah, fair shot!"

He had his man and turned to find himself well nigh alone. The battering-ram lay across the steps of the porch, in the hands of the dead, while the handful of survivors were retreating, heads bowed as if against a storm. Parcel followed, ducking his head at the wasp-like sound of the passing bullets. He jumped a stone fence and in the shelter reloaded.

"——," said he, "I'm tired," and sat down on the wet ground. He found himself sweating profusely and parched of throat. "I've had my try at that door. Now let's find other scenes. Where's that yokel, Barkeloo, I wonder?"

It made no difference, of course. Too many fine lads were heaped dead about the mansion to worry over Barkeloo. Yet he felt faintly concerned; Barkeloo had wanted so badly to get satisfaction for all his marching and countermarching.

His ears told him the attack on the mansion had passed the climax and settled to a desultory sniping. In the distance, southward, he began to hear the strong and sustained roar of a general engagement. It appeared that another wing of the army had gone around Chew's house and were at grips with the British line. There was a column forming near him, just visible through the haze, and he ran over and fell into the ranks. It was not his company, but that made no difference. The column was headed toward the new action. Thither he eagerly bent his steps.

The fog seemed to be thickening and the air appeared colder. But for all that the sweat rolled down his face infernally fast; he licked his lips and immediately clapped his hand to his cheeks. It came away bright red.

"Now where," he muttered, seeking the source of trouble, "did I get that?"

The brim of his hat was neatly sheered on one side; next the temple the skin was broken. "That rascal in the house was gaming for me, likewise. Well, we exchanged compliments and mine was the neater."

The thunder of the new engagement southward redoubled. Fieldpieces spoke continuously, giving impetus to the crackle of musketry. In that direction, too, the fog was heaviest. The farther the column went, the faster it went, until Parcel broke into a trot. His spirits rose.

"By Godfrey, we'll win this day yet!

'Tis Washington's favorite piece of strategy. I'll not doubt he's got three or four columns coming up from other angles. I wish this column would move a little faster!"

It moved fast enough. They slid over the uneven ground, seeing at intervals the outline of other stone houses. This was the center of the straggling village of Germantown, now filled with an uproar such as its peaceful villagers had never imagined possible short of the Last Trumpet. The column ducked off the road and scrambled over a fence, cutting through another meadow. Parcel, making note of all the gunfire rolling across the dismal sky, thought he had never been in a fight so extended or confused. There was no core to it; the fog blurred the senses and one had the uneasy feeling of firing into his own people or of marching through the enemy's ranks.

"Market place," said a man beside him, badly winded. "I know it well. Another stone house to batter! I'll lay that's Ginral Nat Greene givin' the redcoats ——!"

The column ran squarely into trouble. One moment they labored through a blank field; next instant the uneasy curtain of mist gave way and they were facing a line of British light infantry that slowly gave ground. The officers sang out, the ranks filed off. Ira Parcel was too impatient to join the formality. He slipped away, scurried over a knoll until he had better sight of the opposing line and knelt to take aim. The report of his gun was all but soundless in the general mêlée, but he saw his man pitch forward.

The British retreated before the weight of the American column, growing more and more indistinct. Parcel, ramming a charge down his gun, was aware of a touch on his sleeve and on looking up found a grenadier behind a tree just lowering his musket. The man had fired too carelessly.

Parcel whooped when he saw the grenadier vanish behind a clump of bushes.

"Lad, I'll play a game with you!"

He plunged over the meadow with fine disregard for his game leg. This was the kind of fighting he liked best, wit against wit and a fair field for each. The gray curtain shut him out from his recent comrades, and as he raced around the edge of the bushes, bayonet thrust forward, he found himself in a glade that bore all the marks of terrific struggle. A three-inch brass piece stood with muzzle to the south, one wheel in a depression. Rammer and linstock were on the ground beside it; a crew of five dead men were scattered in odd postures around it. As for the grenadier, he had gone on.

Thought of pursuit left Parcel's mind. The sight of a field-piece was enough to make him stop, lean his musket against the brass barrel and pass a caressing hand over its surface.

"Big fellow, you look —— lonesome here. It's my mind to give you a charge and send a shot to the other gentlemen with my compliments."

His ears caught a shifting of the battle's tide. The baying of voices and the report of guns had gone on before him; now the wash of the battle seemed to be coming back at a precipitate pace. Grass rustled and bushes weaved. A ragged line of men popped in sight and by their haggard faces Parcel knew the story. He picked up the rammer and waved it.

"Rally! Here's a piece to serve!"

The foremost flung out a hand as he passed.

"Surrounded! All four sides! Clear!"

The man vanished as swiftly as he had come. The handful behind him swelled to a company and the company heralded a regiment. It was a general rout. Gray figures, dew-soaked, ghastly weary and swayed by that inexplicable panic which sometimes seizes the bravest, streamed by. It was a sad sight to see the way they drove their exhausted bodies. Parcel threw down his gun, cried at them, swore, leaped to the muzzle and pushed a cartridge and ball into the piece.

"—— yokels, rally here! Don't you fools know the value of a field-gun? By ——, I'd like to bend a sword over your backs! Rally!"

He was talking to deaf ears. The tide had turned. Close by cracked the Tower muskets, turning to win a battle that had all but been lost. Parcel shook a train of powder into the touch-hole and stepped back with the linstock. He was not quite ready. Indeed, he stood there until he saw the color of a grenadier regiment. Then the cannon thundered, slewed around and capsized. Parcel emptied his musket at the nearest figure, more in defiance than anything else. Turning, he followed his people off the field.

He leaped three stone fences, waded a brook and came to the road. It appeared to be the main artery of retreat, for it was covered with tracks, all pointing north and at intervals men burst through the fog and past him, sweating, dispirited. Then his eyes caught sight of a great muscular figure sitting in the ditch, back against a hedge. It was Tod Barkeloo, face dripping in crimson. The man had jammed his hat over one side and from beneath the brim came a steady drip of blood. His eyes caught sight of Parcel and he raised a fist.

"Do'ee see Tod now? But — I've had satisfaction this day! Like as not they'll spit me with a bayonet in a minute or so. 'Twon't matter. Tod'll fool 'em!"

"Give us a hand," said Parcel. "I'll pack you a ways."

"Gawn," said Barkeloo. "If I move I'm daid. My hat's holdin' in my brains, man. I'll tip it to the first English —— I see comin' down the road."

"Dyin', then?" asked Parcel, strangely impersonal. "You're a tough rascal."

"I'm cur'ous," said Barkeloo in a fainter voice. "Allus cur'ous. You been an officer gentleman once. Why'd you take up bein' a private, eh?"

"Why, I was an officer," admitted Parcel. "Lieutenant of artillery. But an officer, Tod, has to stick with his battery, fight or no fight. 'Tis dull work for a man who likes to pick at his pleasure. So I ran away. A private can choose any part of the field he wishes. D'ye see? I fight best alone and I like to wander."

Barkeloo stared at him.

"Then ye're been havin' satisfaction this day, too. Gawn now. Tod'll fool 'em."

Parcel went on, unable to keep from his mind the sight of Barkeloo raising his hat to the first English soldier he saw, and dying by that act.

"The rascal," he muttered. "The rugged, tough rascal. *That's* the spirit to win this war!"

Of a sudden he was terribly weary, terribly hungry. His tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth and his knee seemed afire. It was unknown miles to safety again, unknown hours before the army would be assembled somewhere far ahead. He weaved from side to side, mind reverting to the lines which had been in his head for so long—

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power—"

"——, I'd like to have that gentleman with me. Then he could write something that would make the angels fight—something like the beat of drums."

Buckoism to Order

BY JOHN WEBB

"ALL cap'ns is queer," says my friend Chips, who has been a ship carpenter for many years and should know what he is talking about. Anyway, consider the case of Captain Hatch:

He was a hard-bitten old fellow whose idiosyncrasy took the form of a demand for toughness in his boatswain. He demanded that his bose be an eater of raw meat; had nothing but contempt for one who didn't believe that the principal use for a belaying-pin was to crack heads. His belief was, if a boatswain couldn't maintain order and discipline with his own two fists, then he should stay ashore and jerk soda for a living.

I was boatswain. Did I fill the bill? I did! I swaggered about the decks with my shoulders hunched forward, my chin thrust out, my mouth tight, and a cold, hard glitter in my eye. I roared like an angry lion. Day after day seamen went to the captain with complaints that they were being hazed beyond all endurance, and day by day I rose in the captain's estimation. He rewarded me by giving me many special privileges and increased authority, and listened to my suggestions when he wouldn't listen to the mates'. The mates spoke bitterly among themselves: The captain and the boatswain were running the ship and the officers were only spare pump-handles.

But it was all a farce. The deck force were good seamen, all of them capable and willing workers, and I didn't want to haze them. So we got together in the forecastle and contrived a plan of deception. Willingly they assumed the part of the ill-treated seamen, and I became the bullying boatswain who was never satisfied.

The captain would be on the bridge. The men and I would be on the poop, griping in a lifeboat. I would suddenly let out a bellow, leap forward and clutch a man by the throat. All the captain could see then would be a flurry of elbows as apparently terrific blows were driven to the man's face and body; then the man would slump to the deck and his mates, shaking their heads and casting black looks at my swaggering back, would drag him away. The captain would nod approvingly to himself and resume his pacing of the bridge.

"Say, Bose," the "unconscious" man would say out of the corner of his mouth, "be a little careful, can'tcha? Yuh scratched my neck and tore two suspender buttons off."

And I'd apologize.

One day an A. B. fell off a boom and broke both legs and three ribs, and some of the men went to the captain and told him I did it and that they wanted protection! A swinging cargo-hook split a man's head open and I got credit for that. This last made the captain a little nervous; he feared I was becoming a homicidal maniac, and he didn't want murder aboard.

"We don't want a killing, Bose," he warned me.

"I'll beat their brains out if they don't stop giving me lip," I gritted fiercely.

"None o' that!" he said sharply, but with a note of admiration in his voice.

So it went, for a full year. It was harmless play-acting, slapstick comedy. The captain was content with the thought that he had the toughest and best boatswain that ever sailed and the men had a constant source of amusement. The captain's wife made a voyage with us; with a shudder of repulsion she told the mate I was a "scowling abysmal brute who would certainly be punished, if not in this world, then in the next."

No doubt the good lady was right.

Going on with

Wastrel

GORDON YOUNG'S

DAN McGUIRE had been hiding, wounded and alone, in a pile of copra for more than a day when young David Brade came in with his trading ship, dispersed the natives and took Dan back to Kialo to his father's plantation. Besides Mr. and Mrs. Brade there were on the plantation Fanning, Brade's partner, a bullying weakling who secretly betrayed his tribe with native women, and Mrs. Fanning, who had left her real husband in the States.

The richest estate on Kialo was that of Symonds, a gentleman planter, who left all his affairs in the hands of his brutal overseer Zurdas, who had such a hold over Symonds that he was able to force a marriage between Reena, Symonds' beautiful daughter and his own half-witted son, Manuel. Reena tried to escape the night after the marriage and McGuire tried to help her, but Zurdas seized him.

To gain time McGuire told Symonds and the bully a mixture of truth and lies; that he knew and that Reena knew that she was not really Symonds' daughter, but the child of a man whom Zurdas had killed so that Symonds might have his wife—which was truth; that a strange man whom McGuire had found on the island was Reena's father, not really killed and now come for vengeance—which was a lie. While the questioning was going on Reena escaped alone, and after thrashing his son for not taming her, Zurdas set out in search, leaving McGuire in the hands of Symonds. But the gentleman planter, not daring to face disgrace, shot himself. McGuire escaped.

The next morning McGuire went back to Brade's plantation to find that Reena had taken refuge there and that young David Brade, who had formerly thought her insane, now believed her story and seemed to love her. The Brades refused to give her up at Zurdas' threats, and in the discussion the shameful secret of his dealings with the natives came out, and Mrs. Fanning, whose husband had been a man of honor, at all events, realized now with what sort of people she had cast her lot. In the general discussion that followed she was to learn more.

III

DAVID, old Brade and Fanning came, with Bob Grimes straggling after them.

"Never even looked like they wanted to turn up toward the mill," said Grimes, vaguely addressing McGuire. "That's the way with me. When I have good idees they turn out wrong. Heart-breakin', it is."

He spoke with a kind of mumbling, as if careless of whether or not he was heard, and sat down on the railing with an air of weary indifference as to what might happen.

"*Wastrel*," *copyright*, 1927, *by Gordon Young.*

New Serial of Dan McGuire *in the South Seas*

"Fanning's got something to say," said David in a voice of calm displeasure, much as if nothing Fanning could say would have his approval.

"Ask mother to come, will ye, Dan?" said old Brade.

McGuire started, but Mrs. Fanning said, "I'll tell her," and with long strides, as if setting out on a journey, went to the end of the veranda and called.

Old Brade, from being so broad and bowed and slow of movement, appeared always weary as if ready to sit down. He seldom sat except for his noonday doze, but walked all about his land with plodding unrest, and when he stopped did not look for a place to sit.

Reena turned a chair about for him. McGuire noticed and thought well of her attentiveness, thought more of her natural grace—an instinctive daintiness that was in every gesture. To him she seemed so beautiful that there was a kind of pain in looking at her. Vain thoughts, colored with regrets that he would not admit, even to himself, bubbled in his head; so, with an air of idle unconcern he fiddled with his pipe and did not look at her.

Old Brade said, "Thank ye, girl," and put a hand to the back of the chair but did not sit.

Mrs. Brade came briskly, wearing a light freshly laundered dress. Though in the kitchen she had been about a big dinner, and this was baking day too, she looked cool and tidy.

"Sit here, Mother," said Mrs. Fanning, turning about a rocker.

"Hmm! Why's everybody so solemn?" Mrs. Brade inquired, having with bird-like quickness looked about at the men's faces. She sat down expectantly.

"All right, Fanning. Go ahead," said David.

Reena sensed something unfavorable in the wind. She saw Fanning's glance, half furtive or at least uneasy, at McGuire who, sitting on the railing within arm's length of Grimes, fingered his empty pipe. Reena, as if to have a better place to listen, walked with light step round back of old Brade and Fanning and stood close to McGuire. She liked these people here; but she felt still a kind of lonely uncertainty, since she was yet something of a stranger to them, they to her. Only

McGuire seemed like a familiar friend. Such was her trustfulness in him that, against the urging of all other people, she would have done almost anything he said.

"These men," Fanning began, "say I have to talk it over with you, Mrs. Brade."

Fanning spoke as if he thought this an unmanly necessity; but Mrs. Brade nodded, replying:

"William always talks things over with me. You know that."

"And, mother—" David spoke with pride— "we know now what you'll say!"

"First let's hear Mr. Fanning," she said.

Fanning was a little embarrassed. He was conscious that his position and ideas did not put him in a gallant attitude, but money was money and, if possible, loss was to be evaded.

"We've got to look at this thing sensibly," said Fanning. "I'm just as sorry as anybody for her." He made a slight gesture toward Reena. "And McGuire there too. I like him."

At that, Grimes sharply kicked McGuire's ankle and muttered:

"Gettin' pop'lar, Dan. Gettin' pop'lar!"

"But facts are facts—" Fanning said.

Grimes, grinning, shook his head, and mumbled enigmatically—

"Little black ones, they ain't!"

McGuire, understanding this dark hint, now kicked Grimes' shins uneasily.

"Stop abusin' me!" said Grimes, looking indignant.

The interruption of this by-play annoyed Fanning. He paused with an exasperated look until all was quiet again; then repeated:

"Facts is facts. And the fact is, we want to avoid trouble with Zurdas if we can—"

Mrs. Fanning, with much the expression of one touched by hot iron yet trying not to show how much she felt the burn, looked away, would look at no one.

The sentiment Fanning expressed was, in a way, praiseworthy, and he had spoken with the impersonal blandness of one pointing a moral to those who needed instruction. But there was no answering murmur; there was silence, except for a grunt, expressive as an oath, from Grimes.

Fanning stared with rebuke at the uncouth old rascal, and Grimes met the stare with a look of solemn innocence.

"You heard, all you," Fanning went on, "the way Zurdas threatened. And he's a man to do what he says he will and—"

"Like ——," said Grimes. "I was waitin' there for 'im at the turn o' the road. He didn't come. An' he said he would. He's as big a liar as some other people about what they'll do."

"See here, Grimes, supposing you let me do the talking," said Fanning, growing red.

"But you don't come right out an' say what you mean." Grimes had his friend the pearler waiting for him in Port Kingston's bay, and if the Brades were not going to put up a fight, he meant to go poaching. "You mean you're scairt o' the loss that may come from harborin' Dan here an' the girl. That's what you mean. All right, now I've said it for you, what you suggest they do?"

"I suggest that you take what pay is coming to you, and look for work elsewhere!"

No one could blame Fanning; Grimes had called for just that sort of answer, and he did seem a little squelched, though appearances in the old ruffian were deceptive.

"You're lazy anyhow," Fanning continued hotly. "Don't half do what you're told and talk too much!"

Fanning had lifted his voice angrily; never good at handling men, he had lost his temper without realizing that Grimes had prodded him purposely; but now, having made Fanning sweat, grow red and shout, Grimes looked a little humble. He was a coarse, good-natured, though bitter-spoken old scoundrel, with a gift for getting the better of it in those wranglings with which the weary men in their quarters at night entertained themselves, half vexatiously, half in fun.

Fanning was, in fact, more or less envious of the way Zurdas cowed men; and, Grimes seeming humbled, Fanning took

advantage of this to glower with an expression meant to convey mastery; but his shapely features did not lend themselves to the kind of firmness, even when most firm, that made men uneasy.

It was Fanning's right, respected by the Brades, to hire and discharge as he pleased; the one exception was McGuire, whom they had treated more as a guest than an employee.

Fanning now stiffened his shoulders and stood a bit taller, and spoke with more assurance, saying—

"Zurdas says, and for all we know it's true! that McGuire here killed Symonds!"

At that Reena turned and peered anxiously at McGuire; her face was close, her lips parted, and she was afraid for him. McGuire drew his foot beyond reach of Grimes' kick, fiddled with his pipe, said nothing, looked at no one.

"Come with me, Dan," said Grimes. "That pearler wants good men."

Mrs. Brade said quietly, replying to Fanning:

"I don't believe it! Dan doesn't lie!"

"Now, mother," McGuire said, "that's too much. I do at times, a little."

"But not to me, Dan. I know you don't to me."

"Ah, then," said Fanning, pleased, lifting a gesture to drive home the point, "if he didn't do it, he won't mind going into town and telling the consuls and Cullum there just how it was. Otherwise he'll look guilty, and it will look like we—"

"You," said McGuire unexpectedly, "are right. I'll do just that, today."

He said it so simply that Fanning, experienced in McGuire's irony, did not believe him, and frowned, saying—

"I mean it!"

"So do I," McGuire replied.

David said explosively:

"Shut up, Dan! You'll do nothing of the kind!"

Old Brade, with solemn weary patience, stood without moving, his hand still on the back of the chair; his peering eyes, under shaggy brows, were fastened with thoughtful steadiness on some far-off and unregarded object. As was his habit, he left all important decisions to Mrs. Brade.

She sat as became one sitting in judgment, and watched Fanning with shrewd insight as she listened. In the years of their association, he may have concealed many things that he had done from her, but nothing of his character. He had merits, but they were of a kind less admirable in a warm-hearted woman's estimation than some other people's weaknesses. Yet it was just because he was the good careful business man that had been beneficial to the Brades that he now foresaw losses in this trouble and wished to avoid them.

"Now," said Fanning, with the gracious sort of tone one at times uses when suggesting something ungracious, "no one blames Mrs. Zurdas for the way she feels but—"

No one at first understood whom he meant. David frowned in a moment's puzzlement, then scowled angrily.

"Charley!" said Mrs. Fanning in exasperation, but he ignored her.

Reena, with a movement of shrinking, pressed back; her hand, behind her, touched McGuire and closed on his arm as if in falling she had grasped something.

"—but the proper thing," Fanning explained, "is for her too to explain to the consul and Mr. Cullum and let them help her."

"I," said Reena quietly, "will go to town with Dan."

David began saying incoherent violent things, and started across to stand by McGuire and Reena; but his mother said:

"David!" She lifted her hand. "David, it is my turn to talk."

Then she got up, ready to leave, and said quickly:

"Mr. Fanning, when I or any of my family get to where we're 'fraid to do what we know we ought because we may lose some money, I hope the good Lord who gives us what we've got will take all away and leave us naked—just plain naked! This child an' Dan stay right here, and if there's any money loss it'll be ours."

"But Mrs. Brade," he protested, "I was thinking only of what would be best for them. If they explain to the judge and—"

"And," said Grimes, "are you goin' 'long too an' explain *your* case to old Cullum? He's goin' be mighty hot under the collar if you don't get to 'im first!"

Fanning gazed at him uneasily, but fell into the trap, demanding:

"What 'd you mean?"

"Mean? Why, ain't you heard? Tiulia's father is goin' to make complaint for—"

"Shut up!" McGuire hissed, kicking at Grimes.

"You come right now to the store!" Fanning shouted, making as if about to go, wanting to go. "I'll pay you off! Come on!"

"You mean buy me off!" said Grimes. "No, I'm not for sale. You've been tryin' to buy Tiulia's old man off, but takes more than canned salmon to—"

"Shut up, —— you, shut up!" Fanning cried.

"—more than canned salmon to pay even a black girl's father to wink at his daughter's little—"

The word hung fire at Grimes' lips and might have been swallowed, but Fanning strode forward with fist doubled and, as always when handling men angrily, he said the wrong thing to get what he wanted for he shouted—

"You say it and I'll knock you—"

Grimes did not shrink or move; quite plainly he called the child just what Fanning thought the child was, adding, "Yours, at that!"

Fanning with full swing of arm hit him in the face, striking so hard that Grimes, unbalanced, fell over the rail and to the ground. It was a fall to break a man's neck; but as faces peered down, Grimes arose. He was a little dazed; his face was bleeding, but the devil was in him. He looked up toward Fanning, and with blood falling on his beard laughed drunkenly, tauntingly. Then he turned and walked off.

Fanning rubbed his knuckles and looked about at the silent people who stared at him as if he had thrown away a mask and now disclosed strange and disagreeable features. He grew irritated and uneasy.

"The fellow lied!" he said, sensing that every one felt Grimes had not lied. No one answered. "You're not going to believe that dirty dog! He had a grudge 'gainst me! You know he did!"

He spoke for all of them, but looked toward Mrs. Fanning, whose lips were curled with the contempt of a woman outraged; and anger glistened in her eyes. She, among other things, had sportsmanlike qualities, and Fanning had struck an old man who did not defend himself. As for the thing Fanning stood accused of, it hurt her with the bitterness of an adder's bite, but she said nothing.

"It's all a lie!" Fanning repeated, with angered helplessness.

His flushed face, perhaps reddened mostly from anger, had the look of a blush as if ashamed of himself. He was ashamed of having his story known. He knew the jeering torment he would get from the planters; and now his vanity wriggled under the look of Mrs. Brade whose kindly tolerance did not extend to that kind of sinfulness; and the staring of the others seemed to him as if they were half glad to see him stripped. There was nothing about Fanning that called forth a charitable regard for his weaknesses; this perhaps because with a kind of arrogance he pretended to have no weaknesses, sinning in secret like a man who drinks alone and denies that he drinks at all.

Old Brade, whose heart and hands were as clean as honest sweat could wash them, gazed at him with solemn steadiness. It was that look more than the look in the women's eyes that almost unnerved Fanning, and with the touch of something frantic in his manner he turned on McGuire.

"McGuire, you, everybody knows you know—" Fanning's appeal had in it a kind of anxious promise to help McGuire, if only McGuire would help him now—"everybody knows you know what goes on 'mong natives. You know he lied!

You never heard anything like that, now did you? Grimes lied, didn't he?"

"The truth is," said McGuire, "Grimes lied."

"There! What'd I tell you!" Fanning shouted.

"Dan McGuire!" said Mrs. Fanning, not giving Fanning even a glance, but indicating him with a contemptuous gesture. "You're not telling the truth! You're trying to make friends with him!"

"Nothing of the kind!" Fanning shouted.

"Dan," said Mrs. Brade, coming close. "Dan, look at me."

McGuire looked up, steadily from under lowered lids.

"Dan, you have never told *me* a lie. Now I want the truth!"

McGuire hesitated, then he glanced sidelong and up at Fanning, and asked—

"Do you want the truth too?"

"Yes," said Fanning. "Yes," he repeated as convincingly as he could while at the same time he begged for mercy.

"Very well then," said McGuire, dropping his eyes for a moment, then lifting them again to Mrs. Brade's face. "Grimes lied because—"

"There! I said so!" Fanning put in.

"There's something more, Dan!" said Mrs. Brade.

"Grimes did not lie!" said Mrs. Fanning. "You are trying to be friends with him!" Again the gesture, without a glance, as contemptuously as a woman could make it.

"Stick to the truth, Dan!" said Fanning, laying an approving hand on McGuire's shoulder.

McGuire stood up, pushed the hand away, said:

"Get away." Then, "Mother, I don't like to talk about this sort of thing to you, but Grimes knows, all the fellows know that Tiulia, her father, mother, the whole family, have played a trick to get canned stuff and such goods out of Fanning. The baby isn't Tiulia's at all. She borrowed it and—"

Mrs. Fanning laughed, hysterically; she saw the joke of it, and in her bitterness was pleased that the blacks had made Fanning play the part of a guilty dunce. But the last glimmer of what she had hoped might yet be endurable in Fanning's companionship was gone; now, utterly, she despised him.

Fanning himself was so astonished that for a moment he stood like one partially paralyzed. He believed McGuire lied. Again he raised a fist and would have struck, but David jerked at Fanning's shoulder and sent him staggering backward, turned on him and said—

"You touch Dan there and I'll break your —— neck!"

Much as if his neck had been broken, Fanning went along the veranda, down the steps and out of sight.

"Dan," Mrs. Brade asked firmly, "is what you've just said so?"

"Mother, I'm half ashamed to say it, but it is truth."

IV

MRS. FANNING and McGuire remained alone, and McGuire felt uncomfortable.

David and his father had gone off to find Fanning and have another talk. This being baking day, Mrs. Brade inexcitably returned to the kitchen to be about her bread making. Tropic heat or not, she baked bread for her table—real loaves, not the flat unleavened damper of the bush. She had said to Reena—

"Come with me, child."

McGuire too had wanted to go away, to get out of Mrs. Fanning's sight; but she had told him to stay, saying, "I want to talk to you;" but having said that she turned her back to him and said nothing for so long a time it seemed he was forgotten. Then with her back still toward him, she asked—

"How long has that been going on?"

"I don't know."

"Be honest, Dan. I don't care—now."

"A year or more."

She faced about—

"And you men have known it all the time?"

"It's been talked of some."

"That's why they have been so—so half contemptuous of him?"

"Partly."

"What else then, Dan? Tell me the whole truth."

"Well, Mrs. Fanning, these men here are all hard cases. They don't care much what a man does long as he does it without caring what he does. That's mostly why, I guess. Fanning took a lot of trouble not to get suspected. But natives babble, most of 'em."

"See here, Dan. Now I want the truth out of you. I—"

"I've heard that so much the last few days, Mrs. Fanning, it makes me sort o' shiver."

"The men know, you know too? Don't you? Now tell me the truth! You all know I am not married to Mr. Fanning?" There was the sharpness of self-contempt in her tone. Her face was hot, but she was dry-eyed and watched him closely.

"How the devil would we know? Or care? We've all liked you, Mrs. Fanning."

"I know that, Dan. But would they have liked me had they known? That's what I want to know!"

"I think so. The men here are not so particular as some people."

"The way they have looked at me, Dan, sometimes I have thought they did know. I would feel better if I believed they really had known!"

"Yes?" McGuire inquired, suspiciously. "I can't see why?"

"I can't explain it to you. But can anything be lower than to be the wife of such a man! And now you tell me honestly. Have they known?"

"Not known, no. But guessed at it, yes."

"Guessed at it! How on earth?"

"Tiulia told it."

"That means he told her!" Mrs. Fanning made a sound of repugnance, and shuddered. "Uh, such a man! And what will Mrs. Brade think? I have been a frightful fool, a frightful fool! I realized it almost at once, but shut my eyes and simply clung to hope! And Dan, I used to think it was the good religious women like mother, in there, that were the fools!"

"She's not so terribly religious. She overlooks a lot of things. Take me, for instance."

"Oh you, you are a clean-hearted innocent boy compared to me—to *me!*"

She struck her breast, then walked away, turned and walked back; and so for a time she strode up and down with long swinging step. As she walked she put first one hand then the other on her hip, and at times nervously snapped finger and thumb as if impatiently summoning the thought she wanted. Evidently this did not come, for she stopped before McGuire and asked suddenly:

"Dan, what am I to do? I can't go home. I can't stay here. What can I do?"

"Why, go on home," McGuire explained. "You've told people you married him. Just say you left him. It's done, right along."

"But you see, Dan—" she spoke a little humbly, not appealing to his sympathy, but acknowledging bad judgment to her own somewhat arrogant self—"I believed and—" stubbornly—"I still believe marriage is wrong. I'd found it so in my case. You might as well promise to stay in good health all your life, as to promise to love one man, or woman, all your life. That's why I came away with Fanning. You go anywhere to get back health. I was sick of the life I led. I thought my husband a frightful bore. He had been an army officer. I wasn't a wife. I was just an orderly in petticoats. But now I see it means something to have a man whose every word is truth! Why, the captain would no more lie than—than steal from a blind man. Honor. Honor! Oh I got sick of *honor*—now, my God, I am sick of dishonor!

"I am going to tell you the truth, Dan. My husband was out of town when I met Fanning in San Francisco. He was a planter down here in one of these beautiful tropic islands. Wonderful stories he told me. And wonderful eagerness I had, too, to believe them! 'Come away with me', he said. Oh Dan, I should have

known that a man who will go with another's wife will—but a black girl! Uh, that's the thing! A filthy black native! How I hate myself!"

"Yes, but how do you suppose the captain feels—you to go to a man like Fanning?"

"Even you! You blame me!"

"No, Mrs. Fanning, I don't blame you. But since this is my day to be truthful, I've got to say your judgment wasn't good to leave a man who had a sense of honor for— Oh, I've no business saying it! You're catching —— enough. I don't care a snap about the not marrying part of it. It'd have been all right if Fanning was half the man you thought 'im. We've known it, all the men have known it, excepting the Brades, and nobody's blamed you."

In saying that McGuire was not entirely truthful. Coming through Tiulia, the thing had been talked of among the men but not believed. They were rough-spoken, blasphemous and ribald, but to Mrs. Fanning's name they had given the respect given only to the name of a good woman; and though sin-spotted themselves, they had rigid ideas about what constituted goodness in others, especially in women; and they would have scorned her name had they believed Tiulia, whom they knew to be a cunning and vicious little liar. McGuire, nor even Grimes, had believed the story. It was Grimes' swearing at her that had caused Tiulia to stop thinking it a joke to say so. So the thing once heard, being disbelieved, had been almost forgotten.

McGuire, however, had an uncritical nature, and he now felt woefully sorry for Mrs. Fanning.

"I don't think my husband ever cared, Dan, except perhaps for his pride—his honor. He had no way of knowing where I'd gone. Only my sister knows. She wouldn't tell. But if he ever did know, oh if he ever did know that the man I went off with had—a native girl! I couldn't stand that, stand having him know that!"

Abruptly Mrs. Fanning left him; she went into the house, into a dark hot room; and he gazed after her, being quite sure that she fled to hide her tears.

V

McGUIRE heard the creak of a wagon before it came into view; looking down the road he saw the plodding team of a neighbor named Johnson and two men in the wagon with him. They drove slowly up toward the house.

With some surprize McGuire recognized that the native in the wagon was Pealo; and with no surprize at all, since David had told that he was coming, he recognized the other as the gentleman he had pulled out of Nick's shanty and sent to sea on the schooner. David, the evening before, had told one of the Benz brothers, storekeepers, to keep a lookout for anybody who could give Mr. Mann a lift out to Brade's. David himself, eager for home, had walked, the miles being nothing to his strong legs.

McGuire went to the front of the house, down the steps, and waited. His first greeting was a doubtful one. He called to Pealo—

"What the —— you doin' here?"

Pealo answered with plaintive anxiety—

"I come for money you promise me."

McGuire with lift of hand and grin said to Mr. Mann:

"I'm glad to see you all right. You've saved my life, know that?"

The one who called himself Mr. Mann sat very erect and grave; the slight gesture with which he acknowledged the greeting was restrained.

"But," said McGuire, pointing again at the anxious Pealo, "he's unlucky for me as a black cat!"

"I picked 'im up on the road, hobblin' 'long," Johnson, the driver, explained a little apologetically. "Said he was comin' here." Then, with much grinning, "Say, we heard you been havin' some trouble."

"Nothing much yet," McGuire told him. "But we have hopes—"

Johnson smiled broadly with something

of a leer and, with a piece of tobacco before his mouth, said:

"We met ol' Grimes well up the road. He stopped an' told us 'bout Fanning. Say, that's sure one good joke, ain't it?"

Johnson filled a cheek's pouch with tobacco and grinned in the broad silly way of a man pleased at hearing of another man's sins finding him out.

Mr. Mann sat rigidly and seemed sternly examining McGuire.

Johnson, eager for news, spoke of Symonds and Zurdas; and at the same time Pealo spoke up, asking—

"You no give me money?"

"You were walkin' all the way out here on twisted leg? What you in such a rush about?" McGuire explained to Johnson, "Zurdas burned this fellow's hut. On account of me. Smell of smoke made me so sorry I promised to repay him." And to Pealo, "You heard I was goin' to run away, eh? You guessed wrong."

Johnson, having stared with a kind of fascination at McGuire's face, now said:

"Nothin' for *you* to run about, I hear! They say in town that Manuel's been tellin' round ol' Zurdas killed the girl's father in Honduras so—"

"Manuel tells that! Come on, get out. You men bring welcome news."

Pealo again broke in, whining, wanting to know whether McGuire would pay; and McGuire, in exasperation told him:

"Now you go way over there an' sit on that stump till Brade comes. You're tired an' need a rest. Get over there or you won't get a cent!"

Pealo, anxious to do as told and so give no cause for the withholding of the money he claimed, got off the wagon with scrambling haste and went with lurching pace to the far-off stump McGuire, half jesting, had indicated.

Johnson, wrapping the lines about the whipstock, got down from his side of the wagon, he being quite willing to stop a while, have a drink and talk things over.

But Mr. Mann sat rigid, as if reluctant to get out.

"Come on, get out," McGuire urged. "They're expecting you. David's told them you were coming. And what did *you* hear in town? Did Manuel say—just what did he say? D'you hear?"

Mr. Mann remained on the seat. He said calmly, almost without interest:

"I heard only what was talked of in the store this morning. There was much talk. It appears that this boy—Manuel? —some said they had heard that Manuel had told somebody he had overheard a part of the conversation between you and this Mr. Symonds—"

"Then he told that Symonds shot himself!" McGuire exclaimed.

"That I can't say, for I only repeat—"

"Aw," said the impatient Johnson, "nobody knows what Manuel knows. I hear he was half drunk this mornin' the first anybody seen him—drunk an' cussin' his father—talkin' crazy, like he does, drunk. But what's it all been about? There's ever'body guessin'—"

"Come on up to the house here," said McGuire to Mr. Mann.

"Yes," Johnson added, "this here's Brade's. Jus' where you was wantin' to come."

"David's about somewhere and Mrs. Brade's expectin' you for dinner," McGuire told him.

"How soon can I return to Port Kingston?" Mr. Mann, not moving from the wagon seat, inquired.

"Go back to town?" McGuire asked. "What for? You don't know the Brades if you don't think you're welcome to stay a year. Be treated like company every day! Come on. They want to see you. It was you—remember I asked if you'd ever been in Honduras? Well, last night when Symonds and Zurdas had me cornered I had to talk—convincing! I said you *were* from Honduras. Said you were Reena's father. They thought you'd come to life. It was that, being afraid to face you, that made Symonds shoot himself. You're sure you're not from Honduras?"

Mr. Mann with dignity shook his head and seemed still reluctant. He gazed at the house, looked about and finally asked:

"Where do those people live that the old man we met this morning talked about? Grimes, I think—" this to Johnson—"you called him."

"Fannings? Aw," said Johnson, pointing, "I guess it's about a mile 'r more 'cross over there. That sure was one whale of a joke on Fannin'! Ho-haw-haw-haw!"

At that moment Pealo, unable longer to remain silent, had called:

"You give me money, eh? You no lie?"

McGuire answered:

"Stay on that stump long enough! Play it's a nest, and you're a hen hatching dollars."

Mr. Mann, saying, "I would like to get back to Port Kingston this afternoon," got down slowly from the wagon. He was very thin, his features still marked with sickness, but he stood erect and his eyes were so piercingly steady that McGuire had much to do to realize that this stern gentleman was the same person who, stricken with fever, had talked like a madman.

"Why the hurry?" McGuire asked.

"There is a matter of importance I must attend to," said Mr. Mann with coolness.

McGuire looked at him, and was sure he was being evasive; and, with some impertinence remarked:

"You wanted to come. You're here. Everybody's glad to have you. Why you in such a —— of a hurry to get away?"

Mr. Mann was aware of his obligation to this lean, lank, battered fellow; the doctor had told him in so many words, "McGuire pulled you out of the grave feet first. You were that near gone." But Mr. Mann had never unbent cordially; he seemed to resent that McGuire had listened when he was out of his head. Now his manner was so strangely stiff that McGuire half felt that in some way the man had taken a dislike to him and wished to avoid being near him.

But Mr. Mann seemed to know, or at least suspect, that McGuire would nag him until he had given some sort of reasonable explanation; so, stopping short, with an effort to appear friendly, he laid a hand on McGuire's arm. But though Mr. Mann seemed calm McGuire felt the hand tremble like that of a man under great stress who nevertheless had much self-control.

"McGuire," he said, "I came to Kialo sick. From what I've learned I must have been really out of my mind, for I assure you I have no such — no such feeling toward any person living as it seems I expressed in my sickness. I am much better now. Much better. I shall return to the States at once. My friends, not one, know where I am. That's all, McGuire. I've simply got to get home. And I want to get back to Port Kingston—ah—I would like to go right away, but this afternoon at latest!"

"You'll change your mind after you see how mother cooks. Come along. Both of you. Johnson wants a drink, I know."

As they walked along the veranda McGuire left them to go ahead. He called to Mrs. Brade and Reena to come and hear the news, good news; and here was Mr. Mann himself!

Mrs. Brade came with brisk eagerness. Her fingers were gummed with dough and flour. Reena followed and looked at Mr. Mann with half hopeful wonderment; but he, in turn, gave her hardly more than a glance. No daughter had ever passed out of his life that he, with pained, expectant anxiety, should search Reena's face.

With a kind of cheerful chatter, made up of pleased exclamations from Mrs. Brade and awkward friendly comments from Johnson, McGuire quite gaily told the news they had brought. Both Mrs. Brade and Reena looked very hard at Mr. Mann, interested because they knew of him and how well his name had served McGuire in a moment of peril.

"But you really are not—not from Honduras?" Mrs. Brade asked, she too being almost determinedly hopeful.

Mr. Mann did not answer. They saw him stiffen, saw his eyes take on a fixed, strange look and, turning, they saw in the doorway Mrs. Fanning, who had heard their voices. She too stood with a

strange, fixed stare, as if she had lost her breath and could not even gasp.

"The captain!" she said in a whisper.

The captain's thin face became instantly bloodless.

"You! Susan!"

"Oh!" Mrs. Brade exclaimed. "You know each other!"

The captain bowed slightly.

Mrs. Fanning said wearily:

"Yes, yes. We know—each— No, no—" looking very hard at him—"no, I can't say we ever really knew each other!"

"Why, why how strange!" said Mrs. Brade, not in the least able even to begin to guess what was the matter.

"You—you came to find me?" Mrs. Fanning asked, and there was a thin faint repressed hopefulness in her question.

The captain said quietly, but with effort:

"No, not at all." Then addressing Mrs. Brade, "It was really quite by accident that I came to Kialo. Being sick, I hardly knew where I was. If it had not been for McGuire here—"

Mrs. Fanning could endure it no longer; this was revenge on his part too great to be suffered without protest. With a tone almost as if thanking him, she said:

"Oh you did, you did! You were trying to find me. I've heard Dan tell how you talked, but never dreamed it was you. I never dreamed you cared!"

"I don't understand," said Mrs. Brade, her voice almost plaintive, glancing with a kind of eager worried look from Mrs. Fanning to the captain. "What is the matter? Dan, what—what's wrong?"

McGuire's hand fluttered, as if discarding any responsibility. It was for the captain and Mrs. Fanning to explain as they pleased.

Then Mrs. Brade bent toward the captain and said:

"Who are you? And why do you both act this way?"

The captain, with another slight bow, replied—

"Mrs. Brade, entirely by accident, I have encountered my former wife."

Mother Brade faintly said "Oh—oh," and had a dazed expression as she again looked at Mrs. Fanning and yet again at the captain.

McGuire, whose impulses were sudden —though he half admired, half hated the captain—McGuire, better than any other person, knew what real feelings were deep in the man's heart; these, at least these and sickness, had driven him mad for a time, but now he ruled himself with that cool, rigid self-control that had made even his wife, in his own house, believe that he was without emotion, without feeling.

Though the husband, having been wronged, was in the right, McGuire's whole sympathy was with Mrs. Fanning.

"Well," said the awkward, blundering Johnson, with a kind of stammering glee, "things is all mixed up for ever'body this day, ain't they? We just met Grimes up the road an' he tol' us—"

McGuire with hasty reach got to him, got his arm and pulled, saying, "Come on an' get that drink!" And so led him off. But as they were going he heard Mrs. Fanning's gasp—

"Grimes!"

"Well I wish I knew what to say!" Mrs. Brade exclaimed with childish frankness and gazed helplessly, kindly, at Mrs. Fanning. Then, with tactless effort at tactfulness, not realizing that almost above all things the captain and Mrs. Fanning did not want to be left alone, she said, "You'll have to excuse me. I've got things on the stove that'll burn. Come on, Reena."

She put a hand on Reena's arm and at once began hastily to brush off the flour her touch had left. Together they walked away and into the kitchen.

VI

JOHNSON did not get his drink, for when out of hearing McGuire said:

"That break you made about Grimes—maybe it wasn't so bad after all, in a way. I know what's in that captain. But he's not going to waste his good clean courage on Fanning—that is if Fanning keeps out of sight. He knew the name—he must have!

It's a wonder he hadn't heard it before you met Grimes today. That's why he wanted to get back to Port Kingston. The fever he had burned all the murder out of his heart. But anyhow you'd better get over there by the storehouse and tell Fanning. Aye, an' watch 'im get down on his belly and crawl into the bush to hide!"

McGuire, peering from shelter, saw that the captain and Mrs. Fanning were alone, and it seemed to him she stood in an attitude almost like that of pleading; then he went round back of the house and entered the kitchen.

Mrs. Brade was flustered; she said over and over that she didn't know what to think.

"Dan, why if they were divorced and she had married Mr. Fanning, why would she think he had come here after her? I don't understand it, Dan. And the captain seems a nice man, too!"

"But, Mother, you women are queer," said McGuire, reaching for the gin bottle.

"I'm not! I'm not a bit queer."

"You wouldn't trade Old William for a handsome young fellow like Fanning?"

"Dan! How can you say such a thing?"

"Then you *are* queer!" He swallowed half a tumbler of gin. "Most women would!"

"It isn't so! It isn't. I know it isn't!"

McGuire swung a leg over a corner of the table, asking:

"Know why she left him? He's got stomach trouble. She told me so."

"You put that bottle right down, Dan! I don't know what you'll be saying next."

"That man's breast is covered with scars, Mother. Decorations beyond the gift of kings! Aye, awards of bravery bestowed only by enemies. But he had stomach trouble—" McGuire waved a finger up and down before his cheeks, as if streaking them—"Made lines in his face. Took away his good looks. And Mother, that's coal-oil you're putting in that dough!"

Mrs. Brade, with a startled exclamation, dropped the teacup. It fell and broke. She bent down, dipped her fingers into the liquid and smelled.

"Dan, you stop that! It isn't. It's water! I knew it was. But I am so nervous— The water barrel needs filling anyhow. You get out of this kitchen!"

McGuire walked over to the water barrel, lifted the cover, peered. He laughed at her, but picked up a heavy wooden bucket, and in the door paused.

"I'm going to tell William to be careful an' not get stomach trouble."

"Oh that boy!" said Mrs. Brade with a kind of pleased exasperation, beaming at Reena.

Reena went to the door, looked after him; she hesitated, then ran up along the path to his side and, laughing a little, put her hand to the handle of the bucket, saying—

"You *are* a tease!"

"I'm not. Don't you be like other people, Reena, and think a man has to be solemn to be serious. Take yourself, for instance. You haven't been married two days—and don't want the husband you've got."

"Oh Dan! Don't, please!"

"Don't what? Remind you of Manuel? He's so far out of your life, Reena, you can call him a bad dream."

"I hope so. But it's like a dream I can't forget. And it isn't kind of you to talk like—like I had changed my mind in two days. I would *never* change *my* mind!"

"Want to know what Mrs. Fanning told me a while ago? She said love was a kind of sickness you couldn't help getting over; that is, sometimes you just got well in spite of yourself. Fanning's certainly cured her."

"Don't you feel dreadfully sorry for Mrs. Fanning?"

"No, I'm sorry for Fanning. He cures her of folly, then she despises him. That's the way life is. People don't appreciate what you do for 'em."

"Aren't you ever serious?" she asked, smiling.

"Well see for yourself how silly it is to

be in love and have to try every way you can to please somebody besides yourself!"

"But wouldn't there be pleasure in pleasing when one loves, Dan?"

"Must be. There's mother. Feed her William crackers? Never! The hottest day of the year she will bake if it's baking day. Natives don't cook to suit her. There's not another white woman on Kialo that'll sweat over a stove for the pleasure of seeing her men eat—more'n good for us at that!"

Thus loitering as they talked, they came to where a spring under a far-reaching breadfruit had been dug out and walled up with rocks, like a small cistern, in the shade.

"Sit down," said McGuire pointing to a low rock and taking out his pipe. "Mother just wanted me out of the kitchen. The water barrel's half full."

Reena broke off a few ferns, held them together and brushed the rock. McGuire watched attentively. There was a graceful fastidiousness about her very pleasing to see. Mrs. Fanning was careless and brusk and, try as she might, was never in order, could never keep herself in order. Neither she nor any other woman that McGuire could recall had Reena's sensitive daintiness.

He liked to watch her—the way she moved her fingers, her wrists, the way she stood or walked. She would, he thought, have known as little how to be awkward as some of the big-boned, robust planters' daughters to be otherwise than awkward. Symonds had given her governesses and tutors from almost the time she could walk, but McGuire felt that proud and dainty women of Old Spain must have bequeathed to her such unconscious grace. And that proud and slightly sullen poise with which she had for so long out-faced the men about her from whom she wished to remain aloof; that too, he reflected imaginatively, must have been through heritage—the heritage, perhaps, of some ancient princess who had learned the art as captive in a castle's turret. He, helped by fortune, had found Reena the gentlest of sweet, half-shy maidens.

He shook himself out of this dreaming and filled his pipe.

Reena sat down, locked her hands on her knees and, bending forward, watched him with searching steadiness, smiling slightly as he discarded match after match that would not light.

"What you staring so hard at?"

"You, of course," she said.

"Stop it. Makes me remember my face is full of black bumps and one eye half closed."

"I wasn't looking at those things."

"At what then?"

"Just you."

"I'm going to raise a beard. Sign o' manliness an' hides your face. Half the time I have to shave with glass. Don't have any glass but a gin bottle. Have to drink up the gin to get the bottle. So you see what it leads to, not having a beard."

"Do you like gin so much, Dan?"

"It helps."

"In just what way?"

"Oh a lot o' ways. If you're cold it makes you warm. Hot, it cools you off. Got no money, makes you rich. Lots o' money, makes you spend it. Easiest way I know to be happy."

"What," she asked, trying a little to tease him, "would make you unhappy?"

"Same as other people. Wanting things you've no business wanting. Then getting 'em! Like Mrs. Fanning did."

"I am so, so very sorry for her," said Reena.

"Should be. It's not every woman can have such dreams as yours come true."

"What dreams, Dan?"

"Plain truth, Reena?"

"Yes, of course. And I wonder what you are going to say."

"The finest boy I ever knew, at least the finest for a woman, loves you. And I am glad."

"You mean David?" she asked simply.

"David."

Reena looked straight at him, without the least confusion, without the least pretense at confusion; very slightly, gravely, she shook her head. Then her dark eyes

fell and her fingers absently picked at the lace of a fern.

"Don't sulk and don't be untruthful! Manuel—blessings 'pon 'im! I'm going into town an' see that his story's taken down. Soon as that half-marriage is broken, why, you and David will be married."

Reena shook her head slowly while he was speaking; she did not look up, but picked at the frond.

"Now what's wrong?"

"I do not love him," she said, with face downcast.

"How do you know you don't?"

Reena looked up shyly, stubbornly shaking her head, and again looking down, replied—

"I just know, that's all."

"What can *you* know? You've been shut up in a kind of convent—devil's kind! What do you think love is anyhow?"

"I know," she said so softly he could barely hear.

"Well, tell me then. I'd like to know. Lots of people in this world would like to know. Look at the mistakes it would save, knowing."

"You are trying to tease."

"You were in love with David, weren't you? Once?"

"No. I liked him—" her eyes lifted; she spoke quietly but without the slightest embarrassment—"I always liked him. As a child I used to think of him. When I thought of running away from Mr. Symonds I did think of him. I did wish that he would take me. That is all."

"But you thought that love, didn't you? Be honest, now!"

"Yes, I think then I did," she said, with shy, almost wistful smile, but looked right at him as if she would not hide her face under his questioning.

"You still like him, don't you?"

"I do indeed. Oh, very much!"

"Then you love 'im much as ever, don't you?"

Reena shook her head. Her dark eyes were very bright and a little moist; her voice was nervously low.

"No, no—that isn't love!"

"What is then?"

"I don't think of him when I lie and can't sleep. When he isn't by me I don't wish for him and have something—something here in my throat—" she put a slim hand up to her throat—"that makes me so I can hardly breathe. When I see him I don't feel that—that everything I wanted had been given me. When I am with him I am not content just because—"

"You're hard to please. What do you want, anyhow?"

"Just to be happy, Dan."

"You want too much!"

Reena glanced shyly through lowered lashes, smiled nervously; then, with a smile of daring, though her low voice almost failed her, said—

"I want no more than I have—at times."

McGuire had been sitting on the overturned bucket. He took the pipe from his mouth and thrust his thumbs into his belt and looked at her intently. What she seemed to mean was plain, but he, utterly devoid of a good opinion of himself, half thought that she, in this the woman's way, was trying just a little to see what he would say.

He was not greatly wise in the way of women; and though sensitively aware that many had liked him, yet always—as he had so often with secret hurt reflected—there was that taint of pity in the liking that made him think they felt he was almost unworthy of being liked.

He stood up and, with a tone of skepticism that was not quite sincere, was just a little on the edge of mockery, asked—

"When did you begin to learn all this—what love is?"

Reena held her fingers together, as if they were half frozen, and her low voice had the added sweetness of faint trembling, but her face, now aglow, was turned upward toward him in brave confession.

"I felt it before, but when I thought they had killed you, Dan—Oh then I *knew!*"

"You mean you love—"

Both McGuire's hands with sweeping

downward gesture indicated his lank body from neck to knees, indicating himself and what he was.

Reena said yes—just that. Her eyes were searchingly eager; she did not doubt, but still was breathless and felt a flush of anxiety at his staring disbelief.

She, to his mind, was as near to what a princess must be as any woman he had ever seen; and from his life and way of life she was so far removed by a sweet, half sad beauty, where still a shadow of her long unhappiness dimly lingered even in her smile, by her qualities of heritage, by birth and woman's character, that any thought more than of helping her, as luck gave the chance, had seemed to him vain, unmanly dreaming.

The cool and inexcitable part of McGuire's brain told him that she had, in her inexperience and out of long loneliness, mistaken gratitude for love. She knew of him, of course, as the reputed beachcomber; but she did not know enough of the world to know what a beachcomber was, or to care. Very young, very lovely, very headlong; and as usual with headlong young loveliness, very amiss in her judgment.

"Good God! What a dear little fool you are!" he said and sat down on the ground at her feet, laying or rather tossing aside his pipe.

He looked up at her. The grin on his bruised face gave her assurance; and she, either blind as the love-stricken are, or else with a deep insight, saw only the tenderness, the manhood which, though deeply corroded by wastrel life was still manhood, within him. She put her hands gently to his head and drew him against her as she leaned over in the unconscious mothering caress of one who would shelter and soothe.

McGuire's thoughts spun dizzily, searching for what he knew they could not find—some plan to which he would give approval for taking this lovely child unto himself. Blackbirding, trading or the underling's servitude on a plantation —such were the occupations he might hope to find and draw a salary's pittance. They were futile. Not to be thought of. He knew his weaknesses, but had no awareness of strength unless a certain confidence in impudence might be called a kind of strength.

"What are you thinking of, Dan?" she whispered.

"That, Reena, this kind of lunacy is as much as heaven can give its saints, but for mere mortals, sweet child, it *is* lunacy!"

"You do not love me!"

"That's just it. I do!"

"Then why—"

"Why? Why Reena! You've lived with men you hated, but they've kept you like a princess. However much I loved, with me you'd go in rags and starve."

"I wouldn't mind, Dan—with you."

"You've never been hungry. Or in rags."

"I have been hungry always, until you came. And I have envied the native girls their loose, torn skirts and freedom."

"Poor kind of freedom, child, to do what you —— please because nobody cares enough to make you do otherwise!"

"Who has cared for me but you?"

"They did in a way. Were proud of you. Your pride hurt them—but they were half proud of it, of your being so proud!"

"And Dan, I had only shame."

"A woman doesn't know what shame is until she has loved the wrong man. There's no deeper spot in hell than learning to hate the man they've loved! Look at Mrs. Fanning—scrappy, reckless woman—long ago all the fight went out of her. Shame of Fanning took it out."

"Dan, you are trying to make me understand that you do not love me?"

"Great God, Reena, can't you understand that I do love you—love you too —— much to let you ever learn to hate me!"

"I couldn't. No matter what you did, I couldn't. I will be happy just to be with you."

"Oh you've got yet to learn there's no such thing as happiness—merely ways

of being unhappy, and you have to choose between them!"

"No, no, you mustn't talk that way to me. You are just trying to see what I'll say, aren't you, Dan?"

He looked down, bent forward, feeling helpless, shook his head; within his brain some detached thoughts seemed trying to pray, while others seemed to stand aside and curse him for what he was, had been, would always be.

With both hands to his cheeks she held his face, turning it up and toward her; and she gazed upon him with the wondering searching passion of a woman when she loves. She drew him slightly toward her, and when he bent his head again, with much the feeling of one unworthily in the presence of great and sacred mystery, she said with soft reproach:

"Look at me, Dan! Look at me."

He lifted his face; and she, the beautiful child, kissed him, whispering:

"I love you! I love you so!"

Close behind them there was the sound of a step.

McGuire, turning, rose hastily with a guilty flush overrunning his body, as if he had been taken in some sin; and it was not unlike sin that he, being what he was known to be, should touch with his lips the face of such a girl.

In rising he faced David, which made him feel the more guilty. Not two hours before he had pressed David's hand and given words of congratulations.

David stood awkward and stiff. His jealousy confused him, though he was not aware that this confusion was jealousy. His was an honest, earnest nature. His temper was not violent. He was hurt with an agonizing pain, for this was like betrayal from a brother whom he loved.

Trying not to show his feelings he showed them the more by speaking hoarsely, jerkily, saying:

"That captain wants to see you. He's going back to town. And Pealo is at father for some money—says you owe it."

David's foot stumbled in turning about so that he seemed to stagger for a step or two, then with long steps hurried off.

McGuire's impulse was to call, to hasten after him, to try to explain; but the impulse died away like smoke in wind.

Reena, wholly unconscious that any one had been wronged, had not even flushed under David's eyes. She looked with wistful admiration at McGuire, then asked:

"What's the matter, Dan? You look so thoughtful."

"Thoughtful?" He stepped aside to his pipe, picked it up, wiped the dust from the stem. "I am a little. You see, I have to leave you now. I'm going into town with that captain. There, I'm going to get hold of Manuel, get the truth out of him before Morris and Cullem, so they'll cancel that half-marriage. Then—"

"Then—" she stood up quickly, with hands against him and, standing close to him, looked up happily, expectantly into his eyes—"then you will come right back to me?"

"Just as soon as I can," he said—and lied.

He meant, when Manuel's story had been heard and taken down, to go to sea with old Grimes and the reckless pearler, and come never again to Kialo. It was, he felt, the best that he could do for Reena; it was all that he could do to show David that he was true in friendship.

CHAPTER IX

THE captain sat alone on the veranda, looking impatiently in the direction Old Brade had gone with plodding slowness after understanding the captain's reasons for wishing to leave at once.

Old Brade had looked at him calmly, said nothing, turned and gone off, so the captain did not know whether he had gone for a wagon or had simply ignored the request.

Mrs. Brade was within the house with Mrs. Fanning. There Mrs. Fanning, with the shame and bitterness of a girl confessing sin, told her story with the abasement of one utterly humbled.

The captain could hear the murmuring sound of her voice. He tried not to want

to listen but, as he nervously tapped the arms of his chair with his fingers, his head would unconsciously tilt sidewise to catch faintly a word here and there.

The captain was still a sick man; the shock of meeting his wife had seemed to take the recently gathered strength out of his knees so that in standing he felt that he must hold to something or totter.

"Ah, McGuire!" said the captain, with relief that some one had come near for him to talk with. "I have, or at least I think I have, made arrangements with the old gentleman, Mr. Brade, to take me back to town. I wanted to say good-by to you and thank you, McGuire, for—"

McGuire wearily waved aside his thanks and sat down, saying:

"And I'll go in with you. I want to get to town and—"

His ears caught the sound of a muffled voice within the house, the voice of a woman sobbing. He looked at the captain. The captain pressed his lips tightly and looked away.

"Her story—" McGuire gestured vaguely—"I know it, all of it. You going to leave her with that brute?"

The captain returned a surprized stare. He seemed a little shocked; this, he appeared to feel, was too personal a subject for even such impertinence as McGuire's to touch.

"Are you?" McGuire persisted, indifferent to the captain's stare.

"I really—I—why—I say! Aren't you —But you see, it was her own choosing, and—ah!—the incident is closed, sir!"

McGuire, himself too unhappy, too miserable to care what he said, spoke as he felt, saying:

"Well, why didn't you kill her—or Fanning? Him especially. That's what you came for. She's a —— fine woman."

"Oh I say, may we not talk of something else, please? Or better, not talk at all. Not talk at all!"

"Said it was quite by accident you came to Kialo. And she, not an hour before, said you were a man that never lied."

"The devil is in you!" said the captain, trembling with exasperation. "Can't you have the decency to keep still?"

The devil was indeed in McGuire; the devil of unhappiness and an utter disregard for the captain's feelings.

"I'll bet," he said, "Fanning's hiding out in the bush. Waiting for you to get away. That's the sort he is. If you wanted to do the right thing, you'd shoot 'im!"

"Do you think," the captain inquired bitterly, goaded into a reply, "I should be held responsible for her choice? A choice that has been disappointing?"

"That's just it! You're satisfied because she's miserable. However else you felt, there was some pleasure in it when you heard old Grimes tell his joke. Wasn't there now? If she'd been happy here I bet you'd have made a row. You promised it at Nick's shanty."

"My ——, sir!" said the captain furiously, struggling up out of his chair. "You don't think—think I should ignore —forget—for-*forgive* her?"

"You beg hard enough, she might forgive you. You hid too much of yourself under that mask. Deceived her. I've seen you with your mask off. She never did. So how the —— was she to know?"

"I will not listen longer to your —— impertinence!" the captain exclaimed, walking determinedly along the veranda, holding the rail to support himself.

McGuire eyed him moodily, half repentant that he had spoken so, half wishing he had said more.

At that moment Pealo came hobbling disconsolately into view and, catching sight of McGuire, hurried toward him with pitiable lurching of broken body.

"You give me money?"

"No, if I give you money, you avaricious old turtle, you'll think some white men keep their word. Then along will come some fellow and bamboozle you. Best thing I can do for you is not to do it. Isn't that right?"

McGuire's inflection seemed to demand an affirmative, and Pealo, eager to please, nodded ingratiatingly, as if with approval.

"What'll you do with it?" McGuire demanded.

"Oh, buy me boat. Fish."

"You're lying."

"Oh no, I no tell lie."

"You, a good five miles from the beach, hobble up and down to fish?"

"Oh Kirmo, he fish. I buy boat for him."

"Bah! You slip from one lie to a worse one. Kirmo's too lazy and you know it. I want to know what you're in a such a fret about that money for? Buy gin and have a big feast, eh?"

Pealo looked as reproachful as he could and made denials.

McGuire knew that this sly crafty old heathen was up to something he wanted to keep hidden, but suspected whisky and food for a rousing feast in some remote jungle spot. It was common enough for the natives to slip away, have girls dance the old and now forbidden dances, eat much food and grow drunk. McGuire cared not in the least, or so he thought, what Pealo did with the money, but he was curious. Pealo, however, would say nothing that McGuire regarded as truth, so at last McGuire told him:

"Go sit on the steps and wait for the wagon. You'll get a lift home."

II

A NATIVE on the wagon-seat drove up toward the house. Old Brade, riding back from the barns, stood up in the wagon-bed, about as immobile as a figure carved from wood; then he got down slowly.

The captain, who had been sitting far off on Pealo's stump, arose and came toward the wagon, but paused as he saw McGuire go toward Old Brade.

"I'm going to town and would like whatever is due. Fanning's out in the bush having a chill. Will you take a look at the books?"

Brade looked at McGuire; the silent old man seemed looking straight into his thoughts, and nodded; then:

"Yes, lad. But ye're leavin', Dan?"

"Don't you think it's best, with Zurdas up in arms? I might get hurt if I stay around here."

"So ye've a mind to go 'way?" Brade asked, stroking his thick beard.

"I'm a blasted Joner! Ever' place I set foot, —— pops."

"You've a welcome home, lad, any time ye come. David's over at the store. He'll give ye money."

Old Brade, with plodding shuffle, walked off.

McGuire told the native driver who sat listlessly on the seat waiting to be told what next to do:

"Don't you set out for town till I get back. Understand? That fellow over there—" McGuire indicated the impatient captain—"will talk coaxing and maybe slip you a dollar. I'll give you two. So wait."

The native grinned lazily and nodded.

III

McGUIRE, with about as much of an uneasy feeling as any that ever turned him aside from what he wanted to do, went toward the store. Though utterly innocent, he was flushed with a sense of guilt. He had no thought at all of David's anger, only of the reproach that would be in David's eyes.

He found David alone, sitting on a box in a slump-shouldered brooding, gazing vaguely into the dimness of the long storeroom. He looked up with a bewildered frown.

"Take a look at the book an' see what's due me, will you, David?"

David hesitated; he got up reluctantly and, in walking toward the shelf, stopped, turned as if about to say something, then took down the ledger and started to open it. With sudden suspicion he slapped the book down on the board that served as a counter, and asked—

"What you want with all that's due you?"

"I owe a bit, here an' there."

"You're going away?"

"May."

"Don't do it, Dan! No. Why are you? Don't do it, Dan!"

"I feel my toes begin to turn to roots. It's time to go then."

"You think I'm mad at you?" David asked with a kind of pleading. "I'm just mad at myself for being a fool."

"The only fool thing you do is skittering about in that schooner when you ought to stay home. Buy Fanning out—or run 'im off."

"When he heard who the captain was he hid!"

"He would. I understand his feelings better'n you ever will. Have got 'em myself in a way. But see here, David. Reena's only a child. She loves me as she would an uncle. She loved even old Tomas; or would've loved even Grimes had he been kind to her. You guessed things wrong, boy. You always do."

"But don't go 'way," David said with open pleading.

"Feet itch. And when they do, like mine, it's only walking on far off coral that eases them. Besides, there's Zurdas and—"

"Why, Dan, it's like you were running away!"

"There's no other way for a coward to go."

"But you're no coward, Dan!"

"There's a streak o' fear in even the best. And I'm not that."

"There's none I know that's half so good!" said David. "Why, you can't go. I won't let you. I'll go tell mother and Reena too." Then David tried to laugh. He made queer sounds, not like laughter and, with effort at confessional blurting, said, "Somehow I'd never thought of her, then somehow of a sudden I—I don't know—I just wanted her—and like a fool— She is so beautiful! I might've known— Don't go, Dan!"

"Come, look in that book! The wagon's waiting. And if you take my suspicion, have one of the bookkeeping shopmen from town go over your accounts. Fanning's been keeping them."

David fingered the book, turning pages. He bent forward, moving a forefinger down a row of figures.

"A hundred an' thirty-seven. I wish it was more."

"More than I expected. I'll be in town some days, most likely, before I get to sea. So don't say anything about my not coming back. Just say I'm drunk in town. It'll be truth."

"I won't say it. Not to mother, nor to her!"

"No? You'd tell a lie, would you?" McGuire asked, with a flickering trace of teasing.

"Of course, if it helps somebody I like. Anybody would. But you're not going, Dan! I'm going to come right into town after you. I'm going with you now. That's what I'll do!"

David slammed the book back on the shelf and came round the end of the counter, meaning to go with McGuire, meaning also to bring him back.

"You can't do that, David. I've got to go. I've got to run an' hide, like Fanning did. Same reason, too."

"Same *reason?* What'd you mean?"

"Well, since you've got to know, I'll tell you. And when I'm out of sight, you can tell 'em all. They'll hear it soon enough anyhow. I've got a child or two up at Samoa. No more married to the mother than Fanning to Tiulia. Well, her brother showed up the other day in a ship's crew. That's why I've got to go. So you see, I know how Fanning feels. I can't stay here."

"Honest, Dan?"

"Honest! Is that the sort of thing a man's glad to tell about himself? But you know how the truth is. The —— thing gnaws till it comes out your mouth!"

"But why? You didn't need to tell me. I wish you hadn't told me." Then suddenly, "Dan, I don't believe it!"

"Have I ever lied to you? At least, been caught at it."

"No."

"The same with this. You think I can longer look in your mother's eyes after

knowing what she thinks of Fanning? Or Reena's either? They'll hear the story from town, David. The girl's brother talked enough when he found out I was here. So you don't need tell it. When Reena's heard it—well, she should have guessed. A man doesn't go knocking about these seas and loafing on beaches as I've done without—you understand. So there you are. You sell that ship o' yours and stop at home."

"I wish you hadn't told me. I don't want to believe it, Dan. Why, you're no more like that than—why you're not like that at all!"

"You think I want to dodge away like a blasted thief? This is truth and all of it: I've got to go because of shame to stay. So here, good-by!"

McGuire put out his hand.

David, convinced against his will, breathed heavily, moistened his lips but could not speak. He was as broken up inside of himself as if a blow had smashed his ribs. He struggled hard not to believe, vaguely felt there was something that he couldn't quite touch and seize upon that would help, somehow, to understand all this; but why McGuire should lie about a thing like this was beyond the grasp of David's honest mind.

"Here," said McGuire, putting his hand closer.

David, frowning gloomily, took the hand, gave no pressure to the grip, let the hand fall and stood moodily staring at the floor.

McGuire was hurt at this slack parting, but hurried off without a backward look, and so did not overhear David's groping, half-dazed mutter:

"I don't believe it. I don't."

Thus, stubbornly doubting, David sat down on a box, held his head and broodingly struggled to get some thought that would help; but McGuire's cunning, his gift of shameless lying, his sense of willing sacrifice, his plotting foresight in how to make himself detested by whom he loved, was hopelessly beyond the reach of David's penetration.

IV

THE captain sat on the wagon-seat by the side of the native driver. McGuire and Pealo sat in the bed of the wagon. Pealo held in a moist fist, tightly, two of the gold pieces that Brade had taken from a sack that he kept under a mattress and given to McGuire.

Hardly a word was spoken until they reached the trail that led from the road up to Pealo's land.

"All right, get out," said McGuire.

"I go on town," said Pealo and put his other hand to the gold-hoarding fist as if the better to protect it. He gave McGuire a queer, distrustful look.

"You're going on to town. What for?"

Pealo nodded but did not answer.

"The missionary'll take that money away from you. I'm going to tell 'im you've got it."

Pealo grinned nervously and shook his head.

"Pull ahead," said McGuire to the driver. "Pealo's going to town to get drunk. He'll buy us all drinks."

The driver looked across his shoulder with cordial interest, but Pealo took care not to notice. The old fellow's expression was very sour, almost fierce.

McGuire, in trying not to think of his own troubles, at last fixed his gaze meditatively on the captain's back and wondered which was the real man—he who had spoken vengefully in the midst of fever or this cool, soldierly individual who had faced his wife much as he would have faced an enemy who had fought unfairly but been anyhow taken captive.

"I'm sorry for her because he's pleased that she is sorry," said McGuire to himself.

The captain, perhaps feeling McGuire's brooding stare upon his back, turned his head, looking over his shoulder. Their eyes met. The captain's gaze darkened resentfully. As if not to be out-stared by this impertinent rascal he looked at him steadily, and McGuire imperturbably met the stare. All manner of reckless words came into McGuire's mouth, ready

to fly out, but he said nothing, was content with merely thinking them. Then the captain faced about.

With mild jolting the wagon creaked on. The native driver, slump-shouldered, with reins slack in his hands, day-dozed. Pealo clutched in a sweating palm the pieces of gold. McGuire gazed broodingly into the thin smoke-like veil of dust that was stirred by the wagon wheels.

When not much more than a half mile from town there came from behind the sound of a horse, ridden furiously. The hoofs clattered on the road, and in the midst of dust the horseman appeared. McGuire watched closely, expecting Zurdas; but it was one of Brade's men, humped over in the saddle, riding as if for life.

McGuire jumped up and, with feet wide apart to brace himself, flung up a hand; he shouted, wanting to know what was wrong.

The man, swerving to one side of the road to pass the wagon, pulled down the excited horse, which, as if impatient at being checked, with head up-pointed under the jerk of the bridle, seemed to dance fretfully. The rider's hat had been jerked low against the breeze of fast riding, thus giving him an odd, browless expression. With wide-open mouth, hastily shouting as he passed, he bawled:

"— doctor! Took poison—cockroach poison! On, you ——!"

He cursed the willing horse as he swung by the wagon, lashing with rein-tips, stabbing with spurred heels. The rider passed from sight in a flurry of dust that rose swiftly, then hung with listless drifting over the road, moving slowly, to settle on the foliage at the roadside.

The team, stirred by the running of the horse, had begun to trot. The wagon jolted sharply over the ruts. McGuire, standing, caught at the seat to steady himself.

The captain looked back and up anxiously, saying:

"Who? What's wrong? I didn't catch—*who* took poison?"

As the wagon jolted behind the rapid trot of the team McGuire, jerkily, with voice pitched to be heard above the creaking, said:

"*She* did, of course! Was the only way left to strike at you! You were glad she was sorry. Wanted you to be sorry too. So she struck—and run—out of the world!"

"Did he say— I didn't hear him say who—" the captain began in protest, trying to be doubtful.

"You don't hear well! You didn't hear her beg, beg you to pity her there on the veranda. That's what she wanted—your anger or your pity! You gave neither."

The captain fell silent; he leaned forward, far forward, with elbows on knees, and head down like a man struck from behind.

The native driver, not liking to be jolted or hurried, brought the team again to a walk, and at a snail's pace the wagon entered the town, which was hardly more than a small patch of stores huddling half secretively under the shade. At a distance, down near the beach, open to the sunlight, was the litter of battered tin cans called warehouses which gave to Port Kingston that rickety appearance, so disappointing to the few tourists who came seeking the romance of out of the way places.

The wagon, with plodding creak and slow bobbing nod of horses' heads, was drawn up the street toward the general store of the Benz brothers who, being aggressive clipped-head young Germans, undertook ambitiously to supply all the market needs of Kialo and offered a variety of goods that ranged from needles to ploughs; they would contract for the delivery of a piano to the home of some fond planter whose daughters were musical, or take the measurements for ladies' boots and have them made to order at Sydney.

Several men were standing about on the unrailed platform before the store; here kegs, boxes and burlaped bundles were piled. Wagons drawing alongside could be easily loaded from the platform with supplies ordered by planters.

Both the young Benz brothers, bareheaded, with the air of having paused for only a moment or two in the midst of busy work, were there with the three or four bearded men in slouch hats. They were all looking expectantly up the street, if a roadway where stores were all on one side could be called a street, until the coming of the wagon attracted their attention; then stares were turned toward it.

At the same time from up the street came the man who had ridden in from Brade's, now returning, accompanied by the doctor, who sat a horse borrowed from a hitching rack near the club. They were riding at a trot, the doctor in an uncomfortable attitude with elbows flopping and holding the pill-bag off to one side.

The men on the store platform had been waiting to see him pass. He rode by without looking toward them. His cross-eyed gaze was toward the approaching wagon, and he rode by even this without speaking, though he seemed to make a vague gesture of greeting with the hand that held the reins. Under his oblique stare it was hard to tell at whom he looked, whether at the captain, McGuire or Pealo. The doctor's expression was haggard and sour, likely enough from too much poker and whisky. His distorted eyes, the rusty, scraggly whiskers, his ungainly jiggling about in the saddle, gave him the appearance of an absurd knight-errant riding out to meet the challenger Death.

The captain turned, looking after the doctor, and said huskily—

"McGuire, why doesn't he hurry—hurry?"

McGuire answered bitterly:

"He's kind-hearted, that fellow. Who wants her to live?"

V

THE wagon drew alongside the platform.

The rider from Brade's, coming in to town, had stopped there long enough, in making inquiry as to the doctor's whereabouts, to shout hurriedly the story. Those who stood there now gazed at the captain with half sullen gaping, a kind of brutal curiosity.

Pealo, the moment the wagon stopped, got out with lurching scramble and dodged wide of the men, as if afraid some one might stop him, then went into the store with the agility of a crippled thing evading pursuit. It was with something the manner of pursuit that one of the alert Benzes, always on tip-toe for business, whether to sell a fish hook or a plough, hurried after him.

The other men, with uncertain scuffle of feet, edged nearer the wagon. All knew McGuire, and there were many things they wanted him to tell; but for a moment they gazed at the captain.

"Well," said McGuire, rising, ready to step from the wagon, "here we are, Captain." Then, running his glance along the faces of the men on the platform, "And a crowd waiting to swallow the anchor!"

They replied with grins, and one said—

"Zurdas, I bet, is goin' a-swaller you!"

"Oh I'm a Joner," said McGuire, "an' would turn a whale's stomach. You fellows—" this with ironical impudence—"going to believe all I tell you?"

At that they laughed, some with guffaws in playful mockery of anybody's believing him.

McGuire stepped out and turned toward the captain, who hesitated broodingly, looking at no one. He leaned slightly toward the driver, but without looking at him, asked—

"How soon are you going back?"

The native fumbled in the roll of his waistband, drew out a bit of heavy brown paper on which was written a small order of goods and, holding it toward the ready hand of the remaining Benz brother, said—

"You give me this quick, eh?"

Benz snatched at it, glanced at it, said, "Ya, you bedt!" and hurried across the platform, reading aloud in an undertone.

"I go back when they give me 'em," said the driver.

Then the captain looked across his shoulder and up at McGuire, and said quietly—

"I shall return with him to Brade's."

McGuire faced about, then turned again toward the captain, but before he said anything men laid hands on him, hustled him aside and began questions. One, known to be of a thrifty nature, was so excited by his eagerness to have McGuire talk that he drew a bottle from his pocket, companionably pulled the cork with his teeth and poked out the bottle. McGuire took it and thrust it to the right and left; in half a minute the bottle was returned to its disgusted owner, empty.

They flung questions at McGuire: What of Symonds' death? What of the girl? What of Mrs. Fanning and this captain? And was it true, as Grimes said, that a native girl had made Fanning sweat canned dainties? Yeow-ow-ow, but that was a joke! Wait till they saw Fanning!

They had expected McGuire to talk entertainingly. He was abrupt, and asked questions of his own. The thrifty man with the empty bottle ominously offered the bet that Zurdas would skin McGuire alive. No, Zurdas had not been to town. Manuel? Grimes had asked about him too. Where was Grimes? The devil knew! Most likely down on the beach. Aye, in the chink's shanty perhaps. Manuel's horse was still in town, so he must be somewhere about. One said one thing and another something else; but one man told that he had heard somebody tell Grimes that Manuel lay dead drunk on the floor in a corner of Nick's shanty.

McGuire learned that Consul Morris, Dr. Martin and another man or two had gone out to Symonds' plantation that morning, and returned an hour or so ago. Morris had said that Zurdas was in a sullen mood and would hardly talk; just stared at them, saying, "Think what you —— please." Another man spoke up, saying he heard that Zurdas had said McGuire killed Symonds; but that he wouldn't say so under oath because he didn't want McGuire to be arrested. Meant to attend to him himself.

McGuire suspected this of being planters' talk to make him feel uneasy. The idea, the plan, the logic of it, fitted in with Zurdas' character; but it was not like Zurdas to put the thing into words.

Symonds had been buried before Morris returned. Interments were not delayed on Kialo.

One of the aggressive Benzes pushed into the group and thrust an open palm under McGuire's nose, saying:

"Bealo says dot you gif dem to 'im. Is dot so, heh?"

"What's the matter with 'em?"

"Nodings, only didt he shteal 'em? Dot I vant to know bevore I—"

"He robbed me, but didn't steal. It's his money," said McGuire.

"He vants un shootgun to shoot bidgeon. Dot und tinned zamon ob gourse!"

Benz hurried off, business-like; and a moment later McGuire paused with a kind of blank stare in the very midst of answering a question, looked toward the store doorway and started for it.

A man grabbed him.

"Gone off your head?"

"Let go! That blasted native—buying a shotgun! He'll shoot Zurdas!"

They thought McGuire was trying to escape from them with their many questions unanswered. Others also laid hands on him. Some one said—

"Zurdas'd break his neck if he tried it!"

"They've no right to sell him a gun," said McGuire.

It was, theoretically, against the law to sell firearms to even the peaceable Christianized natives of Kialo. But, as one man replied—

"Lots of natives buy guns an' let the rust eat 'em!"

"Yes, I know," said McGuire. "But long ago Zurdas broke this fellow's leg—and this morning burned his hut. It was over me. That's why I gave him money. He'll pot Zurdas sure, from the edge of the road."

"Be a lucky thing for you, Dan, if he does!"

"Be —— unlucky!" said McGuire. "Me, having given him the money and brought him here, right here to the store. You fellows yourselves would think I'd put him up to it."

"Not us, Dan. No, of course not."

McGuire swore at them, saying:

"Of course you would! I'd think it myself, such evidence against any man. Let go o' me! I see now why the old heathen wouldn't say when I asked what he meant to do with the money. Let go!"

"You can't stop Benz sellin' a shotgun to a native. May be 'gainst the law, but ol' Cullem hisself lives off pigeons his deacons bring 'im."

"Pealo's no deacon. He's got murder in 'im!"

McGuire swore so venomously they did turn him loose, though still a little doubtful as to whether or not he was really in earnest.

McGuire jumped to the door, went in, looked quickly all about, his vision for a moment blurred by coming from the sunlight into the big dim storeroom. He shouted—

"Where's that blasted Pealo?"

A Benz glanced about, then answered—

"Maype he vent oudt der pack vay."

"With the gun?"

"Vas id vor you? I knowdt der vas someting qveer aboudt der vay he acdt—"

McGuire ran to the back of the store and looked out. There was a tangled growth of bushes, vines, banana palms. He went hastily to the small unused icehouse near-by, went around it. He called, commandingly, "Pealo!" There was no answer. Pealo had quietly slipped off.

McGuire, re-entering the store, swore at the astounded Benz brothers for having sold a native a gun. It was against the law. They knew it. This fellow, he said, had bought the gun to kill a man.

The Benzes answered him together, indignantly. They gesticulated. They wouldn't sell a rifle to a native. No! Indeed, not. But shotguns to shoot pigeons, yes! Why, only a few days before Mr. Morris, the consul himself, had brought a native in and bought him a shotgun. McGuire was crazy.

Much else was said; but in their haste and broken English much that they said escaped McGuire's understanding, though he knew that they were righteously emphatic in saying that they would not sell a native a rifle. "But a shootgun? Dot vas vor bidgeons!" They spoke as if their shotguns, deadly for birds, could not injure men.

VI

McGUIRE, having been told that Mr. Morris was at the club, went there and found him sitting on the veranda in conversation with a few men, Magistrate Cullum among them, discussing the late happenings on Kialo.

McGuire went up the steps and through the wide screen door, letting it close with a bang behind him. Faces turned curiously with an expectant air. Fresh cigars had just been passed among the men; only the tips were burning; they held the cigars or sucked upon them with the dainty carefulness given newly lighted cigars, very like children tasting the ends of long dark chocolate.

At once, to Mr. Morris, McGuire said—

"I'd like a word aside with you, sir."

Mr. Morris was of a mild, not vindictive nature; but he was still irritated by the rudeness of his recent meeting with this scamp, who had even now a directness like a hint at further insolence. Mr. Morris ran his fingers through his gray hair and brought his hand slowly down along a ruddy, freshly shaven cheek, very much as if trying to detect stray whiskers the razor had missed.

Magistrate Cullum, with pop-eyed severity, gazed upon McGuire. The magistrate had long, and not unreasonably, regarded him with disfavor. Cullum more than filled his broad chair. His large soft hands were folded across the front of his fleshy belly as if with self-affection.

"Very regrettable affair, McGuire," said Consul Morris with grave frown. "We were just about to send and ask you to come in. I returned from Symonds' not two hours. I went out to make inquiry, the judge here, the doctor and I."

Cullum's heavy eyelids fluttered down, then rose as if modestly acknowledging as a compliment the reference to himself.

"Why didn't you come on out to Brade's? We've nothing to hide out there. But Zurdas—" McGuire included the magistrate in his glance—"if you saw him, lied!"

Magistrate Cullum vigorously cleared his throat then, with solemn displeasure—

"How sir, can you be so sure of that, when you don't know what he said?"

McGuire answered—

"I know what he wants to keep hid!"

Such a reply was unexpected. They examined McGuire with judicial stares and hardly knew what to think or do for, though they had been willing enough to believe McGuire had murdered Symonds —this was the charge Zurdas had made— other things perplexed them. One of these was the hearsay report of how Manuel had been talking; the other, and more influential, was the way that savage cross-eyed doctor had talked. Dr. Martin was a sour, bitter man, but honest and not afraid of anybody. In the presence of Morris and Cullum he had talked to Zurdas about as McGuire's lawyer would have cross-examined Zurdas.

Dr. Martin had said:

"I've no doubt at all but McGuire ought to be hanged, but not for this. Your charge, Zurdas, is only a guess. You know it. I'll go in any court under heaven and say the evidence upon Symonds' body indicates that he shot himself. Why he did it, I don't know. You probably do. Perhaps McGuire can tell us too. We'll ask him. But if McGuire did shoot him, Symonds stood stock still, facing him, and waited for the bullet. You said that when you left you gave the gun to Symonds—handed it to him. He's a bigger man than McGuire. How'd McGuire take it from him without a struggle? There's no sign of a struggle on Symonds except a welt down across his shoulder and back as if somebody had struck him with a whip. How'd that happen. You know?"

It was then that Zurdas had become sullen, and said it was no use to talk to such men; that they could think what they pleased. He wouldn't make a charge against McGuire; he didn't know of any reason why Symonds would shoot himself. There was no use expecting help from officials.

Now, in reply to McGuire's remark, Mr. Cullum in slow, ponderous way began to ask—

"What, sir, do you mean by—"

But at the same time Mr. Morris, leaning forward and, turning the unlighted end of his cigar toward McGuire like a pointer, said—

"There is the bare possibility, McGuire; the possibility of holding you responsible for Symonds' death!"

"You should. I am," said McGuire. "Responsible, yes. But shot him, no."

"That's hard to understand, McGuire." said Morris.

"Haven't you seen Manuel? Haven't you heard what he said? There's Reena too. She knows what—"

"We have heard some report of what Manuel is supposed to have said," Mr. Morris answered with composure, he being a moderate and comparatively inexcitable man who perhaps did not like the mental hastiness. He brought to the management of affairs a leisureliness not unlike indecision. "But Zurdas, Zurdas himself, told us, the judge and me, that Manuel was a liar, that he had disowned the boy, whipped him and kicked him out. His own father told us that."

"True, he is a liar, but it was partly truth that got him whipped. And since I did it, you think, do you, he'd lie for me?"

Mr. Cullum cleared his throat; he hesitated a little as if somehow he felt that he had better not ask the question, but he did ask it—

"Just how was that, McGuire?"

"Why, through that half mock marriage you made."

Cullum was both offended and puzzled. McGuire spoke with assurance; it was exasperating to be so addressed, and before people. He frowned and, with guttural slowness, disclosing anger, asked—

"Mock marriage?"

"Aye, just that! Reena stood and would not answer. She went through the form, but in silence. Is a girl who does not answer wedded? No! And that night she drove Manuel from her. Said he was no husband. When Zurdas learned this he was furious. Get hold of Manuel. He's a liar, but I'll get the truth out of him and let you hear it from his mouth."

Cullum glowered solemnly. Morris spoke:

"You misjudge us hastily. When we came back to town this afternoon, the judge here gave orders to have Manuel found and brought to him. We mean to investigate this matter thoroughly, McGuire."

"Thoroughly, sir!" said Cullum.

"You've got much to learn if you don't already know Symonds was not Reena's father. He and Zurdas killed her father in Honduras. She's been a captive all these years. That's why Symonds shot himself. He found I knew. I made him think Reena's father, having been left for dead, had not died and by long searching had reached Kialo. Symonds blew open his head, hurrying out to face God rather than the man he'd wronged. Manuel overheard what Symonds said to me, admitting guilt."

Men swore. Mouths crackled with astonishment. The magistrate leaned forward ponderously in his chair, repeating:

"What? What? What?"

"The truth—you've heard it!" said McGuire.

"McGuire!" said Mr. Morris, speaking severely, "that is impossible! Miss Reena has been the friend and guest of my family all these years. And she has never, never intimated such a tragedy in her life. What you say is incredible!"

"Ask her now! She knows you've always thought her half crazy, at least queer. She knew—and told me so—you wouldn't believe her; or at least would believe Symonds when he said that she was crazy. And wasn't she right? The one time she did try to trust you, you gave the letter she wrote me to Symonds. Queer way to keep a promise, that!"

Mr. Morris' red, clean-shaven cheeks seemed to freshen with hot blood and burn as if wiped with nettles.

"That," McGuire continued recklessly, "is what brought on the smash-up. Symonds and Zurdas—you sent 'em a message!—waited for me in the darkness. Caught me. Here—" McGuire touched his face from place to place—"and here! You see the marks. There are others all over you don't see. Thinking I'd been killed, Reena got out of the house, got on a horse and bolted for Brade's. She was afraid you and—" this to Cullum—"you too, would hand her back to Symonds and Zurdas! Go out to Brade's. She'll tell you!"

McGuire's indignation was like wrath. The insulted officials were more amazed than angered; they were not really convinced by what he said, for it was a thing difficult to believe, but were perturbed and at least a little doubtful.

The sitters-by, who had heard all, spoke in broken sentences among themselves:

"Zurdas *is* a bad one!"

"Symonds girl queer! Always was!"

"Worse mess I ever heard of!"

"— to be done, Judge?"

"— get the girl and hear!"

"Manuel's horse still out there, so he must—"

The magistrate and the consul gazed at each other for a time in silence, each seeming to wonder what the other thought. Their cigars went out. The comment of the men who sat by died away. They watched the officials and listened for what they would say. Consul Morris glanced across his shoulder, as if judging the hour by the shadows that had fallen with sprawling length, for the afternoon was nearly gone, evening was at

hand; then he drew and flipped open the case of his watch.

"Judge," he asked indecisively, "shall we go out to Brade's?"

Magistrate Cullum cleared his throat two or three times, hesitating to say no, not wishing to say yes. He was already weary. His bulk was such that travelling distressed him. He suggested judicially:

"It would be better to have the girl come into town. Manuel, Miss Symonds, McGuire—let us have them all together here. Let us sift this matter carefully, very carefully."

"I'll go for her," said a man named Harris, promptly, rising as if to start at once and be back soon.

"But who'll find Manuel?" another asked, as if himself willing to aid in that search.

"I'll find him," said McGuire. "And do you want him here or—" to Mr. Morris—"at your house? Or—" this to the magistrate—"where?"

"At the consul's," said Cullum.

"Yes, at my house," said Mr. Morris. "But are you sure you can find him? The judge gave orders about two hours ago—"

"I'll find him right enough. The judge's native police, being good Christians, don't dare venture in the places where I'll look!"

McGuire turned and started off. Cullum gazed after him with displeasure and suspected irony in what he had said. Near the door McGuire turned, took a step back.

"Here's something, too, I nearly forgot. The sooner Zurdas is neck-deep in ——, the better I'll like it. But some of you ought to know that blasted Pealo—the fellow Zurdas crippled some years back, and burned his hut this morning—was in town a while ago and bought a shotgun. He'll lay for Zurdas in the bush. That's my guess. Anyhow, I want Zurdas hanged, not shot!"

With that McGuire left; and left astounded men glaring and gaping after him.

CHAPTER X

McGUIRE started off down the beach for the shanties. If Manuel was drunk he would be drunk there, or else lying out in the bush. What natives McGuire passed he asked whether they had seen young Zurdas, and at times jingled money in his palm to make them interested.

"If you find him, take him to Mr. Morris' house. I'll pay the man that gets him there."

A few repetitions of the promise stirred the natives to much chatter and some poking about. Some of the barefoot native police had also inquired about young Zurdas, but mostly by sitting in the shade and asking their friends whether they had seen him.

McGuire went on, hurrying, sweating, stumbling through the ankle-deep sand until he reached the firm, tide-pressed beach where footing was better; here he walked and did not at all try to dodge the rising ripples that wet his feet.

Darkness was coming soon and a drunken man could then lie easily hidden almost at the feet of one that peered about for him.

McGuire, with rising glances seaward to note the going down of the sun, splashed and tramped on. Coming to the chink's shanty first he called hastily into the dimness through the doorway:

"Hey Loo! Manuel here? Young Zurdas? Where the —— are you, Loo?"

A dark shape materialized noiselessly in a rear doorway. The shanty, since business rarely began before sundown, was now empty except for Loo who came forward with long-stem pipe poised at his lips and black blouse hanging loosely on his thin body.

"Wat you wantee, eh?"

"Want! You heard me. Have you seen young Zurdas?"

"No hab seen 'im. No. Wat you want—dlink eh? All litee."

The Chinaman struck a match, moved its wavering gleam to a lantern overhead

and, having the lantern burning, he stood there for a moment staring.

McGuire swore at him, saying:

"From the way you look I half believe you do know something. Have you seen 'im?"

"Oh you Dlan MaGly, eh?" said Loo, with an air of sudden friendly recognition. "Hab dlink. Yles. Fline dlink. Who you want, eh? Man'l. No hab got."

Loo, as he talked, moved quietly about, then noiselessly put down a tin cup before McGuire and offered the bottle, asking:

"Wat you want Man'l foh? Him no good fella."

"He hasn't been down this way today?"

"Day time me sleep. Placee shut. Sleep. Yles." He nodded, with eyes almost closed, illustrating that he slept. "Who want Man'l?"

"I want 'im!"

"Wat foh, eh? Take dlink."

"Have you seen Grimes?"

"No. No. No hab got!"

"Sure? Old Grimes."

"Oh-o-o! Glimes. Yles. I seen 'im. He go 'way. Takee dlink."

McGuire, knowing what stuff the Chinaman at times sold, sniffed the bottle, then, satisfied that it was no worse than his best usually was, covered the bottom of the cup and laid down a coin.

Beach loafers passed the story among themselves that Loo was a greedy and tricky miser. Many stories, most of which were perhaps untrue, were told of tricks he had played on stranger captains. But had he done one half of what was said the chink would have had broken bones to knit.

Now his skinny arm moved out with the gliding stealth of a snake and his fingers curled about the coin McGuire had laid down; then the hand drew itself back up into the loose sleeve. All the while he gabbled chitter-chatter, very friendlily.

"So you haven't seen Manuel, or Grimes either?"

Loo picked up the bottle and cup; he answered cheerfully, turning away to replace the bottle:

"No hab seen 'em. Been sleep. Place close. Come black, Dlan."

"I'll stay now an' have some change. I'm in a hurry, but not forgetful."

" 'At lite, yles," said Loo with cheerful composure and, not apologizing at all for his oversight, counted out change.

McGuire left. The next shanty was Nick's, about a hundred yards down the beach, farther too from the water's edge, under the overhanging shade of the bush.

When he left the chink's it was not yet dark; before he reached Nick's the stars were out, twinkling as if in glee at now being allowed to dance.

Before McGuire reached the shanty he knew that Nick was in a noisy mood. Entering, he saw Nick, with much of his own liquor sloshing about in his barrel-like belly, wheezing and gasping as he talked loudly into the faces of two men who sat with him indifferently at the table. Nick shouted welcome at McGuire, calling him good friend, with wide-arm flourishes introducing him to the men.

McGuire asked:

"Manuel here? I heard he was."

Nick wheezed, swore, stammered, trying to tell a long story instead of words to the point; he got off impulsively to boasting of McGuire—who he was, what he had done; admiringly called him "bigst scoun'rel an' bes' feller 'n Sou' Snees, whole Sou' Snees."

McGuire called him a drunken fool and again asked for Manuel. This hurt Nick's feelings and he whined in a kind of asthmatic tearfulness, protesting that he and McGuire were brothers, "zmuch like brozhers as two pickles 'n shame bottle!"

Nata came out of the rear room where she was eating potted ham from a can with her fingers; she held the can in one hand and, with a dab of ham on her fingers ready for her mouth, asked—

"You want Manuel?"

"That I do. Where is he?"

"You come here to me. I tell you."

The men said something leeringly to Nick, and he struggled bulkily to rise, protested with angry whimpering that he wouldn't allow it, wouldn't allow any man to talk aside with his wife, especially such a worthless, miserable, drunken beachcomber as Dan McGuire. His table friends, amused, grinned and were hopeful of excitement.

Nata, speaking native with a peppering of South Seamen's words, abused him, and in the midst of hot words—so matter-of-fact had her scoldings become—she stopped to suck a dab of potted ham off her fingers, chewed a time or two, swallowed gulpingly and went on with her stormy abuse.

Nick got up with unwieldly waggling of body, lurched against the table with both hands out flat to prop himself and, as if to tell all Nata could tell, and hopeful of telling it first, so that then she would have no excuse to talk with McGuire, shouted thickly:

"Wash 'ere dedrunk, Man'l—so-shol Grimsh took himsh 'way. Ash all—ash all—I tol' all she tell."

"That's not all!" Nata shrieked, then hastily taking the last mouthful from the can, she threw the empty tin at Nick's head. The can went wide of its mark and, after it had passed, striking the floor with hollow clatter, Nick dodged so hard that he toppled back on his chair and stayed there, waggling his head and, seemingly, trying his best to cry.

Nata laughed shrilly, hatefully. With awkward left-handed fling she then sent the last gob of potted meat at him. It too passed wide, unnoticed by Nick. She stood for a moment with hands to hips, grinning with sudden half-playful gleam in her eyes, as if trying to think of some other deviltry.

To McGuire the scene was hardly new, oft repeated with drunken men and sour sluttish native girls on the beach, all in half-angry amusement, with curse and laugh mingling; yet at that moment as he watched there came a whirlwind of bitter thought:

Brothers of the beach, and he was of them; wherever he was he was known, at least recognized as of the caste. It was written on him, on the very heart of him. No man of these, or of this kind elsewhere, would claim David Brade as a fellow. Mrs. Fanning's captain, too, seemingly drunk, certainly wild of tongue and fever-stricken, had yet not been of them. There was a difference, somewhere. The difference was in the hearts and lives of them. McGuire felt as if his mouth were now gagged with ashes.

Nata turned to him with teasing carelessness and, knowing that McGuire would push her arm away, threw it across his arm and laid the palm caressingly against his cheek.

The table companions, tormentingly, wanting to laugh, called quickly:

"Hey look! Look Nick, look!"

Nick turned his wobbly head.

Anger of a kind as unusual in him as even tearfulness had flamed through McGuire. This dirty beach wife's hand was on his face where Reena's had been but a few hours before. He spun from the curve of Nata's arm and swore at her with such new meaning in his voice that she shrank, startled, staring as if at a stranger. Her face trembled into the distortion of coming tears; this man she liked, in the child-harlot way admired; often this same teasing gesture of a caress had been pushed aside, but with tolerant jeering at most. The tears stayed back. She asked with honest amazement, hurt but curious—

"You gone clear —— fool."

"Where's Manuel?" McGuire snapped.

"Don' know, don' care. You go —— you!"

With that she put herself in a sullen stubborn attitude and stared defiantly.

Of the two lanterns burning in the shanty, one was behind McGuire, above the bar; and, seeing that Nata had turned sullen, and himself being in no temper for coaxing, he stepped back, unhooked the nearest lantern, loosened the chimney and shook it out, letting it fall and break. He stepped to the thatched side of the shanty. The flame with sooty

wavering seemed spluttering for something to touch. The men at the table yelled, Nick bellowed, Nata screamed.

"Where's Manuel?" McGuire asked.

The words came with a shrill rush:

"Ol' Grimes an' 'nother fellar take 'im off. I watch 'im. They go to chink's there. By'n'by they carry somepin like dead man all cover' up an' take boat —— go out to ship. Dirty schooner-ship. Don't you burn this house, you ——!"

She abused him with the worst that her tongue knew.

McGuire backed to the opened front door. Outside, he turned and threw the lantern, wick-down, into the sand. Then, with long strides that scrunched in the sand with a sound as if walking on snow-crust, he went back to the chink's shanty.

II

THREE or four coolies, flat-faced yellow bush-grubbers, in dungarees were now there about a table. Their lively gabbling could be heard by McGuire as he approached. He stopped and looked through. When he entered their voices were hushed as, like animals disturbed, they looked toward him; then, having looked, their talk started up again, rising querulously, the tones excited, the faces blank, hands almost listless. Two or three were talking at once as if to talk and not to listen were companionship.

"You flind 'im eh?" Loo inquired, with a lilting inflection, as if happily hopeful for McGuire's luck.

"No, not yet, Loo." McGuire had ready a small gold coin and, offering it, said, "I want a bottle, full one. Good whisky. Whisky—not gin."

"Hab got!" said Loo.

With darting quickness and deft touch he took the gold piece from McGuire's palm and rubbed it between fingers and thumb as if by touch he could detect a yellow coin's baseness or value. He had a chink-miser's love of gold, of the metal, and where a rat would have starved Loo was said to have grown wealthy.

Then, with a bobbing sing-song praise of his whisky, he went to a corner and, after reaching about in a grass-stuffed box, brought up a bottle. He still with mild happiness sang its praise as he brought it to McGuire.

The coolies talked on now, indifferent to McGuire, who cuddled the bottle in the crook of his left arm, as if with tenderness. With his right hand he jingled his pockets, clinking gold.

"See here, Loo. I've got money. I want— Come out back a minute." McGuire walked through the shanty and out back, jingling his pocket like a piper's lure, and Loo followed. "I don't want them to overhear," McGuire explained, and went some steps farther toward the beach. Loo came on and stood before him on the white sand.

"You see," said McGuire, shifting the bottle, speaking low, "I wanted whisky—there's a better hand-hold on the bottle-neck than gin."

The bottle came up like a club, and McGuire's left hand seized the loose black blouse up near the throat:

"One peep, Loo! I'll break your head!"

"Wat fo' you glet mad at good flen' all samee me?" said Loo, putting his hands to McGuire's wrists as if to break the hold.

"Stand still an' do as told. I know old Grimes hates Manuel and the reason for it, which is good. But if the boy's been done in, there'll be a chink hung, too. Did they kill 'im? And keep your hands up, right up there 'gainst mine. One wiggle an' I'll crown you! Did they kill 'im?"

"Him dlead dlunk, no dlead. Take him to shippee, dlead dlunk."

"All right then, we go too, out to the ship. Put your hands up—way up!"

McGuire, from behind the Chinaman, felt about the blouse and near the waist-band detected the hilt of a knife. He drew it out and flung the knife far across on the sand. Then, taking hold on the slack of the blouse's back, he told Loo to lead on, to go down to the beached punt he used to visit such ships as came into the bay and were willing to traffic in a Chinaman's bottled goods.

The Chinaman, who knew bad luck when it met him, went with so little protest that he seemed almost willing.

McGuire, helping to tug with one hand while with the other he held in readiness the clubbed whisky bottle, saw to it that they got the punt into the water. He put Loo at the oars, then from knee-deep water climbed in and sat facing him.

Loo rowed with the sullen willingness of a man who makes the best of what can not be helped.

When the punt drew somewhat near the lighted stern ports of the pearler, voices could be heard in discordant singing. Old Grimes, whose brains were packed with ribald ballads, was howling; his friend the pearler seemed joining in with a kind of wordless accompaniment.

McGuire, making Loo draw near, shouted, but was not heard by the roisterers. Then McGuire dipped the bailer and, standing up, sent the bailer, hurtling, half full of water, through an open port. Silence followed as, evidently, the drunken men within stared in fuddled wonder.

McGuire yelled—

"Grimes, ahoy!"

A head that, with the light behind it, seemed black as a negro's peered out, and Grime's voice demanded—

"Who the —— are you?"

"McGuire!"

"Huhn?"

"McGuire!"

"You're liar! Dan's gen'man. He wouldn't do trick like that. Made poor Tim all wet an' he ain't uster water!"

Grimes, then leaning far out, boisterously swore at McGuire; and at about the top of his drunken voice, which he misjudged to be no higher than a conversational tone, wanted to know whether McGuire wanted to go pearling. They were, he said, going to jump the French pearling grounds. He wanted, he said, to know who the blue-blazed land of unending —— light gave the frog-legged, clipped-tongue French the right to say a man mustn't catch oysters Godamighty Hisself had made. Oysters were free. Oysters wouldn't like it themselves. Poor little things down in the bottom o' the sea!

As if they were to up anchor and be off that minute, Grimes bawled—

"Wanta go, Dan?"

"Aye, that I do!"

"Then shake a leg. Come a-jumpin'! Aye, boy, an' we've got somethin' to show you. Who's that with you?"

"Loo, the chink!"

"The chink!" Grimes yelled with glee.

A powerful voice within the cabin bellowed—

"That chink?"

"Oh we've been prayin' f'r 'im to come!" said Grimes. "An' was comin' ashore for 'im at sunrise!"

Loo, who seemed to understand this unexpected interest in his presence, began to splash with the oars; but McGuire made him stop.

A second head appeared at the port, and a burly voice with a trace of Ireland in it roared:

"Hey-hurrah! We nade a cook. Shanghai Tim, that's me. What we won't do that ——!"

Loo, as much as he had been sworn at in his life, probably never before had received such a thoroughly comprehensive, yet welcoming, cursing.

"Oh how we want 'im!" said Grimes.

"Then be on deck to grab him as I make him scramble up," said McGuire.

He did not know why they wanted Loo, but was willing they should have him; perhaps, he thought, Loo might be exchanged for Manuel. He knew that, senselessly reckless as these fellows were, they would not be even drunkenly cheerful if they had taken the sort of revenge Grimes had often threatened he would some day take on Manuel.

Both heads disappeared backward from the lighted port. Now McGuire could hear the men still roaring with laughter, and with stumbling clatter moving about. They shouted over what seemed merry luck in having the chink.

"Lay 'longside there, Loo, then up you go!"

Loo chattered protest. He knew what to expect, and mingled Chinese with

English, made threats and offered, in the next breath, McGuire all sort of favors. Then he made a sudden movement to lift an oar. McGuire jammed a hand to his throat, pinched, brought up the bottle.

" 'Longside!"

Loo's oar scraped the schooner's side.

From over the low bulwarks two forms peered down, peered so far as to be in danger of toppling over. They bawled welcome to McGuire, heightening the welcome because of Loo. Belatedly, Grimes called, "Look out below!" The coil of rope was already falling, and struck athwart the punt.

"Make all fast!" Grimes shouted most nautically, but half in play.

Loo refused to rise from the thwart. He swore in lurid Chinese. The Irish skipper took this as mutiny; wild words passed, then—

"Up ye come, or I come down wid both feet first!"

Against the starlit sky McGuire could see a burly form uncertainly balanced on the rail.

"If he jumps," said McGuire to the Chinaman, "and he will!—we'll be adrift. How well do you swim?"

Loo stood up, stood on a thwart, reached up; then Grimes, lurching far over, snatched the coil of pigtail from the Chinaman's head and with loud chantey-cheer helped the spluttering, swearing Loo over the side.

When McGuire got on deck they were pummeling Loo and swearing at him. Loo seemed to understand clearly enough what it was all about. At that, their anger, though genuine, was half playful, so well satisfied were they at having got the Chinaman into their hands. They swore that he would go to sea and serve as cook and, the better to be sure of this, they trussed him up with elaborate knots. Some of Captain Tim's native crew lurked curiously, looking on, but kept well back out of the way in shadows, for when Captain Tim was taking his fun he did not want meddlers by.

The Irishman explained to McGuire that the chink had played them a dirty trick.

"We bought a case ov gin, but it was wather. An' we nade a cook. The Lord provides sea cooks. We bought whisky an' a case ov gin. The chink he didn't know we be such thirsthy men as to broach the gin in port; gin's good to wash down whisky. He sould us wather! Maybe he thought he'd be in Chiner before we iver got back to Kialo an' broke his neck for makin' us die ov thirst!"

Captain Tim then gave McGuire a hearty welcome, as to a man worthy of roistering friendship. The pearler was a tricky scamp of burly good nature; and now, much as if staggering through a storm, he led the way below; and inside the cabin, with one hand out in a lurching reach for the bottle on the drop table, he pointed the other at the huddled, staring, terrified thing, ape-like, on the deck in a corner. This was Manuel.

McGuire, facing about to Grimes, said:

"I brought you the chink. Give me him. I've got to have him ashore, to-night, right away."

Grimes, soundly drunk and contented, said:

"My pet monkey? Not for a thousan' dollars. Not two thousan'."

He gazed at Manuel with proprietory pride and some grinning malice.

"But I need him," said McGuire. "Want his story told."

"He'd lie, Dan," said Grimes with affected sorrow. "We found 'im over at Nick's. Was lookin' for 'im. Meant to kick the life outa him. Too drunk, he was. Wouldn't 'a' known anything 'bout it. Tim here's allus good-hearted that-away, so he says, 'Let's help the boy. He never had no chanct. We'll make a sailor outa him. Do that, we gota get 'im on board without them ashore knowin'.'

"So we took 'im over to the chink's, put some sackin' on 'im. Carried 'im to the boat an' threw 'im in. Paid ten dollars—out *my* wages, I did—to the chink. Top o' that I said I'd come ashore an' break his neck if he told anybody. We're goin' out with the tide in the mornin', an' you're shipmate too—hoo-reh!" said the

sin-scarred gray old ruffian, giving McGuire a companionship thump on the back.

McGuire, serious, anxious, desperate, tried to explain; but these drunken friends would not listen. Captain Tim spun him about, said:

"Too much talk's bad for the ears, me lad. Wears 'em out. Here we go!"

With waggling hand that slopped booze from the brim he passed half-filled coffee cups to McGuire and Grimes, then, raising his own, commanded:

"Here's t' —— an' the ——'s dam mother ov us all! Drr-rink!"

It was an old toast of beach and shanty, one McGuire had lifted more times than he had teeth in his head; but now he did not answer with uproarious shout. He took a swallow, then, watching his chance, with furtive backward gesture tossed the liquor out of the cup through a port.

He had to get out of this somehow, with Manuel.

For a time he stared with a kind of fascinated loathing at old Grimes; not seeing Grimes, but himself when he should have come to Grimes' age, teeth broken and cheeks covered with gray fuzz, a wasted roisterer, still drunken and reckless, seeking happiness—and more than most men, getting it! Was it, after all, mere happiness that a man wanted? McGuire wondered, but could not say. Yet he was accepted as one among their fellowship, companion of the bottle, half-thief and wholly wastrel.

They slapped his back, tottered; swaying, singing, all in good fellowship. There was no evading them. No making them understand why he had to get ashore with Manuel; in fact no understanding that McGuire did not mean to remain on the schooner, though in sincerity he explained—

"Let me get Manuel ashore, and I'll come back."

He meant it, for this seemed to him his chance to leave Kialo; but they misunderstood his willingness to return on board, and told him, "You'll stay!" with stubborn friendliness.

"Shanghai Tim, that's him!" said Grimes, waving a hand approvingly at the skipper.

At that moment Shanghai Tim began to express himself with feeling, to hop and swear; but even this had in it the glint of play. He was abusing a corkscrew that had come away, crumbling through the cork. He and Grimes put their heads together over the bottle, discussing ways and means of getting out the rotted cork.

McGuire took this chance and stooped to Manuel.

"See here! If I get you out of this, will you tell the truth, all of it, to Morris and to Cullum?"

Manuel, dark as his skin was, now seemed pale, at least gray as a pipe's ash. His head ached and fear bit on him. He shivered, rubbed at his face and head with dirty hands. At best a simpleton, he was now half crazed, and gasped promises.

McGuire took some few coins into his palm, furtively dropped one or two into the scattered grass torn from about the bottles of the Chinaman's gin, then strewed the others into the grass that remained in the box.

A moment later, McGuire, with tone of discovery, shouted:

"Hey-O! Look here! Where's this come from? Gold!"

The skipper and Grimes turned about, stared from McGuire's palm to where he pointed; they bent, snatching among the grass, then dropped to their knees.

"You," McGuire said to Manuel, "get out, on deck, down into the punt. Wait for me there!"

"They'll kill me if—" Manuel began, shrinking back, looking wildly toward the two men who, with drunken friendliness gone completely from their tones, clawed jealously, each watching the other's luck.

McGuire jerked Manuel by the neck as if to start him, and Manuel, with hesitant creep and crouch moved away from his corner. McGuire then fell knees-down and in his pretended searching, put another coin or two here and there. These

men by him were like hungry brutes that had sniffed blood. Manuel got from the cabin, unnoticed.

"There's another!" McGuire said, pointing, and made as if to reach. Both the others snatched out. Tim missed, Grimes caught it in his claw.

" 'Tis mine!" said the skipper.

"You're a liar!" said Grimes.

"I'll have it!"

"You'll be in —— first!"

It was now as if the beasts, having found a bit of raw meat, snarled over it. McGuire, to make sure there would be enough left to keep them searching and forget all else, scattered his coins.

Himself unnoticed, McGuire then got out of the room and on tip-toes ran up the ladder. At once in the still night he heard the thud and awkward splash of oars. Manuel had cast off the punt and was trying to escape. It was like Manuel to do that, in just that way.

Peering as he hastily loosened one shoe, then the other, McGuire saw the shadowy blot of the punt on the dark water some hundred feet away. He kicked off his shoes, climbed to the rail and dove, gliding far under water before he rose. He shook his head free of water and, treading, listened. Sounds of loud growling came through the cabin ports.

"Aye," he said, thinking of how they had looked on knees and hands, snatching and snarling, no longer companionable, half ready for murder, "what raw meat is to cats, gold is to men."

He swam then with long strokes toward the punt where Manuel, frightened and an inexperienced oarsman, splashed and clattered, turning the boat on a zig-zag course. As McGuire drew near, Manuel, half squatting with lifted oar in both hands, fairly shrieked:

"Keep away! Keep away! I'll kill you!"

McGuire told him:

"Shut up! They'll hear you in the cabin—then we'll both be killed. An' you let that starboard oar go adrift! Set down!"

McGuire, being near the punt, laid hold on the oar Manuel had let slip, put it inboard, then drew himself up over the stern, got to a thwart and took the oars.

"We're going up to Morris'. And all I want out of you this night is the truth—and all of it. Do we get it?"

Manuel, his teeth clicking as from a nervous chill, said the truth would be given. Not three minutes before he had threatened to split McGuire's head in the water with an oar; now he jabbered in gratitude.

III

McGUIRE beached the punt and, taking hold of Manuel, who had woes to tell and sniveled in the telling of them, and said he wasn't going to the consul but would go for a drink. McGuire half dragged him out. He tried with words to buck Manuel up; said, "Show yourself a man," and all such things. They did no good. Manuel seemed to have every weakness but that of shame, which, at times, is like a virtue in that it makes men brave.

"Then there's only this for it," said McGuire and pinched him.

Manuel shrieked as if being killed. He hated pain when it touched him; though that sense of pleasure he had got from watching others suffer had caused old Zurdas to think the boy had a stout heart.

"That," said McGuire, "is a good idea," and pinched again. "You yell loud enough, somebody'll come to help me drag you."

Manuel's yell was now not so loud, but more angry. He struck at McGuire with a flurry of light awkward blows, in a sort of womanish rage. A moment later he dropped sullenly on the sand, saying:

"I won't go. I won't! I won't! You can't make me!" And woman-like, "I hate you!"

McGuire, exasperated, seized him; he pinched, he hurt, he meant to hurt. Manuel squalled, begging and shrieking promises. McGuire swore in disgust. The fellow did seem almost monkey-like.

"By ——, you come! Heels first if need be! Just as you are. And now!"

McGuire fastened his fingers about the

back of Manuel's neck, stood him on his feet and held the grip with threatening pressure.

In the starlight Manuel faced him with a kind of sullen staring as if the small brain within his head worked in thoughtful cunning. The whites of his eyes glistened; his expression was that of an evil weakling who remembers old grievances but does not dare speak of them. Then, as if suddenly yielding, Manuel started off, willingly enough.

The going was hard, the sand slippery, and beyond the sand the ground had a sloping up-grade that took their breath in hurrying.

They went on without meeting any one to whom they spoke; and though seeing at a distance the glimmer of lights through foliage that indicated men were at the club, McGuire was tempted to go by and make sure Morris had not, as was his evening's custom, returned there; but the instructions had been to come on to the house.

They entered the grounds which, like that of all the older, more prosperous homes, was densely surrounded with tropical growth. Those most fastidious about their gardening might make the effort to keep their underbrush cleared; but if so, thus encouraged, bushes bellied out much like trunkless trees; implanted bamboo raced about in all directions and sent up clustering squads of stalks; vines burrowed their runners like creeping moles and popped out with exuberance, and with tangled growth crept up tree-trunks and into boughs, dangling in festoons. Bougainvilleas swarmed with billowing weight over everything that came within tendrils' reach and hung out in uncountable profusion their tissue-paper bloom. Thus the old garden of Mr. Morris ran wild and at night was black and dense as the deepest jungle.

Manuel and McGuire, guided readily by the crunch of gravel and its dimly perceived grayness, followed the winding roadway and came before the veranda where, pausing, McGuire faintly heard voices in conversation.

"Come along," he said. "They're 'round to the side and back. Ten minutes now and it'll be over."

Turning the corner, he saw at the other end of the veranda, which was more like the Morris' living quarters than any room of the house, four or five persons who appeared merely as bulky shadows, without detail of silhouette, for the lamp, that insects might swarm to the light and leave them in peace, was some distance away, high up on a bracket against the house.

At the sound of coming steps the heads of those who sat there turned; the voices became silent, and McGuire called—

"I'm back an' Manuel's with me."

He then overheard some speech among them, mentioning Reena and the man who had ridden out to Brade's for her. At first they had thought that he and the girl were coming. There had been some talk, a little doubtful, as to whether McGuire would willingly show up again.

McGuire came near. Mr. Morris was now standing. Mechanically he drew his watch and, as he was putting it away, McGuire asked the time.

"Ten of nine."

"You sent for Reena?"

"Yes, McGuire, and," Mr. Morris again drew his watch, looked at the face—"she should be here by now, or soon. We had given you up, too."

"Manuel here was with friends who didn't want him to go. He's promised to tell the truth."

Cullum and the Frenchman, Lamont, who were waiting there in company with Mr. and Mrs. Morris, had stood up, cigar and cigaret in hand. Cullum was bulky with fat; Lamont, always dapper in whites, was alert and quick.

Manuel looked about with staring uneasy eyes; he seemed afraid, was pathetically wretched, haggard, with clothes soiled as if he had groveled in dirt. His eyes, wide-open, glistened; he breathed through his mouth, and the fish-like lips were curled back as if to avoid some bitter taste.

"Oh, what have you done to him?" Mrs. Morris said with protest and reproach, blaming McGuire for Manuel's disheveled appearance. "And you, you are all wet!"

"That," said McGuire, resenting her tone of sympathy for Manuel, "is sweat from the work of making this—this young gentleman come."

Lamont glanced quickly to the right and left, amused. He had always rather liked in McGuire that irrepressible impudence that others disliked.

Manuel, with a kind of stupid staring, gazed at Mrs. Morris as if at his one friend. She, with sympathies quickened by what seemed response to her kindliness, said more indignantly:

"A shame! He's nothing but a child. Poor boy!"

McGuire replied:

"He was drunk on the beach. Children who do that are likely to spot their clothes, Mrs. Morris!"

Lamont smiled aloofly, blew smoke overhead, flipped his middle finger against the cigaret, daintily jarring away the ash. Cullum and Mrs. Morris eyed McGuire with disfavor for this sarcasm to the motherly Mrs. Morris. In fact Magistrate Cullum teetered on his toes as if about to tip over on top of McGuire, whom he regarded with a severe frown.

"Poor boy!" Mrs. Morris repeated. Her sympathies were always easily touched, she was not used to being in the least contradicted, and so thought McGuire heartless. "Now sit right down there and tell us all about it."

She stepped forward to move a chair, but Lamont, with the attentiveness that had caused her to think him charming, though he thought her a fat, tedious old woman, took the chair from her hands, turned its back to the railing and with a kind of deft forcefulness pushed Manuel into it. Then Lamont shifted a chair near and to one side of where Manuel sat, and with word, bow and gesture, invited Mrs. Morris to sit; after which he walked around back of the others who were settling themselves in chairs and, as if silently expressing his sympathy, stood near McGuire.

McGuire, really tired, was hunched over on the rail within hand's reach of Manuel.

They were waiting for Manuel to talk. In the silence Manuel scraped his feet, moved his hands, rubbed at his face with jerky motions, looked from one to another, but not at all toward McGuire; he squirmed in his chair as if trying to move it farther from McGuire.

Lamont said something softly in French; McGuire glanced at him, but did not understand, and Lamont did not explain. He, with a fresh cigaret at his lips, struck a match. The pop of it caused Manuel to jump.

"*Poor* boy!" said Mrs. Morris, shaking her head pityingly.

Magistrate Cullum spread his legs, placed a hand on each knee, and leaning forward slightly said—

"Now, Manuel—"

He stopped, as if remembering he had not cleared his throat; this done elaborately, he began anew:

"Now, Manuel, tell us, tell us just what happened last night at your home. It is very important that we know the truth. You may tell us here without fear. Now, Manuel, tell us."

Manuel opened his mouth as if about to shout, then moistened his lips as if they were too dry to let the words slip through.

"Now tell us, Manuel. That's a good boy," said Mrs. Morris.

Manuel said nothing, though Cullum leaned even farther forward, attentively, expectant. The others bent forward, watchfully listening.

Manuel fidgeted much as if bitten by many fleas. His glance seemed darting about to find some place where he could avoid their eyes, and he edged to the side of his chair farthest from McGuire.

"Now, Manuel," said Mr. Morris, "we all have been your friends since you were a small boy so you should talk freely to us. You have nothing to fear, Manuel. The truth is all we want. Now, now will you tell us?"

Manuel nodded jerkily, and seemed

about to speak; then did not, but sat like a man being secretly tormented. He writhed and wriggled, again gasped with open mouth as if to blurt out what he knew, but seemed to catch his breath for lack of daring. Then unexpectedly he screamed and flung a gestural arm half backwards toward McGuire.

"He killed him! I saw him kill Symonds! I was looking— He killed him! And me—tried to kill me! Said he would if I told—"

Lamont nodded coolly; his lips rippled.

"Zat is what I jus' said he would do."

McGuire did not hear this any more than he had heard, or rather understood, the other remark; for Manuel had started to rise from the chair, to fling himself from near McGuire.

But McGuire, sliding from the rail, snatched at his shoulder, jerked him back and into the chair and swung up a fist. As Manuel huddled down to escape the blow he expected, and covered his lowered face with his forearms, many voices were mingled in outcry at McGuire. McGuire did not strike, and did not hear the voices. He cursed Manuel and Manuel screeched. Mrs. Morris, shocked and angered, screamed. Mr. Morris, with wrath, shouted, "McGuire!" And Cullum, unused to hasty movements, with unwieldy effort pushed himself half out of his chair, with hands on the arms of the chair, and bellowed—

"Sir, I command—"

McGuire struck a back-handed, contemptuous blow at Manuel's head as he faced about, beginning to say:

"You people let me alone! I'll get the truth out o' him or—"

At that moment, Lamont, leaning over the rail, peering down, having been attracted by something strange in the shadows, called out sharply—

"What ze ——! Who?"

Then, as Lamont wheeled about, crying a warning in French and caught McGuire's shoulder with a wild jerk that sent him almost off his feet, there came from right behind Manuel's chair the burst of an explosion and the lightning glint of flame.

Manuel, who to escape from the side of McGuire, had been rising from the chair, pitched forward, as if thrown bodily, with a ragged black hole in his back, and a puff of black smoke, strong with powder smell, rolled up in the still air.

For an instant or two, on the veranda, there was the silence that comes with sudden daze of horror; but outside in the darkness was the thumping trample of a man that stumbled awkwardly in running.

McGuire, with almost headlong jump, leaped the veranda railing and dropped with sprawling lurch to knees and hands on the soft earth; and a moment later he stumbled over the fellow who himself had tripped and fallen.

McGuire dropped upon him with catlike ferocity and, fumbling for the throat, squeezed as he bounced the fellow's head on the ground. The man was not strong. He gurgled and floundered weakly.

Lamont, talking French, came up and in his whites seemed ghostly. He chattered excitedly and hopped from side to side, demanding: "Who is eet? Who is eet?"

Then, striking a match, he thrust down the tiny flame which went out at once, but under its gleam had been disclosed the face of Pealo.

Lamont ran back, shouting that the fellow had been caught; that it was Pealo; that here, right by the veranda, was the gun where he had dropped it the instant he had turned to run.

McGuire understood what had happened; understood the working in Pealo's crooked brain.

"You blasted idiot!" said McGuire, yanking him along with crippled hobbling. "You were afraid of Zurdas. 'Fraid of his back! But you heard I would bring Manuel here, and lay and waited. Killed him with the lie in his mouth! You—you won't need to say I put you up to it. They'll think it soon enough! Why didn't you put it to your own head and pull the trigger with your big toe?"

TO BE CONTINUED

The Park Cannon that Won a Battle

BY

MEIGS O. FROST

ONE of the deadliest campaigns in Mexico was fought in 1912 when General Inez Salazar and General Emiliano Campa, capturing Juarez from the forces of President Francisco Madero, joined forces with General Pascual Orozco at Chihuahua—Orozco was then Governor of the State of Chihuahua—and marched south in a revolution that failed. There was much tragedy and little humor in that campaign. But it took an old muzzle-loading cannon from an El Paso public park to supply the loudest of the few laughs of that foray.

Back in the days when Francisco Madero came out of the hills to capture Juarez from the men of Don Porfirio Diaz, a deputation of El Paso citizens, sympathizing with him, had hauled the old relic across the Rio Grande and given it to him. The Salazar-Campa forces took it when they occupied Juarez. It was their only artillery.

They got an El Paso foundry and machine shop to cast and turn down two hundred round iron cannon-balls. They got a supply of black powder and mining fuses. The gun went with them to Chihuahua.

Under the personal command of Orozco the column started south. At Santa Rosalia the revolutionists found some Federals fortified strongly in an adobe ranchhouse. An attack by infantry would have been too costly. They didn't dare march on and leave that Federal garrison behind them. Salazar ordered up the El Paso park cannon and the army's two lone Colt machine-guns, manned by Sam Dreben and Tracy Richardson, each commissioned overnight in El Paso a revolutionary colonel at $500 a month gold, with a bonus for every battle. The machine-guns were to keep the Federal sharpshooters under cover while the park cannon breached the thick adobe walls.

Dreben and Richardson had fired only a belt apiece at the Federal sharpshooters when behind them they heard a terrific blast. It was the first shot from that ancient park cannon. Also it was the last. The gun had been loaded with a bucket of black powder and two round iron cannon-balls. It had burst into a thousand fragments. By some miracle not a soul was even wounded, though the gun crew was clustered close around the breech.

But the old cannon won its last battle. The minute the Federals heard that terrific explosion of the formidable looking piece trained on their wall they hoisted the white flag. Their morale was shattered. They couldn't hold out against artillery, they told their officers.

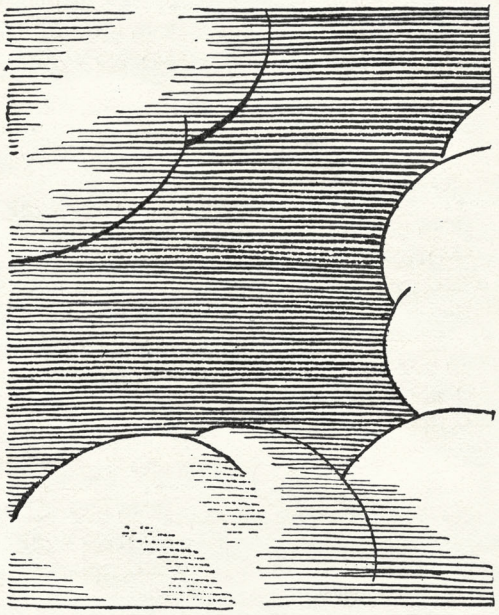
An hour later, officers and all, they had joined the rebels!

Probably somewhere near Santa Rosalia to this day, are rusting one hundred and ninety-eight round iron cannon-balls that the rebels dumped right there. And probably all the history of artillery will fail to show another gun that fired one shot, burst—and won a battle.

On the Skyliner

A mysterious German ace

By THOMSON BURTIS



OF COURSE, I realize perfectly that you don't give a —— about my opinions on the matter, one way or the other. You can form your own, and mine don't weigh a nickel's worth more, if as much. Nevertheless and notwithstanding, I arise to announce that in my several years of aerial policing with the Army Air Service Border Patrol, it was seldom, if ever, my privilege to work with a guy like Lieutenant Percival Enoch O'Reilly, no less. By the same token, it rarely falls to the lot of an average bozo, staggering through this vale of tears, to collide with such a charming antagonist as Mr. Frederich Von Sternberg of Germany, Mexico and the world at large.

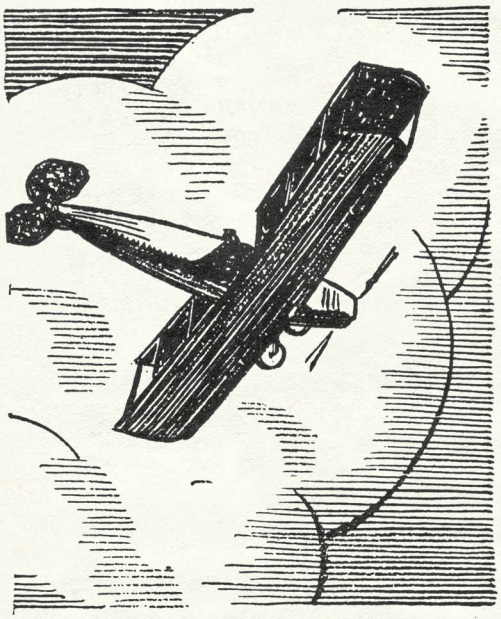
Looking back at my last little tour of duty along the Rio Grande, it seems to present ingredients of a more spicy sort than my other incarcerations in Texas. And I give all credit to P. Enoch O'Reilly and Frederich Von Sternberg, with much assistance from Mr. Eric Montague St. John. That guy O'Reilly had spent his life trying to see and do everything, and he promptly proceeded to drag me into the messes which he delightedly engineered.

The episode began without warning, giving me no time whatever to get myself set. Ordinarily my brain requires a good shot of anticipation and considerable warming up to get under way on any given proposition, but this one hit me right on the button. Doubtless the fact that I had no time to do what I jokingly call thinking caused me to handle it better than I might have otherwise, which wasn't very well at that.

I was sending my De Haviland bomber up the Rio Grande, returning from the late afternoon patrol west. The big twelve-cylinder Liberty was hitting perfectly, the sun was about to go down and George Hickman, a large blond gentleman who had been an All-America guard before the war, and still looked it, was my observer in the back seat. Southward the mesquite of Mexico lost itself in the distance, and northward the mesquite of America lost itself in the distance; from which you can see that the landscape presented little variety.

I was enjoying myself, however, because I hadn't been back on the Border long. I'd been up at Cook Field, the

and the Border Patrol



experimental field of the Air Service, as a test pilot. The powers that be had discovered that when I, as engineer officer, had left McMullen, I'd been shy so much property that if I stayed in the Army without pay for twenty years, I'd still owe the Government money.

So I was back, endeavoring by ways that were dark and tricks that were vain to clear myself. Every time a ship wrecked I galloped in with a survey proving that the wrecked ship contained three motors, at least a ton of tools, bales of flying suits and battery upon battery of machine-guns. "Dumpy" Scarth held me up a bit, however. He didn't show up for two days one time, and we figured his ship, at least, was a total wreck. I got twelve typewriters and eighteen tachometers off the list, and then the —— fool flies in safe and sound and all my work was for naught.

"I," by the way, in this yarn refers to none other than First Lieutenant John Evans, customarily known as "Slim" because of my architectural innovations. I am nearly six feet six inches tall, and the only curves included in my design are connected with my Adam's apple—an acrobatic appendage which flies up and down my six inches of neck like a monkey on a stick whenever I talk, which is most of the time. I am possessed of a prodigious proboscis which juts forth from my thin face like a duck's bill would if grafted to a canary bird.

I mention these matters to prevent you from visualizing one of the handsome picture-book aviators with their wings shining and their boots flashing in dazzling splendor. I fly, when its warm in Texas, in undershirt and old khaki pants, and there's usually oil enough on me to grease the wheels of industry for a full day. I'm a big country boy from the sovereign State of Utah, although a bachelor, and my education consisted of punching cows, being a private in the Mexican unpleasantness and going through the University of Texas one afternoon on a sightseeing trip. I got into the Air Service through an uncle who was the black sheep of the family and became a Senator.

That's the gink who was buzzing through the air toward McMullen, hunched down in his seat to avoid the air blast and leaving it to his observer, the Honorable Hickman, to keep an eye out on the ground below. I was more or less somnolent as the roar of the Liberty hit my ears like a lullaby, and there was just enough breeze to make it comfortable.

Suddenly I felt a grip on my shoulder, and turned to confront George. His round, good-humored face was serious, and his gray eyes snapped a little behind his goggles as he pointed south.

I searched the air for a moment. Then I too snapped into consciousness, and without delay I tossed the ship into a steep bank and started back.

Four miles or so southward, over Mexico, there was a speeding speck which could be nothing but an airplane, flying high and fast, and headed for the States.

I turned the motor wide open, and the tachometer was reading seventeen hundred and fifty revolutions a minute as I

stuck the nose up and climbed desperately. We were about a mile high, and the other ship at least three thousand feet higher than we were. And any ship coming across the Border merited profound observation. There'd been a lot of airplane smuggling.

Well, we made it. It took him longer than I'd figured to reach us, and we were even, as far as altitude was concerned, when he got within a half mile of us. I cut the throttle for a moment, and yelled back to Hickman:

"He must see us, and he isn't stopping. Guess it's O.K., probably."

I took a quick squint at the ground. Lining the banks of the Rio Grande were many clearings and fields, forming a narrow lane through the mesquite on either side. I saw one which I recognized; I could land there, and that would be as good a place as any to examine this strange ship.

My eyes were glued to it as it came closer. It was a two-seater, although I could see but one man in it. It was a small ship, much smaller than the ton and a half De Haviland I was flying, and seemed just about as fast as our D.H. I couldn't recognize the type—it looked more like a two-seated fighter than a weight-carrying plane.

I wasn't unduly excited, right then. Airplanes were in use all through the Tampico oil-fields; there were several companies of flyers who occasionally ferried passengers to the Border; and Mexico was developing quite an Air Service down at Mexico City. On the other paw, however, no airplane was supposed to get across the river without examination, any more than a man in an automobile. We'd had no word that I knew of that a ship was coming, either.

I banked about and waited for him. The unknown pilot was coming for us without deviating at all from his course. The ship was painted a dark gray. Excellent for blending with clouds, or the sky itself, I remember thinking.

Then I leaned forward, and strained my eyes until they watered. There could be no mistake about it. On the cowling directly over the front cockpit twin machine-guns were placed.

That was no civilian ship—couldn't be, in my opinion, unless said civilian was more ready for trouble than he had any normal right to be.

Ten seconds later I was faced northward, my motor throttled to fourteen hundred and the D.H. flying barely fast enough to stay in the air. Hickman was standing in the back seat, his hands on his Lewis machine-gun, and my hand was very close to the little lever on the stick which controled the front guns.

I pointed at the field below, and then motioned at the ship as it overtook us. Hickman nodded. As the strange ship came close to us he signaled it to land.

The other pilot was about as tall as I was, it seemed—half his body was visible behind the cowling. He shook his head decisively and pointed east.

Now we were flying side by side, and again Hickman pointed downward. Again that dumb pilot shook his head. Hickman fondled his machine guns lovingly. I was alert as a cat at a rathole. If that other pilot should be an outlaw, I didn't want him making a sudden turn and pouring lead into us first.

"Why the —— doesn't he land?" I asked myself with a sudden conviction that all was not as it should be.

It was a good field, and presented no problems. Any man in that country knew what the Border patrol was, and that their orders should be obeyed. Why should he argue with us, in dumb show, unless there was something in that ship which he didn't want us to see?

I turned to Hickman, keeping alongside the alien ship. Suddenly it banked away from us, turning west in a great curve. I pointed at the guns, and then into the air. Again George nodded, and as the Liberty went full on I swept it around, cut across the circle which the other ship was making, and got alongside him again.

He looked at us and motioned us away.

He was flying south now, he was bound back across the river. He wanted to get away. Could it be possible that he hadn't seen us when he was coming north, and had walked into us in ignorance?

Hickman gave him one more chance. Again he shook his head. Hickman dropped down on his seat and loosened his parachute harness a trifle for freer movement. He was sighting along his guns now, and then, and they seemed to be trained on the fleeing ship. The pilot's hand was flung out, and again he was motioning us away, as cooly as if he were not staring into guns which were fully capable of going off.

Sudden streaks of fire belched from the gun muzzle, and the tractors darted along fifteen feet above the stranger's ship. Hickman was giving him a bit of moral suasion, as it were.

Just what happened in the next three seconds I have only a vague idea about. I had a momentary glimpse of the pilot's long, white face, turned toward us in stunned amazement. We were so close to him that our right wing was but ten feet back of his left one, and possibly ten feet higher. Perhaps it was his astonishment which caused him to pull his ship up suddenly. I, too, was concentrating on him more than on my flying.

His ship seemed to dart upward and hang in the air in a stall as our D.H., going a hundred miles an hour, ploughed ahead. At the last second I tried desperately to dive and bank, but I was too late. Our upflung right wing crashed into his left one, the tip of the D.H. wing barely five feet from the stranger's cockpit. The wings tangled, and the crash of it could be heard above the roar of the motor before I shut it off.

The two ships were locked together, the wings a mass of débris. There was no possibility of disentangling them. The wind was stripping linen from them as it caught the openings in the ripped coverings, and with two motors going we were slipping and sliding and fluttering downward, very slowly.

Hickman's hand was gripping my shoulder like a vise as I blasphemed and fought my ship—or ships.

"He hasn't any 'chute!" the big observer bellowed. "Try to hang on for a thousand feet or so, anyway!"

The next second he was climbing over me, hanging on for dear life as the uncontrollable ships flung themselves about. The other pilot was making motions, slowly, as methodically as if he were signaling a friend out of a window.

The roar of the motors and the shrilling of the wires and the ripping of linen were like the jeers of devils as we slipped and skidded toward the ground, seven thousand feet away. Hickman, moving awkwardly because of the seatpack 'chute at the back of his thighs, was on our right lower wing now, crawling on his belly as his hand grasped struts and tangled wires to hold himself on.

The world was a spinning chaos to me, and I had no more idea of what he was up to than I have about what's happening on Mars this minute. With both hands on the stick, and my feet locked on the rudder, I was trying with all there was in me to synchronize with the other pilot and bring the locked ships down in an orderly manner. The D.H. was trembling so that the instrument needles didn't mean anything; they were hopping around like so many dancing mice. The whole structure of the De Haviland was weakening fast, and the ship would tear itself into pieces any moment.

Hickman was in the midst of the wreckage while I fought to keep the planes from going into a spin. The other ship was now lower than I was, and could not seem to keep up. We were sideslipping to the right, and the speed of the ship was increasing every minute. Did that cake of ice over in the other ship realize that if the planes tore loose he was a gone gosling?

I would almost have said it served him right, if I hadn't admired his guts so much.

Hickman was making wild motions, the meaning of which I did not comprehend in the slightest. We couldn't be

more than five thousand feet high now.

Then I saw the flyer stand in his cockpit. He was tall—tall as a flagpole. Fighting the controls desperately, I watched as closely as I could while he got out on his left wing and made his tortuous way through the wreckage. Sometimes he was out of sight.

There was no use of trying to fly any more. The other ship, out of control completely, was going into a dive and dragging us with it. We were starting into a slow, flat spin as the stranger hauled his way toward me, hanging on wires for his very life, and following Hickman back toward me. Now I knew what was up. There was a chance to save him—but couldn't he make it faster?

The ground was but three thousand feet down when Hickman got to me. He clung to the cowling, his feet dug into the wing. I cut the Liberty dead; a motor was no good to us now as we spun dizzily downward.

Any man who says that he isn't afraid when he leaps into space with a pack on his back that's supposed to open is either a fool or a liar, or both. As I climbed out, hanging on to the center-section strut with all the strength I had, I was so frightened that I was numb. The ground seemed unreal, our position just a chapter out of a nightmare.

As the other pilot got within two feet of us there came a tremendous ripping and tearing. The other ship was shearing away, and the very wing whereon Hickman and I were crouched, with the other man crawling toward us, shook mightily and seemed about to sever itself from the fuselage.

"Grab our necks!" roared Hickman above the screaming of the wires, and as the unknown got to his knees between us and slowly came upright, I got a look that I'll never forget.

His eyes were pale and round, and in them there was no fear. There was a little flame dancing in their depths, as if he were enjoying himself as he sneered at death. His face was pale but immobile as one long arm curled around my neck, the other one around Hickman.

We were half crouched; both Hickman and I had one arm outflung over the cowling to keep aboard the spinning ship. I was on the stranger's left, and I put my right arm about him. Hickman did the same with his left.

"When I say three!" roared Hickman. "For God's sake remember where your ripcord is!"

I nodded. We watched Hickman's mouth. I was trembling, I admit. The three of us were in close embrace—the closest ever a trio have been since the world began.

"Three!"

I guess I shouted, or cried, or merely shrieked. As we literally were thrown off the back of the wing, sidewise, the stranger's grip around my neck almost suffocated me, and my arm around his body so tight that it was a feat of physical strength to keep the hold.

How we fell I know not. I think we tumbled toward the ground head first, in a sort of triple dive. And suddenly all seemed well. It was as peaceful as if we were diving into the water. All was soothing quiet as my left hand found the ripcord at my left side.

Hickman's voice fairly shattered my eardrums when he shouted—

"Pull on three!"

There was no sensation of falling. The earth was so far away that we seemed to be floating calmly in the air.

"Hang on for dear life, stranger!" I bellowed, and Hickman started his count as the rush of the air began to sweep the breath from my nostrils.

At three I jerked the ripcord ring. And God, what a great feeling it was to know that the little pilot 'chute had sprung forth, and then to hear the snapping of the big silk umbrella!

Just as the shock of our sudden stopping all but tore us apart, Hickman's 'chute billowed forth. Now both my arms were around the middle man in a bearlike hug, and so were Hickman's. Luckily, or we would have dropped him.

Even our legs were interlocked as the two 'chutes, angling slightly outward, held us seemingly suspended in the air.

We didn't swing a great deal—there were a few sickening arcs, but they soon stopped. We were just making minor circles in the air, and I was commencing to sit up and take sightings of the terrain below when I heard a very quiet, unemotional voice—

"Jolly well done, what?"

I couldn't look at him; we were so close that I couldn't move a muscle.

"I'll make a few remarks about how jolly it is on the ground, by ——!" I told him.

The next instant there was an explosion which seemed to shake the air, and I looked down to see the two ships hit the ground simultaneously, a few hundred yards apart. Both gas-tanks exploded, and the next second the two samples of what hell must be like disappeared, dying down to an ordinary pair of fires.

Whatever the man we had between us might have been carrying would never be subjected to the gaze of our peepers now.

My right ear was up against the middle man's left one, and Hickman's head was out of sight over the Englishman's—for that's what he sounded like—right shoulder. We could not observe one another.

"If we're lucky we'll hit a field along the river," I told George. "How in —— are we going to make this landing?"

"Oh, if we hit in the open we may not hurt anything," Hickman responded. "Gosh, the ground's getting close, at that, and boys, we're going fast!"

I looked down. We were barely five hundred feet high. The earth seemed to be rushing toward us with a constant increase in speed.

"Er—pardon me, but if by any chawnce we should be above the rivuh when we are about—oh, twenty-five feet high say—you chaps can drop me. I'm a fair divuh, you know, and I shouldn't want to see—"

"The river isn't so —— deep!" I barked at him. "Eight feet's a diving pool along this stretch."

"We'll see," decided Hickman. "—— if I don't believe we'll about hit it, at that! Get ready, Slim. We'll grab the shroudlines as per usual, I guess, and try to make her easy."

"Say, if we slip our 'chutes I believe we can hit the river, at that," I said loudly. I wasn't feeling so good with that ground coming up that way and an overload on the 'chutes.

Parachutes were new to the Border, but I'd had some experience up at Cook with them. As I instructed Hickman I saw that we weren't going to make the river without a struggle. I grabbed the shroudlines on the left side and hauled the big silk bag into a slanting position which braked our forward speed and thus causing us to drop even faster. If we weren't going twenty feet a second, I wouldn't know the difference between a snail and a swallow getting somewhere.

"Get ready, Lord Vere de Vere!" I shouted at him. "We may drop you at that."

We were sweeping over the undergrowth on the American side, forty feet high. We seemed to swoop toward the muddy water. Fifteen feet—

"Let go, big boy!" I shouted. "George, let up your 'chute!"

The Englishman released his hold and so did we. And he arched over in a good dive, and a shallow one. I'll swear he barely went under the water, from a height of ten feet.

As Hickman and I floated apart the speed of our drop slackened. The next second I hit the undergrowth and the Mexican shore at the same time. I ploughed through weeds and bushes, cursing scandalously as I unsnapped the 'chute harness and the 'chute itself drifted away into Mexico with the wind.

II

I GOT up on shore, nursing scratches, bruises and a rotten disposition, and my Colt was in my hand. There was the pilot from Mexico, standing dignifiedly in about five feet of water.

"Don't make a move!" I shouted,

flourishing the gun. "George, where in —— are you?"

Something like *gug-gug-gug* was my reply, and I plunged through the weeds to a spot about fifteen feet up the river. And there was George. His face was red as fire, his clothes dripping with muck, and he was methodically dragging gobs of mud from his wide open mouth. He spit Rio Grande goo over the landscape, and was *gug-gugging* away for dear life. I didn't know what he was saying, but I thought I could see blue smoke curling from his throat and nostrils.

Finally he was able to talk in a blurred manner. He quoted from the Bible at length, while I sat on the bank, gun ready in my hand, and laughed hysterically. It was the reaction, I guess. Anyhow, my hilarious cachinations as he dredged out his tonsils made the welkin ring.

He got the mud washed out, finally, and we started into the river. He gave vent to casual epithets, but his enthusiasm had departed.

"Now," I reminded him, "we settle our little account with Algernon there, and see what we can figure out about getting home. I wish we'd had a chance to radio the flight—somebody could have come after us."

"Not too fast, you!" yelled George as the tall pilot slopped toward the American shore. "Say, Slim, what the —— do you think of that bozo?"

"That he had something in that ship he didn't want us to see, and was willing to risk his neck to keep us from seeing it," I returned.

Finally the Englishman emerged from the water, clambered up the bank, and leaned against a mesquite tree as he waited for us. He had a wet pipe in his mouth, and was eying us steadily as we floundered through the water.

The more I looked at him the more I wanted to look. And when I saw him fish inside his leather coat and bring out a pair of noseglasses which hung on a long black ribbon, I made up my mind positively that we had caught a queer fish.

He affixed the glasses to his long, thin nose and looked us over as if we were some new species of walking fish strolling through the Rio Grande. He gazed at us with dispassionate interest and curiosity, like a burlesque show audience when a fully dressed prima-donna is singing.

He was nearly as tall as I was—six feet three, anyway. And he was almost as thin, although he was deceptive, at that. He seemed to have a perpetual stoop, which hid the broadness of his shoulders somewhat. His long neck slanted forward from between his shoulders, providing the foundation for a long, lean horseface which was now irresistibly comical. It was framed in his strapped helmet, and huge goggles were pushed high on his forehead. Below them were those eye-glasses, perched at an extreme angle on his nose.

His knees were bent, he was leaning casually against the tree, one hand fussing with the spectacle string and the other holding a pipe. With those rounded shoulders and those long, bent legs, and his utterly casual air, he was the most languid-looking guy I've ever seen. He looked as if he'd be liable to starve to death because it was too much trouble to lift his knife to his mouth.

He was dressed in the *ne plus ultra*, and likewise the *sine qua non* of what the modern flying man will wear. And somehow the fact that his clothes were soaked didn't seem to make him look sloppy. Whipcord breeches with a full flare, the correct thing in boots, a leather coat that hadn't cost a cent under seventy-five bucks and a tan silk shirt with a black four in hand tie—he was neat but not gaudy.

As I clambered up over the bank I took a few more detailed observations. His mouth was wide and thin, and garnished by a close-clipped, sandy mustache. His jaw was long and narrow and square, and his cheekbones were the highest and the hollows under them the deepest I remember having seen.

He awaited us calmly, lounging there,

peering at us through those flossy spectacles. He was so —— superior that he got my dandruff up higher than it had been, which wasn't low. Now that I'd got myself in hand I couldn't forget that we'd been tweaking the beard of St. Peter up there a few minutes before, and tweaking it for no reason except the failure of this four-eyed specimen from the British Isles to obey orders.

"Well, your Ludship," I sa d nastily as we approached him, "you'd better oil up the accent and be prepared to talk. In the first place, just what the —— did you have in your ship?"

"Er—what?" he drawled. "Why, just a bit of a bag—toilet articles you know."

I realized then that my question had been truly brilliant. Had he had fifty thousand dollars' worth of dope or jewels he would, of course, have confessed it promptly.

"Then why in ——," I went on grimly, "didn't you land when I told you to?"

"It seemed so —— silly!" he returned easily, and his spectacles dropped from his nose.

"Oh, it did, did it!" I barked, and my disposition, never such as to cause regrets among the angels because I'm not in Heaven to add to the stock of brotherly love up there, became approximately that of a grizzly bear surprized while attending to a sore paw. "Listen, Montmorency, do you know exactly who we are?"

"No. By no means," he assured us, meeting my inflamed eyes with a sort of impersonal curiosity in his own. "That is," he added as an afterthought which wasn't important, "I know that you must be—er—Border patrolmen, but otherwise—"

"Oh, that's all you knew, eh?" I howled, and I was fairly hopping up and down with rage. "Well, that should have been enough. Do you know that we ought to have shot you down? Do you think people buzz back and forth from Mexico to America just as they please, and without a search?"

"I say, old chap, let's not get excited," he suggested, sucking on his pipe. Those watery blue eyes seemed to have a flicker in them which suggested that he was enjoying a private laugh at the world. "As a matter of fact, it seemed jolly useless to land on that rough field, you know, when—"

I took a long breath, and then interrupted him.

"Well, that little oversight on your part has cost you a ship already, and it's going to cost you a trip to McMullen, Texas, and several days in the bull-pen unless there's some tall explaining done. Do you get that?"

"I say, you're not from McMullen?" he inquired in pleased tones. "I had an idea you were from Laredo. Silly of me, what?"

"What tickles you so much?" I snapped.

He had my goat frisking around at the end of its tether.

"Why—er—McMullen was the place I was trying to find, you know. If you hadn't been so hasty we could have all got there in good order, eh what?"

The methodical Hickman got into action then.

"What did you want at McMullen?" he inquired calmly.

"You have a flyer there — Percy O'Reilly, what?"

"Sure. Know him?"

"We got quite pally at odd times in the pawst," he drawled. "I say, this is topping, eh? Meeting you all like this—"

He was laughing at us, or so I felt in my condition. Every hair was being rubbed the wrong way until they were ingrowing, as far as I was concerned.

"Oh, it's topping, is it?" I inquired sarcastically. "Well, it's not so —— topping with us to have a collision in the air, have to drag you down at the risk of our own necks, lose a ship and have to get home as best we can. Understand that?

"You should have landed when we told you. If there was any doubt in your mind, that machine-gun should have settled it. Why the —— didn't you do

it? Do you know you came within the limits of a law that says you shouldn't resist an officer?"

"No doubt," he agreed calmly, removing his helmet.

His hair was thin and sandy, slicked down without so much as a hair being out of place.

"I'm to be hanged, drawn and quartered, I presume?" he added, putting on his spectacles.

That finished me. I don't excuse myself. I'm giving you the straight goods, and I'm no hero.

"No, but you're just about one jump ahead of the worst licking you ever had, mister, and by —— you'll get it unless you button up that sarcasm of yours—and I don't mean probably!"

His hand found the handle on his glasses, and he looked me up and down with the corners of his thin lips lifting slightly.

"I shouldn't be surprized if we *should* put on the gloves," he remarked casually. "Then we might be friends, what? Any time you say—"

"Can that—both of you!" snapped Hickman, who was two hundred and twenty pounds of bone and muscle. "Slim, get hold of yourself. Duke, be careful how you answer back. You may be a lord to your mother, but you're a bum of the Border to us.

"First off, who the —— are you?"

He fished inside that leather coat and, so help me, he came out with a pocketbook and presented Hickman with a waterlogged oblong which had once been white.

"Eric Montague St. John," read Hickman. "In Mexico now?"

"I have piddled around theah, off and on, for the pawst several years," admitted St. John.

"What doing?"

"A bit of flying, a few flyers in oil—just looking about," he told us wearily.

"And you know 'Penoch' O'Reilly?" demanded Hickman.

"Yes, we were pally at one time."

"And you were flying to McMullen to see him?" I inquired.

"Partly. For other and more important reasons, too."

"Then why were you flying due north, thirty miles west of McMullen?"

"I intended to hit the rivuh, and then turn east, you know, just to make sure I didn't miss the village."

"Where did you know O'Reilly?" I asked him, striving to discover one gleam of interest in the proceedings on the part of Mr. Eric Montague St. John.

The sun had set, and in a moment the swift Texas twilight would descend on us like a blanket dropped from the sky. It was full time we were picking 'em up and setting 'em down in the direction of the road and an automobile, if fortune was kind. Nevertheless, we stood there while we tried to pry information from that languid Englishman.

"I ran into him overseas—"

"You flew over in France?" interjected Hickman.

St. John nodded.

"Then we joined up with the Kosciusko squadron in Poland for a while, and I lost sight of the little blighter. He became something or othuh in the Lithuanian cavalry. I ran into him next when we were both instructors in the Mexican Air Service, three or four years ago."

I stood there with my mouth open. That had been O'Reilly's career, all right, until he rejoined the American Army and went to the Philippines. And this drooping, melancholy Englishman tossed it off in a bored manner, as if the sketch of the past was a necessary evil.

And it was somewhat important and interesting to me, because Penoch O'Reilly and I had become fast friends. We'd only known each other a month, but we'd been associates on a couple of Texas tea parties which were calculated to give us the lowdown on each other. They did, and we both seemed to be satisfied with what we'd found.

"You claim you've got important business with the McMullen flight," Hickman reminded him. "What is it?"

"I say, let's not chatter any more, eh?" suggested St. John, raising his drooping

eyelids mildly. "I should only have to go all ovuh the ground again when we get to McMullen, you know. It's a beastly ordeal to tell the same yarn so often."

On that ground he stood, and nothing we could say would budge him. Consequently I, in a highly puzzled, bewildered and curious state of mind, finally said—

"Well, it's four miles to a road, and then it may be twenty before we get a telephone or a horse or any other method of transportation except Shank's Mare.

"Let's go. By the way, though, Duke, let's get one thing into the record. You may be the Prince of Wales, Penoch's dearest friend or one of the Twelve Apostles for all I know. But remember that as far as we're concerned, until otherwise proven, you're a total stranger who came tincanning across the Border in a strange ship, refused to stop, tried to escape being caught by turning tail and flying south—"

"What rot! I was turning to get straightened out for McMullen to show you chaps that I was going there when you cut across my circle and made me straighten out, pointed south! Then you start popping at me in that silly way, rammed me and all that."

He didn't seem to care much, one way or the other. Perhaps my uneasy feeling that maybe we had been a bit Wild West caused me to pursue my hard-boiled course, too. Anyhow, I informed him:

"We won't argue that, mister, but this is just to warn you that false moves from you are out of order, and that you're going to be searched before we start. That ship might have been full of dope for all we know. By the way, I suppose you have a good explanation of why you had guns on the ship? Official Mexican Air Service plane, I presume?"

"Oh, no. That will be explained later. I'll have to spin the yarn in detail, to let you chaps know what's ahead of you."

"Ahead of us?" snapped Hickman.

St. John nodded.

"Let's toddle along, what?" he suggested, and we toddled.

BY A miracle—a Spig flivver caught us within three miles, almost as soon as we'd hit the wandering highway, and we were bound for McMullen, thirty miles away. My interest in St. John and all his works was rising faster than a thermometer in Tampico on a July day, and I could barely repress firing question after question at him.

He lounged back in the seat, sucked his empty pipe and finally asked the driver in perfect Spanish—

"Have you a drink I could buy, señor, or do you know where I could get some?"

The middle-aged Mexican, whom I knew by name and reputation, realized that Border patrolmen weren't in the business of spotting hip-flasks. He nodded, and from the sidepocket of his car brought forth a full bottle of Habanero.

St. John paid him ten pesos for it, a ridiculous price, and we all had a swig. We had several as we bumped along through the velvet darkness, but Hickman and I had about one to St. John's ten. He sucked on that bottle almost continuously, without raising so much as a flush on his pallid face, or even a low barrier to clear speech. He did not desire to talk, it seemed, until we were within five miles of the airdrome. As the lights of the town of McMullen became more visible against the sky he asked mildly—

"Has Perce—Perce O'Reilly, I mean—been stumbling about in and out of trouble since he joined the Army again?"

"Has he?" I said spaciously as the Habanero flowed warmly through my veins. "Say, that bird has been creating anecdotes ever since he was born, from all I understand. Three years ago he got stranded in a hostile mining town up in West Virginia during a strike and declared martial law all by himself and acted as czar of the town for thirteen days. Made a curfew law, ran the whole works and got his liquor free!"

I thought I heard a cackle of glee, which was as surprizing as listening to a bedbug suddenly raise its voice in song. I peered around and met St. John's eyes.

He was laughing silently, and his eyes were the merriest I've ever seen. They just danced, and that slight smile on his face turned his long, thin, melancholy countenance into a boyish pan that glowed with hilarious joy in existence. You never saw such a change in your life.

He actually seemed like a human being.

"Quite a lad, Percy, quite a lad," he nodded.

"He had a forced landing in the Philippines, too," interjected Hickman, whose full-moon face was now glowing happily in the warmth of the liquor. "Right in the midst of a bunch of hostile Moros. Everybody gave him up, but he comes out one of their honorary chiefs!"

"A rum chap if ever I saw one," stated St. John. "Another snifter, what?"

We stopped at a telephone and warned the gang of our coming, so when the battered Ford rattled into the small, square airdrome, the ten other flyers and observers of the patrol were gathered in the recreation room.

As we piled out of the car St. John took a look around the dimly lighted field. We were in front of the row of buildings and tents which formed the southern boundary of the sandy field, and to east and west the great corrugated iron hangars loomed darkly. Northward there was only a fence, then some cleared fields, and the beginning of the mesquite which stretched away toward San Antone for a solid hundred and fifty miles.

Over eastward the lights of the flourishing town of McMullen made a white patch on the sky.

"How far away is the town?" he inquired.

"Four miles," I told him.

"Jolly well isolated out here, eh what?" he commented as we clattered up the steps.

"Not as bad as the boys are at Marfa and Sanderson, though," I pointed out. "Even Del Rio's no metropolis. Well, here we are."

I let him go through the door into the comfortable lounging room first. I hadn't given his name, and I was listening. There was an interval of dead silence, and then the deep bass foghorn of Penoch O'Reilly resounded through the room.

"Monty St. John!" he roared. "For God's sake, Johnny, where did you drop from? Glad to see you, kid! I thought you were in India! And you turn up here! Ho-ho-ho!"

III

THAT Rabelaisian laugh was still echoing from the walls when Hickman and I entered, and Lieutenant Percival Enoch O'Reilly was pumping the hand of his tall friend in no uncertain manner. Penoch introduced him around, that characteristic "Ho-ho-ho" roaring forth continuously.

"I'll shoot the yarn in a minute, Cap," I told our C.O., Captain Kennard. "This boy apparently brings news with him of some kind. We had a —— of a time, though—I'll tell you in a minute."

"Ship cracked up, eh?" barked Kennard.

I nodded, while the stocky little captain's gray eyes probed mine. He was a short chap, with a square face that had been cut to pieces by some two dozen flying wrecks. It was crowned by a stiff brush pompadour, and enlivened by a spirit of utter devil-may-careness which partially explained why he'd been an engineer on jobs from South America to Alaska, had two Germans to his credit overseas, owned more decorations than an ambassador and was conceded to be the best squadron commander on the Border although he used less real Army discipline to control his troops than any other.

"I can wait," he nodded. "But we're cracking too many ships—"

"You'll understand," I told him, just as Penoch O'Reilly took the center of the floor.

"Gentlemen, hush!" he bellowed, and the size of his voice as compared to his body was as surprizing as seeing a volcano start spouting from an anthill.

Cock a snook at Percival Enoch

O'Reilly while the dozen khaki-clad airmen are falling silent and disposing themselves as comfortably as may be on tables, chairs and the floor. If the small items which have come to light concerning him have soaked into your minds, you'll probably be as surprized at his appearance as I was when I first saw him. It took me an hour to really believe that the bird I saw before me was the same O'Reilly who'd given the Air Service more laughs than all the comic papers combined; whose exploits had been chuckled over from France to the Philippines; who'd been court-martialed an average of three times a year and never convicted because the members of the court martial laughed until they were too weak to vote.

In the first place, he wasn't an inch over five feet two. He was so short he could take his daily walk in an upper berth. His torso, however, was round and barrel-like, with a pair of wide, sloping shoulders which gave an effect of squat power. Below, his legs were thick and round and straight, and he had a habit of planting himself solidly, his feet wide apart, and laying down the law whenever it became necessary. That was his pose now, as he waited for silence, one hand out and giving an impression of rock-like solidity.

His square, brown face, though, was the tipoff on one of the world's choice spirits. He had red hair, and when I say red I don't mean pink, sandy, henna or anything else but a forthright, shrieking red. He always wore it short, plastered down and parted in the exact middle of his small head.

Below that flaming thatch were a pair of eyebrows which had been bleached into blondness—a light yellow, so to speak—and they met quizzically above a pair of blue eyes which shot forth sparks of vitality. A short snub nose lifted its peak over a small mouth full of big white teeth, and a ridiculous little mustache. The ends of it stuck up cockily and were always waxed to points capable of inflicting a flesh wound. His mustache, like his eyebrows, was light.

There was something elflike in his sparkling eyes, and his mustache seemed to bristle with zestful virility. In fact, he radiated health and an unquenchable joy in existence for its own sake. Health fairly crackled in him. He always wore perfectly fitting clothes, so tight that he seemed to be poured into them, and that thick body of his was as hard as rock.

To top it all off, he had a bass voice which would make the Bull of Bashan sound like a soprano. It was loud and deep and smooth, but the first time you heard it you were likely to jump a foot and look around to see who was talking.

That was Percival Enoch O'Reilly, and if ever a guy bent life to his will and had himself the best time possible out of it, Penoch was that man. He gave not a single, solitary —— about duty, discipline or the Golden Rule so long as he squeezed the last drop of juice out of any situation which arose. If none did, he created said situation.

"Now, gents," he boomed, his face a broad grin and those eyes twinkling brightly, "a few words on Major St. John. Did you ever hear in France about the English major that laid around in the clouds over a German airdrome and potted eight straight ships—"

"I say, douse that, Perce!" protested St. John, who was reclining nonchalantly on the back of his neck. "Er—let me talk, eh?"

"Sure," barked Kennard. "There's been so much mysterious hinting around here that I'm a nervous wreck myself. Shoot first, Slim."

"Well," I stated, "I don't know what to say except that up to this minute I've thought of St. John here as a captive and not a distinguished guest. His own fault, anyway. Here's what happened:"

I told it in a few well chosen words, while St. John sat in somnolent immobility.

"And he says that he's got news of importance," I said, "If I don't hear it soon I'll take a rest cure."

"Er—yes," St. John drawled. "Queer situation, what? Here I was coming to

McMullen to er—try to join up as a special officer for a while to help you out."

"Help what out?" snapped Kennard.

Every man had his eyes glued to the languid Englishman. Even Sleepy Spears had his eyelids up as far as they'd go, and his eyes were shining in a subdued, but interested manner.

"I'll begin at the beginning to get everything straight," St. John told us. "Er—both Percy and I, Percy some years ago, had occasion to know a rum chap named Frederich Von Sternberg. What say, Percy?"

"Yes, —— him!" spat O'Reilly, and sudden tension seemed to grip the crowd, their faces dim in the light of the shaded lamps.

It was as if every man had drawn closer to the bored Englishman, although no one had moved. The name of Von Sternberg, for some reason, had grown to be somewhat of a fetish for the patrol during the past month, and Penoch O'Reilly had helped to make it so. For the hundredth time I wondered.

"What happened down in Mexico between O'Reilly and Von Sternberg?"

O'Reilly's eyes were gleaming savagely, and his face had sudden grim lines in it as he concentrated his gaze on St. John. That gentleman raised his eyelids, glanced about the circle and went on calmly:

"Percy, old chap, tell me what the men know about Von Sternberg. What you've told them, you know. It will save me repeating."

"I told 'em all I knew—or most of it that wasn't personal," Penoch declared, "When we ran into him I—"

"You might give me the real truth about the time the patrol beat him," St. John suggested casually.

"Well, the net of the proposition," Kennard said in his raucous voice, "was this. We got acquainted with some people that lived down the river named Gray. This bird Gray claimed to know Von Sternberg in Mexico. Gray tipped us off that he thought Von Sternberg was doing some airplane smuggling. We watched for him. One night a ship comes across, and the men we had planted at Gray's place hops for it. This ship goes on down the Border, instead of north.

"Well, that ship had Von Sternberg in it. He must be a cuckoo bozo, because he knew we were watching for his smuggling ship. But his idea was for him himself to draw our pursuit, you see, down the Border, and he had another ship, full of dope, which came across ten minutes later after we were supposed to be out of the way, chasing him. But we figured his game. Some of us came back and we landed this loaded ship. As for Von Sternberg in the decoy ship—"

"I could have got him!" fat little Dumpy Scarth burst forth. "I was chasing him. But at the last minute he jumps in a parachute and floats across the river. I couldn't shoot a helpless guy like that, and the —— was thumbing his nose at me all the way down!"

"Furthermore," I added, "these Grays that were supposed to be our stool pigeons turned out to be confederates of Von Sternberg; he'd planned the whole scheme to keep them in our good graces by pretending they were enemies of his, see? It was—it was as audacious as anything I ever saw, and it makes me crawl to think how near he got away with it, sending a load over and making it when he knew we were laying in wait for him.

"He must be a darb."

"A what?" inquired St. John mildly. "A peculiar blighter, certainly. A bit wrong in the bean, I think. However, you have an idea of the kind of man he is. Perce, how much did you tell the lads about him?"

"Why, that he was a German baron who'd flown in the war and got credit—him and his circus—for more than thirty Allied planes," boomed O'Reilly. "Also that he'd turned up in Mexico, for a while, as an instructor in the Air Service, quitting later for mysterious goings on that nobody ever seemed to know the right of.

"Then I told 'em what my opinion of him was, of course. May be wrong, or

right. You'll know more about that than me. I said it was my idea that the war wasn't over yet as far as he was concerned. That is, that he was sorer than —— at America especially, for hopping in at the last minute and licking Germany. And I know —— well that he aims to be a wild whisker in Uncle Sam's beard as long as he can. I got the idea after I got down here that he aims to be a hornet stinging the United States every chance he gets. I believe he tried this air smuggling business half for profit and half to put one over on the U. S.

"Why, the way he took to try the last job shows it. He came —— close to making monkeys out of us all, and I wouldn't put it past him to drop a note, if he'd succeeded, and tell us so!

"You boys know how I described him—a big, tall, blond —— who doesn't fear God or devil, educated to the limit, been everywhere and done everything, speaks about five languages and all that. I guess the war got all the family's money, and since then he's been a soldier of fortune right. And along with losing his money he got this wild complex against America and Americans. A nut, in a way—but what a tough one to crack!"

"Right-o!" St. John agreed morosely. "Well, lads, Percy is strictly right, as far as he goes, but the pawst three years have seen changes that you don't know about, old chap. That's why I'm here, you know. In a word, it behooves the Border patrol to gird up its loins, and—er—be prepared to have a bit of a tiff with Von Sternberg."

Big, lounging "Tex" MacDowell heaved a sigh, and his gray eyes were shining with the leaping, dancing flame I knew so well. Even Hardboiled Captain Kennard moved restlessly and shot out—

"Hurry up, St. John, and give us the lay!"

"Right-o!" agreed the flyer. "Evans, pass me that Habanero, like a good chap. I seem thirsty no end tonight."

He tossed off half a tumbler of the red liquor, wiped his close-cropped mustache, and lighted his pipe with maddening deliberation.

"I'm heah, lads," he stated, "to do what little I can to—er—help you out. Personally I don't care a —— what comes over the Border—nothing to me, what? But I have a bit of a score to settle with the baron, and this seemed the tight little scheme, eh? Join up with you chaps.

"The idea is this, Percy. Von Sternberg left his flying job with the Government while we were still instructing, eh? And after that he did some civilian flying and what-not, always had money and there were rumors that he was engaged in some smuggling and all that even then.

"I left soon after you did—ran over to India to see my brother—and then came back. I dawbbled a bit in oil—made a package of the ready, too. Just about then Von Sternberg started to do a bit of oil work, himself. He had two ships then, carrying a few passengers and this and that.

"Same old chap—sort of a boy, in a way, taking a lick at Americans first and Englishmen next whenever he could, and all that. Very popular with the Mexicans, and seemed to have some authority, for some reason, with some of the Jeffes. He—"

"Any German has the inside track in Mexico," stated O'Reilly. "The Americans are out of luck, and the English come next. And him known to hate us, as well, and being able to speak the language and being a —— of a fighter—"

"Well put," nodded St. John. "Mark you now, right here is where he started changing from the lad you used to know. Not such a bad egg then—"

"Ho-ho-ho!" roared O'Reilly, but there was little mirth in his cachination. More sarcasm. "Not a bad egg, huh? Why, the dirty—"

"I'm wrong, doubtless. I never knew. However, to resume, he got a piece of acreage down toward Zacamyxtle—about fifty acres, I should say, right in the middle of territory that was proving up a bit. And he brought in a well of a hundred thousand barrels!"

"Great guns, what the —— does he

smuggle for?" I ejaculated. "That's a —— of a well, even for Mexico!"

"Right-o. But mark you. He was hemmed in completely by big companies, what? They made offer after offer to buy him out, but he refused to sell for the chicken-feed they offered, d'you see?

"The companies were all American, mind you, and they—er—had little love for Von Sternberg. Doubtless many things were laid to him unjustly, but that's neither here nor there. He refused their offers.

"Then they jolly well hopped to it. The tight little game of freeze-out, eh? They refused to let him have a right of way over their property, see? He couldn't even bring in tools or supplies. They wouldn't let him pipe water for his drilling or pipe oil over their land. And they wouldn't buy his oil, what?

"See how they worked? All in combination. Count Von Sternberg was left sitting on a tack, eh, with a hundred thousand barrel well that was no good to him and a tract worth a million dollars which wasn't worth a nickel, eh?"

"Boy, how I'd like to have been there!" exploded O'Reilly, "Ho-ho-ho! Shoot, Monty! What did he do?"

"Er—well, this is partly hearsay and partly known fact," St. John drawled. "He had a band of twenty Mexicans who were his dogs, even then. And the worst bandits that ever roamed the *monte*. He seemed to gather more. He disappeared for some time, way out in the south country somewhere.

"And right after that the payrolls shipped from Tampico to the fields began to be robbed, eh? Sixty and seventy thousand dollars, American, at a lick. Jolly annoying, what? He—or some one—got payrolls off of barges going down the canal to the south country from Tampico, and from cars going to the Panuco and other regions. It was smooth work, lads, smooth work. He had accomplices in Tampico, no doubt. He knew when the payrolls were going out—and he bothered American companies only."

"You see," interjected Penoch, "the oil country down around Tampico is around a hundred and twenty miles long—great big territory of millions of square acres, with camps all over it, hid in the *monte*—jungle—and a bunch of roads that haven't got two consecutive feet of rideable space in 'em. A bandit's paradise."

"Exactly," agreed St. John. "Furthermore, you must remember that there is no law. There are a thousand groups of bandits, calling themselves revolutionists, in the main, who roam the *monte*, hold up the oil cars and are satisfied with a few pesos—whatever you have on you. Come toddling into the camps and ask for contributions to the cause, or to pay for some uncertain protection they will give or words to that effect. Blackmail, of course. But the companies have to fall for it.

"Von Sternberg's organization is topping the field. No comparison. He has four or five hundred men, at least, and doubtless a thousand more who would be glad to join him and are allies, so to speak. That he has many confederates in Tampico, right in the offices of the companies, there is no doubt. That there are a number of renegade Americans, English and others goes without saying. No one knows just how powerful he is.

"A few sidelights, if you're not bored. The companies try to fight him. He has several prices on his head—and walks into the Imperial Hotel in Tampico with a couple of the bandit sub-chiefs whose gangs have joined him. He sits in the lobby as big as you please, and nothing happens.

"And, mind you, there have been gunmen imported from this very Border—mean *hombres*—for the express purpose of dusting him off. Don't let anybody, oil man or otherwise, tell you differently. And these killers disappear, or toddle home, what? Several joined his army!"

"Sounds —— peculiar, even for Mexico, the oilfields and a two-for-a-cent revolution combined!" exploded Kennard.

"Quite so, Captain, quite so," agreed

the placid, weary looking St. John. "But remember several items: One, the hatred for American oil men, and Von Sternberg the greatest thorn in their side. Second, the idolatry of unnumbered Mexican peasants. He tried to be a bit of a Robin Hood, you know—presents and all that sort of thing, where they'll do the most good. Add the blind devotion, which he has the power of exacting, from hundreds of followers. His nerve and audacity and personality combined do that, eh? And his success.

"The final fillip to the bally thing is that the various Jeffes round about—most of them—fear him, admire him and doubtless get paid by him.

"Almost any hour of the day for months he could have been done away with. But the man who did it would not live five minutes. Do I make myself clear?"

"Well I'll be ——!" breathed Penoch, and suddenly his eyes bored into mine with the flame in them I had seen before.

He was on his feet now, legs wide apart, planted solidly, and there was cold cruelty and the disillusioned, granite-like look about his face that shows the man who cannot be turned aside when once his mind is made up on a definite course of procedure.

"Slim, remember what I said when that Gray business was over?" he boomed, and I nodded.

"Well, by ——, if Fred Von Sternberg is getting gay I'm going to make a —— good attempt to repay a little debt I owe him!"

"And the time is not far away," interrupted St. John, and for the second time since I had known him there was a smile on his face.

And again the miracle happened. Those blasé eyes turned from a washed-out blue to sparkling life, and there was an unquenchable boyishness, a careless recklessness in that reclining Englishman which was so different from his usual bored, lackadaisical expression that a new soul seemed to have moved into the St. John apartment.

"I say, let me finish it off, eh?" he begged, and the other flyers moved restlessly, their gleaming eyes on the now emotionless countenance which gleamed whitely under a lamp.

"Well, that's where Sternberg is today, with one addition that I didn't mention. He collected four pilots—all German—and he imported German ships for his business. That business, I have reason to know, will be one of two things. Forcing the companies to send their payrolls, at stiff prices, in *his* planes, or—knocking off the other planes that carry the ready, eh?"

"But, —— it, how can he—"

"He can exert more pressure than one would think," St. John answered before I was through. "He has guns, as you noted on my ship. That was one of his. It amounts to forcing the companies to bribe him not to steal their payrolls, in the air or on the ground. They're scared of him, I tell you.

"Now to the nub of the bally yarn! In the few months I was knocking about as an instructor in the Mexican army, Von Sternberg and I hit it off all right. I rather admired the nerve of the blighter, and he seemed to have no particular aversion to my company.

"Not intimate, you understand, but we understand each other. Then I drifted off to India, came back and messed a bit with oil, as I said, and once in a while he and I would run into each other in Mexico City, Tampico or wherever.

"Three weeks ago he found me in a saloon in Panuco and he had a bit of a chat with me. He doesn't overshoot, ordinarily. In our little conversation he hinted at big things. He wandered about a bit, but big things, nevertheless.

"And gentlemen, I'll tell you frankly that he had found out that I like a lark now and then, and that there will be no grief in England if I never set foot on the bonny strand again, what? He had an idea that I would be strong for a bit of excitement.

"What he hinted at seemed to me to include three things. This—er—aerial banditry, getting back at the big company

hogs by blackmail or by force, for one thing. The other, unless I was down and out on a little Scotch, was a revolution which his army, along with others, would join and which had every prospect of success. He told me bluntly that the day wasn't far distant when he expected to be—er—well, no less than chief of the Mexican Air Service and the power behind the throne.

"The third, lads, contemplated immediately the greatest harrying of the United States Border since the—er—what was it? Columbus Raid? Right-o. For three reasons. One, to make money by aerial smuggling and any other frolicsome sport such as kidnaping and holding for ransom. Number two, merely to twiddle his fingers at Uncle Samuel, eh, and make a monkey out of him. Third, to so embarrass the present officially friendly government that there would be—er—openings made which might have far-reaching consequences."

IV

WE DIGESTED that for a moment, and there wasn't a man there who couldn't come close to a good idea of what an organized band of several hundred could do along the line of touching off the ever-threatening explosion which Border men and Americans in Mexico are always fearful of. Penoch O'Reilly stood in the center of the room, right in front of St. John, like a stunted but stalwart oak. He radiated ferocious concentration, and he seemed to be milking information from his friend without saying a word—drawing it out with his eyes.

Again I wondered what had happened, years before, to make Penoch such a deadly enemy of Von Sternberg's. For months, since aerial smuggling had become so prevalent, the name of that German had been noised about, and with the arrival of O'Reilly the legend had taken on flesh and blood.

"Well," came O'Reilly's deep bass, "I got to give that big, smiling, cold-blooded devil credit. He don't shoot for small money."

"Evidently not," drawled Tex MacDowell, whose tanned countenance was shining blissfully. "So the days of Villa and the rest are back again, under modern power, eh?"

"Looks like the Border boys will stay on the job this week instead of frolicking around El Paso Saturday," Kennard said slowly.

"What's up at El Paso?" I inquired.

"Didn't you hear?" asked O'Reilly. "The *America's* trip has been set ahead, and she comes over the Border on her way to San Diego the end of this week instead of a week from now."

"——!" I said disgustedly. "That ruins that junket you were going to fix up for us, eh?"

"Not necessarily, if the Cap will let us go in spite of the Sternberg news."

"Listen," Kennard said scathingly, "if you get away with fixing up a trip for yourself aboard that dirigible, I won't stop you if I'm the only one left at McMullen! You don't stand a Chinaman's chance!"

Which was my own opinion, privately. And yet Penoch had weird and mysterious contacts here and there through the world as a result of his knocking about. I wouldn't have been surprized to hear him call the President "Uncle".

"What's the *America* and the great trip?" inquired St. John mildly.

"The biggest dirigible in the world—Navy built it," Kennard explained. "She's going to fly here from San Antone, on her transcontinental trip, and go over the Border stations as a compliment, so to speak, from the Navy to the Army. Stops off overnight at El Paso—big review of the troops there, with the Secretary of War and all that."

"I see," nodded the bored St. John. It struck me as peculiar that he knew nothing of the much-heralded *America*. "I shall be interested to see it myself. Percy, you don't mean to say that you and Evans—"

"Hey, let's talk that over later,"

Kennard interrupted, "and get the low-down on this Von Sternberg thing. To —— with the *America* for now.

"St. John, you left off at the spot where Von Sternberg wanted you to join up with him."

"Quite so, Captain. Quite so. The old tongue is wagging freely, what? Percy, hand over the Habanero like a good fellow. My best, gentlemen.

"Now, of course I like to kick over the traces a bit and all that, but there are limits. Percy knows me well enough for that. I couldn't join the merry whirl with him—isn't being done, as far as I'm concerned. So I said, 'Nothing doing, old fellow,' or words to that effect. I guess the blighter must have needed an extra pilot or two—"

"Especially of your caliber!" boomed O'Reilly.

"—and was keen no end to get me," the Englishman proceeded without noticing Penoch's compliment. "The gist of the bally mess is that he—er—arranged matters against me, do you see? A matter of gambling, liquor and a woman got me in a very parlous position. He had me jolly well tied, as far as Mexico was concerned. In a manner of speaking, lads, I was in a bad way. It was the woman, mostly—"

"You always were a sucker for women," Penoch said. "Ho-ho-ho! Remember that Polack jane that turned out to be—"

"Of course. Anyhow, God bless 'em. As I was saying, Von Sternberg simply put it up to me. If I helped him out, I was all right. If not—trouble no end, d'you see?"

"So?" prompted Kennard.

"I laid a bit of a plan and I talked with him, and I made off in one of his own airplanes—stole it to save myself. Which now is no more, due to the misplaced energy of Evans here. My idea was to join up with you chaps and hang about until I see my chawnce, here or in Mexico, to fight it out in the air with Von Sternberg. My ambition is to thrust an umbrella jolly well down his throat and then open it."

"Ho-ho-ho!" roared O'Reilly. "Duke, that sounds like the old stuff." He sobered instantly, and one finger came thrusting at St. John like a weapon. "I know you," he stated. "What else have you got up your sleeve?"

St. John's thin lips wavered in the hint of a smile.

"I have a lad or two on the job down there," he said mildly, and O'Reilly's laughter echoed from the roof.

"I knew it!" he bellowed. "Stool-pigeons—and I wouldn't be surprized if they were right in Von Sternberg's outfit, eh? And you can stick around and tip us off whenever something's due, eh, and we can hop right to it?"

"Had I had my ship, I would have insisted on first chawnce at Von Sternberg if he came over personally."

"I imagine so," nodded O'Reilly, and his eyes were blazing. "Monty, —— if this may not be our chance to get even with him, at that, if your men work right—and do the States a good turn in the bargain! The double-crossing, crooked —— has never had a lesson since I knew anything about him, and it's time he got it!"

"You said something!" snapped Kennard. "About wanting to join us—you know, of course, that that's impossible, except as a—er—civilian adviser. Maybe the Customs Department would make you a special agent, but as far as becoming an officer in the Air Service—"

"I was thinking of the reserve corps and being ordered to active service. Now that I would have to fly an Army ship, that is a necessity, eh? As a matter of fact, my parents were a hundred per cent. English blood, but both born in this country. So was I, but they moved to England when I was a tot and I was educated there.

"But I'm eligible, and an American citizen, really. I did a bit of flying about with the R.A.F. in the war—"

"Major, ace, eleven planes official," interjected O'Reilly.

"It was good fun. I thought I might be able to ease in, what? Can we

try for a reserve commission, Captain?"

"Sure, if everything's all right."

"My army record in the R.A.F., my birth certificate and such things are matters of only a few days' investigation."

"We'll get right under way!" barked Kennard, jumping to his feet.

He walked up and down with swift choppy strides, his bristling head bent in thought. As if talking to himself he said:

"You've got reliable stool-pigeons, and we know from our own experience that what you say of Von Sternberg as a Diamond Dick super-bandit is the truth. For the last six months ships have been swarming over this Border like flies. How large a percentage of 'em we've landed is open to question.

"Looks like our chance. Now we've got to get the word all along the Border, notify Washington, get set for business. You say he plans to begin right away, eh? What effect will your flight toward the Border have on his plans, do you think?"

"None, sir. He's entrenched in Mexico, and a few more difficulties he might figure on on this side will just add—er—enjoyment to the deal for him. He particularly wants to put something over on this sector, I think. He was sore no end, according to rumor from my lads, at the way you chaps spoiled his game when you caught his last shipment. He must know that Percy is here, too—he'll never rest happy until he has a chance to crow over you, if you see what I mean. '

"I do," proclaimed O'Reilly. "You know, boys, he's a fatheaded guy—a grandstander, at that. Loves power and thinks he's the biggest thing ever came along. That we—especially with me having a hand in it—knocked down a dope shipment for him, and maybe more than one, in the past will drive him to do almost anything to prove to us that he's smarter than we are."

St. John got to his feet in a series of weary movements and fished for his glasses. He looked at the clock, and then said:

"I'm a bit fatigued, lads. Captain, can I—er—find a bed out here for the night?"

"Sure thing. Penoch, take him to Cravath's tent."

"Excellent," proclaimed St. John. "I'd like to have a bit of a chat with you, Percy. They call you what, here—Penoch? My word, what a peculiar name. Good night, lads. Happy dreams, Evans. Have you—er—gotten over your desire for physical combat?"

"I guess I can get along without taking a punch at you," I said with a grin that I tried to make sincere.

But it wasn't. He was so —— superior that he got my goat. And yet I sensed the iron in him, even without Penoch's sketch of his past career. The size of it was that I respected him but I didn't like him, and I didn't think so much of those washed-out little eyes or that long horse-face or his —— spectacles or his getup in general.

Then, while the boys talked excitedly and Kennard retired to his office to frame some radiograms, I remembered the two flashes of a different St. John that I had seen. When he smiled, I mean, and turned into a mischievous, joyous kid.

"There may be something about him I'll learn to like, but I've sure got to get close enough to him to rub off his shell," I told myself, and then settled down to think things out along various directions.

It takes considerable coaxing, backing and filling to get my brain in action, and I had just got as far as deciding that the Border was about to become busy once more, when Dumpy Scarth's voice collided with my eardrums.

"—— of a note if we have to miss that El Paso party!" he said discontentedly. "That'll be a great time—go over to Juarez after all the doings at Fort Bliss—"

"And a chance to perform daredevil deeds before several thousand people," I finished for him.

The fat, good-natured, moon-faced pilot was one of the best flyers in the Service, but how he did like to show it, both aloft and ashore!

"Huh! I suppose you don't give a ——. Figure on being in on it anyway!" he said scathingly.

"Sure," I egged him on. "Didn't Penoch say that he could work it for us?"

"How the —— can he work it? He's always claiming everything on earth. ——! Talk about digging for oysters and he'll tell about the time he was chief of a herd of wild oysters off the coast of Paraguay!"

I grinned at that one.

"Too bad you won't be along, Dumpy," I said sympathetically. "I'll bet we have our names in the paper and everything."

As a matter of fact, I didn't have the slightest idea that I could get in a trip on the giant dirigible, now that it was coming over ahead of time. I wasn't banking on it before, despite Penoch's vague and mysterious statements. I wouldn't let Dumpy know that for a farm, however.

"I'm going to ask the cap'n to let me fly down to El Paso, anyway. I'll do double patrol to make up. I'll see you there—not!"

"Why the 'not'?" I grinned at him. "Why, Penoch O'Reilly's a famous flyer that stands higher in Washington—"

"To hear him tell it!" blurted Dumpy, and wandered out of the room with a disgusted mien.

I decided to go to bed. The day had been a bit wearisome. I could see Kennard and Tex MacDowell, the officer of the day, in headquarters, and they were busy on the phone and with pen and ink. Kennard was wasting no time in getting things set.

As I reached the line of small, square, board-floored tents which were the boudoirs of the flyers I saw a short figure pacing up and down in the moonlight with choppy, important looking strides.

It was Percival Enoch O'Reilly, and as I passed him the casual good night froze on my lips.

He'd changed a —— of a lot in the last fifteen minutes. Once before I had seen that look on his face, in an emergency. His square face seemed to have lengthened, and there were deep lines cut in it. It was his eyes that counted, though. They were hard and cruel, and somehow there seemed to be primeval savagery deep down in them. When they met mine it appeared that he didn't recognize me for a moment. He wasn't the reckless, devil-may-care adventurer of a few moments before. He was a man whose appearance was far from prepossessing.

It shouldn't have surprized me so much, I suppose. When a man has fought the world in parlous places for as many years as Penoch has, there's something in him aside from youthful joy in adventure for its own sake. If it wasn't there to start, it gets put there. If you play with snakes you're bound to get bit, and if you fool with the slime you can't help getting smeared. Penoch O'Reilly had been hammered into hardness, and now it was showing.

"Oh, hello, Slim," he mumbled, and searched for a cigaret.

He seemed a bit haggard, and in his slightly sunken eyes there seemed to be the hint of a great fear as they met mine.

"Well, what do you think of St. John?" he inquired.

"Not so —— much," I told him. "But maybe I'll change. I sure will be willing to treat him handsomely if he gets us a shot at your friend Von Sternberg."

"He will. And he's almost as good a man as the Baron, too—don't forget that. Looks like a lounge-lizard with the hookworm, doesn't he? Well, nerve never comes any colder than his, big boy, and he pays his debts."

Those last words were fairly ground out in that low rolling bass, and I said as lightly as I could:

"Looks like you think of paying yours, too, pretty steadily. What the ——, Penoch, what's the secret about Von Sternberg and you when you were in Mexico?"

"Nothing much," he evaded, but I knew he lied.

And I knew, too, that Eric Montague St. John had brought Penoch personal bad news.

"Well, I don't give a ——, but if you

need any help call on me," I told him. "The skeleton in the closet, if any, can stay there, and I won't tell."

"Thanks."

He was standing there quietly, head down, and for the first time I saw him with his tail between his legs, so to speak. Or that was the way it seemed to me. Usually he hit obstructions head on, like a small projectile, and trouble ahead was the signal for him to run up the flag, plant his feet wide apart and bellow lustily for the enemy to come on.

There was a moment of silence, and then I said:

"Well, I'm going to turn in. I suppose, on the level, that any chance you may have had to land us a trip in the *America* is all shot now that she's coming over so soon."

"The —— it is!" he shot back, and his head snapped up. "Why, it's almost a cinch we get it now!"

"What?"

I looked at him, and to my intense surprize the old Penoch was back on earth again. His eyes were sparkling with elfin mischief, and that snooty little mustache was bristling delightedly. For the moment he had forgotten his troubles.

"Sure! We got a good break. Ho-ho-ho!"

That laugh rolled through the darkness with all the contagious hilarity I had become accustomed to, and his eyes shone into mine as he enjoyed my bewilderment.

"Listen, you blasted little runt!" I orated. "Why the —— all this mystery? You're not pulling the wool over miners' eyes, or trying to do magic for a bunch of Moros! If you can get a trip on the *America*, why not give me the dope? And how in the name of —— are chances better tonight than they were—"

"Ho-ho-ho! The human flagpole's curiosity is running him ragged!" chuckled O'Reilly.

Then he sobered a bit, planted his feet wide apart, and his finger stabbed out at me.

"Honest, Slim, I'm not being mysterious. I just don't want to shoot off my mouth, even to you. There's nothing unusual about it, except that I don't want to let it out right now."

"I suppose you'll turn out to be Sherlock Holmes in disguise, or a captain in the Navy," I said disgustedly. "However, it's your own business, and I'll thank you for the balloon ride anyhow."

"If you knew how I was going to get it—ho-ho-ho!"

"I'm going to bed to keep from knocking your private joke out of you," I stated. "So long, Pee-wee, and don't take my remarks about his Ludship to heart. You know me."

"You'll know him better soon, too," O'Reilly said grimly, and that lightning change was there. "If things don't happen up here, we'll go where they do—he and I—and you're invited!"

Which gave me something to think of until I went to sleep, and to dream about after I dropped off.

V

TEX MACDOWELL and the captain had been busy enough, between them, working while we slept. I found that out right quickly after I woke up. Three ships, each carrying two flyers, were ordered to fly to Donovan Field, the passenger flyers to fly reserve ships back. Patrols from dawn to dark were to start the day following.

Our staff of informants along the territory between Brownsville and Laredo were instructed to keep an unusually close scrutiny on all things afloat and ashore. These unofficial aids included most of the Americans and a few of the Mexicans who inhabited that section of Texas. The customs men, Rangers and cavalry patrol troops were notified, and from Brownsville to El Paso the old river felt a thrill of life along her keel.

I was one of the unfortunates doomed to fly a D.H. to Donovan and back—a slight jaunt of about four hundred miles as the crow flies, if a crow ever flies above a hundred and fifty solid miles of mesquite. Consequently I landed back at

McMullen tired, dirty and ready to look at anything on earth with a mean and bilious eye. Furthermore, four hours in the air, with scarcely a break, had provided time enough for my mental workings to produce one or two definite thoughts of which I was slightly ashamed, but nevertheless would hold to the end.

"Sleepy" Spears and Tex MacDowell had escaped the trip, doing the patrolling, and as I wandered to my canvas château I spotted them sojourning in MacDowell's tent, with suspiciously long, cool drinks in their hands.

"Come in, my boy," drawled MacDowell. "Sit down. Have a drink. Pardon my lack of a glove."

He's a big, lounging, good-looking Texan who was just about the best all-round, catch-as-catch can, ground and lofty flyer this world ever saw, with the possible exception of a bozo named George Groody. And he was as competent a devil as ever walked on anything from poker to parties, with the kind of a disposition which gets a man into a hole just for the pleasure of getting out of it again. Which stunt Tex always performed.

He and Sleepy were veterans, and boys to tie to. They had experience by the yard, common sense by the ton, and judgment, as St. John would say, no end.

The other D.H.'s were roaring overhead, circling to land, as I accepted a drink and said:

"Well, looks as if work starts tomorrow, eh? —— if this St. John didn't dash in and stir up the Rio Grande, eh?"

"Sure did," yawned Sleepy. "Hope something comes of it. Maybe if we can clean this Von Sternberg right we'll have a little peace around here."

He was a stocky, somnolent chap who always seemed in a doze during the day, and wide awake at night. In the daytime he awakened when there was something important afoot. And when he awakened, his opponents usually went to sleep. That is, they found themselves in sort of a daze.

"For some —— reason or other, I don't like that Englishman," I told them bluntly. "I don't trust him, somehow."

"Why not?" asked Tex gently. "Because he nearly was the death of you?"

"I don't know," I said intelligently. "I think he ought to be watched a little, just on general principles."

I heard steps on the boardwalk outside, but thought nothing of them as I went on:

"As a matter of fact, I think we've swallowed his yarn without thinking enough about it—see what I mean? That is, what reason have we got to think he's so wonderful when he came across and acted suspiciously—"

"How about Penoch?" inquired Sleepy.

"Oh sure. I know. But listen. I wouldn't say this to anybody but you birds, and I know it's crazy and that it isn't true—but then it might be, see? Suppose this fellow St. John *wasn't* on the level—was here somehow to trade on his friendship for O'Reilly—"

"Pardon me!"

It was a blast from without that couldn't be mistaken. It was Penoch O'Reilly, and as his small, solid figure filled the doorway St. John's voice was saying—

"I say, Percy, what rot!"

"Shut up, Monty!" roared the pint-size flyer, and strode in. St. John's long, pallid face peered in the doorway, spectacles on his nose.

"Listen, you!" said Penoch.

These light eyebrows and the mustache were bristling, and his eyes were shooting sparks at me.

"Just what were you boys saying?" he snapped hoarsely.

He had set himself in his accustomed stance, planted solidly to repulse any assault whatever.

"I was doing all the saying," I told him.

"Mind repeating it?" he snapped.

I hesitated. It was an embarrassing position. However, I have all the finesse and tact of a hippopotamus on the warpath, and I have found that shooting the wad and getting it over with is about as

good a policy as any. That is, I never lie unless I think I can get away with it.

There was dead silence for a moment, and the dynamic force bottled up within O'Reilly seemed more obvious than ever in that taut quiet.

"I was suggesting," I blurted, "that we certainly did swallow all that St. John said—hook, line and sinker, and remarking on what a joke it would be if he turned out to be here for some purpose of his own which had nothing whatever to do with battling Von Sternberg. It would be the joke of the season—one after this prominent German's own heart, if St. John came in here with a big tale to set himself right—"

"I thought so!" boomed O'Reilly, and now his small fists were clenched at his side.

"I eavesdropped on you, and I don't give a —— who knows it. And I knew what you were saying. See here, big boy. I lay my cards on the table, see? And what I say goes for the rest of you, and the whole —— flight. I never thought the day would come when I saw you a sorehead, sneaking around knifing a man in the back because your own —— foolishness got you into trouble with him.

"You're running around trying to poison people against Monty, are you? The guy that I vouched for, that's here to do us a favor, that's worth more, by ——, in his little finger than you are in that whole skeleton of yours! And if you don't like that, lump it and be —— to you!"

He was hard as a diamond, and one got the impression that any word, blow or missile would bounce off him with no more effect than a toothpick trying to scratch said diamond. The boyish face had disappeared again, replaced by a lined, cold-eyed, square-jawed mask.

It knocked me off my feet. Bear in mind that I held Penoch O'Reilly in esteem. And, as is usual with me, the consciousness that there might be considerable truth in his words didn't make me any more amiable.

"Now you listen, runt," I told him, and I didn't move from my chair, "cut out this high and mighty stuff. I was having a conversation which was my own —— business and none of yours. I've got a right to my opinion, and if I really thought that St. John wasn't O.K.—and I don't say I think so at all—I wouldn't aim to let any little squirt around these diggings butt in on it. Get that? Now toddle on down the walk, get under a cold shower and be yourself."

For the first time I noticed that O'Reilly was laboring under some terrific strain, or so it seemed. He wasn't normal.

He took a step forward, and his finger stabbed out at me.

"All right, sorehead!" he grated. "Do your stuff. But you and this whole —— flight might as well understand that I'm for Monty St. John from A to Izzard, and if you, or the flight, or the whole —— Army don't like it they can sure as —— get rid of me quick. I—"

"For ——'s sake," Sleepy Spears interjected deliberately, "shut up! Have you gone crazy?"

O'Reilly stood there a minute, as if collecting himself.

"I never heard such —— foolishness," drawled Tex. "Be yourself, Penoch, be yourself. With a half an inch you're taking a mile."

"Well, by ——, it makes me sore to see a man come in here to do a favor and get insulted and laughed at and distrusted, whispers behind his back—"

"I say, old bean, don't be an ass!"

It was Eric Montague St. John, entirely self-possessed. He was holding his spectacles on his nose and looking around the tent calmly. He was as impersonal as the table.

"Come on, Percy, let's toddle on, eh? Much ado about nothing, what? And who cares a ——?"

I didn't know, exactly, but I did know that St. John didn't.

"O.K. with me," O'Reilly said briefly. "If I got off my head a bit I'm sorry. But the main sense of what I said still goes—see? I don't take back a word of

it, and the remarks might as well be spread on the record."

He shot a glance at me, his closest friend in the flight, and there was nothing but a sort of cool contempt in his eyes.

"S'long," he boomed, and went out, following St. John.

"——, he can be hard," drawled MacDowell. "Well, Slim, I guess that puts you in your place, eh?"

"Yeah," I snorted. "I'd like to know the ins and outs of this. This guy seems to be on the way to disrupting the flight, as it were."

"He must have been some blood-brother of Penoch's," Sleepy said placidly.

I remembered what I had seen the night before, and finally remarked:

"I don't think that, exactly. But there's some stuff under the surface that we don't know. I think St. John was more or less of a sidekick of Penoch's off and on, and that he's on the level, at that. But I think he brought private and personal news to Penoch that we aren't in on, and that there's a personal element interjected into this coming scrap, if any, with Von Sternberg. That is, that St. John and Penoch have a mutual stake in it which isn't merely enforcing the law, see?

"That's about as clear as mud, maybe, because I don't mean simply what we know—that Von Sternberg's burned both of them in the past when they were all Mexican flyers. They admit that they hate him personally.

"But Penoch's scared of something, worried about something, and I've got an idea that he thinks St. John is the only man that can help him out."

"Well," MacDowell said, and he'd had no mean amount of experience himself, "these boys that have knocked around the world from pillar to post like O'Reilly, and this St. John bird and the rest of 'em—they usually have a few off skeletons in assorted closets—"

"Chapters," yawned Sleepy, "in their private memoirs that they don't want published.

"Well, there's one cinch. Penoch doesn't miss much, and maybe he's got some muddy spots along his trail, eh?"

"Maybe," I said, half to myself. "You can't tell with a guy like him. But it's a cinch that he got news from Mexico that didn't start him laughing himself to death."

VI

THE special patrols started next day, and everybody on the list had at least two two-hour frolics over the chaparal. O'Reilly seemed to be quiet and repressed, although not exactly downcast. He seemed to be doing a —— of a lot of thinking. His "ho-ho-ho" did not ring out so often. In fact, not at all, and when I was around he was a human iceberg. The playboy of the world had been submerged into a grim-faced man who was carrying that rugged jaw of his farther out than ever, as if daring the world to do its worst and see whether he cared.

I got back from my second patrol at three o'clock in the afternoon. I ran out my motor by turning off the gas, and as I got out lantern-jawed Sergeant Bailey told me:

"Lieutenant O'Reilly and Lieutenant Beaman came down on the eastern patrol, sir. They said they didn't crack anything but the propeller and tailskid. I sent new ones down to 'em by Lieutenant Spears."

I was engineer officer, so this was in my province.

"O.K.," I said. "Thank God they didn't crack anything more. We've had more repairing to see to lately than—"

"Pardon me, Evans, but do you think there's no chawnce whatever of their getting back tonight?"

It was his Ludship, and he actually seemed to be exercised about the matter. I took a squint at the sky. It would be dark within an hour.

"Search me," I told him. "How long ago did the prop start down there?"

"Only a few minutes ago, sir," the sergeant replied from the top of the motor.

The gas-truck had arrived, and the ship was being serviced before being put to bed in the hangar.

"Not a chance, then, unless they decide to try a night flight. And that depends on whether they've got an easy take-off."

The sarge overheard me, evidently.

"They won't return tonight, sir," he explained, "because they said they'd have to have trees cut down before they could get out."

The leathery non-com grinned.

"Latham said Lieutenant O'Reilly cussed considerable over the phone," he chuckled, and I could imagine Penoch's roaring blasphemy at the prospect of a night in the mesquite.

"A rum go, what?" muttered St. John, tapping one thin thigh with his pipe. "I wanted to see Percy particularly this evening, worse luck!"

He stood there, head bent in thought, while I surveyed him with considerable surprize. I had the idea that he wouldn't have missed a heave at his pipe if the Angel Gabriel were tooting the last concert.

"Oh, well, no matter. Tomorrow's another day, eh?"

He gazed at the sky casually. A little Gulf breeze had sprung up, and it was cool and comfortable. Suddenly his emotionless eyes met mine.

"I say, Evans, I have a sudden notion to ask you a favor, what? The other lads are still out, or asleep, or I wouldn't intrude. How about a bit of a hop—just a few minutes around the field? It's been years since I flew a De Haviland. And I like the evening air. If the captain says 'right', would you mind, old topper?"

I was considerably amazed at the calm request, after all that had happened, and for a moment I didn't answer.

Suddenly he smiled, and those eyes glowed with that spark I'd seen twice before. Quizzical, mocking, boyish somehow—funny how it changed the pale-face nonentity into a vibrant human being.

"We've had our tiffs, eh what? But life's too short. We should get together. Let's bury the hatchet in a bit of a hop, eh?"

"Sure!" I told him, and in a way I was relieved.

I don't enjoy having a fight on with any one, and I'd begun to realize that I'd let my none-too-good nature get the best of me. No need of moping around like a brooding grizzly bear, just because St. John seemed a little slimy to me. And, surprizingly, when he flashed that smile I found myself liking the man. I had the idea he'd grow on one—it was a cinch he had something on the ball. O'Reilly's reminiscences and my own observation had shown that.

Well, he got permission from the captain, drew the 'chute which everybody was compelled to wear when flying, and we were off in five minutes. As I circled around the field my heart was full of the milk of human kindness, and I was feeling a little better now that our senseless resentment for each other seemed to be melting away.

The air was cool and smooth, and at a thousand feet I turned the ship over to him, in the back seat. And he could fly, brother. I knew that the second he took hold. He sent the D.H. into a series of long, graceful wingturns. Not a slip nor a skid—as smooth as oiled billows on the ocean they were, and if he hadn't flown De Havilands recently he sure had a good memory.

He turned south for the river, and flew straight and level for a moment. We were getting close to the twisting silver ribbon on the ground, and I was reclining luxuriously on my parachute, when I felt something dig into the back of my head.

I turned around languidly. The next second an unseen observer would have thought that I'd been stung by a hornet. I snapped upright, and couldn't swallow. My eyes popped out until they bounced against my goggles, and I was literally numb with surprize.

I was staring into the barrel of a Colt .45, and St. John's other hand was holding a slip of paper.

His eyes were lifeless as usual behind his goggles—just the hint of a light in them, as if some of the feeling within him was leaking out through a crack. As I took the note all I could think of was—

"God, I haven't even got a gun!"

I read the neatly written note twice, and then a third time as I tried to think of something — anything — to save myself and knock him bowlegged.

> *We're going to fly down into Mexico. We need this plane to replace the one you wrecked for me. You will have a nice trip, and probably stay several days—even weeks, so don't be anxious. And don't make any false moves, old thing, or I shall regretfully have to drill you.*

I didn't look around at him. I sat up straight, and believe me, my hands were in plain sight on the cowling. They didn't even clench themselves, although I was thinking despairingly of what Paradise it would be if they were around that renegade Briton's scrawny throat.

"Get thinking," I admonished myself, turning regretfully from that thought, but I was too mad to think. I was in a raging fury at myself, at St. John, at Penoch O'Reilly.

Kidnaped, by ——, from my own field!

And somehow I was as sure of several things as I was that I was sitting in that plane, two thousand feet high. One was that St. John, pulling his audacious bluff at McMullen, was really a Von Sternberg man. What scheme they had had originally I didn't stop to think of, but it was a cinch that the Englishman had walked right into the lion's den with that cock and bull story which was so close to the real truth that it was convincing, for one purpose. That was to trade on his acquaintance with O'Reilly to pull something for the benefit of Von Sternberg.

This ship must be an afterthought, because his own was wrecked. But it sounded exactly like Von Sternberg's idea of business and pleasure combined to go right into the lair of his enemy, and kidnap a flyer and hold him for ransom, probably. It had been done before with Army men.

And the guy they'd been after had been Penoch O'Reilly! His forced landing had saved him, no doubt. St. John sensed suspicion of him after his little eavesdropping adventure with Penoch O'Reilly, and had decided to take no chances and lose no time. They'd intended to do the stunt in their own plane, doubtless. Now they were thumbing their nose at the patrol from a stolen ship, with Slim Evans a helpless cargo.

The river was but a few hundred yards ahead, as my despairing mind coursed wildly about. I'd have given just one half my life to have that gun myself and be flying this ship. And there wasn't a Chinaman's chance for me to lift a hand. Drill me? That cold-blooded Britisher would have plugged me, if he had to save himself, with no more compunction than I'd shoot a mad dog. I'd been made a monkey of. There were weeks of God knew what ahead down there in the jungle somewhere with a bunch of —— spigs.

Somehow the Rio Grande seemed to mark my last hope for freedom. I felt as if it was the last frontier between safety and imprisonment which would be none too comfortable. I knew they'd hold me for ransom—and what a fine figure I'd cut, brought in like a sack of meal!

I guess it was that blow to my pride more than fear of what the bandits might do to me that got me into action. I plucked a stray idea right out of the sky, and I decided in one split-second to try it. In my helpless rage I would have welcomed being shot, I guess, rather than to take my medicine without a struggle.

I've got a great deal more self-respect than I have any excuse for.

I got myself together, trying to keep the stream of speculation which was racing through my head from interfering with the business at hand. He knew I had no gun—he'd seen me hand it over to the sergeant when I'd landed. I was completely at his mercy, but the gamble had to be taken.

I turned toward him, threw up my hands in a gesture of helplessness. He was immobile, his eyes looking paler than ever behind his goggles.

My hands were in my lap now, and without moving my shoulders any more than was absolutely necessary I tore away at the C.C. gear connection which led to the machine-gun control on the stick.

Then I took my chance. I've never moved so fast in my life. In a split-second those guns were pouring bullets—into the speeding propeller!

The gear wasn't working, so the shots did not synchronize with the propeller revolutions.

All —— broke loose as I threw myself forward, behind the cowling. The six-foot mahogany stick splintered into pieces with noise enough to make one think an arsenal had exploded, and the air was full of deadly flying splinters which could go right through a man. The roar of the four hundred and fifty horse-power motor rose to a frenzied scream as it raced along at close to three thousand revolutions a minute. I cut the switches automatically, every nerve jumping, and my heart stopped, it seemed, as I waited for the bullet.

None came. I straightened, and forced myself to turn around as my hand found the stick and nosed the plane down just in time to keep it from stalling.

A piece of the propeller had grazed the Britisher's forehead, I guess. Blood was streaming around his goggles and down over his face, and he was far from a pleasant sight. But his eyes burned into mine with a fire I had never seen in them before, and his finger caressed the trigger of his gun.

Did you ever know how it felt to be certain of death for a full minute? If you don't, you've missed nothing. I waited in agony for him to shoot, and finally, in the silence which was broken only by the shrill of the wires, I yelled desperately—

"Shoot, you ——, and be done with it!"

Suddenly a sort of wolfish smile widened his thin lips, and he stood up abruptly. I was ready to make one stab at the gun.

Like a flash he was over the side of the ship in a headfirst dive, and I saw him shoot out of sight while my mouth flew open and the air-stream strangled me without my caring.

The nose of the ship was down in a second, and I kept it in almost a straight nosedive until the frail bomber would stand no more. But I couldn't catch him. He dropped eight hundred feet, if a one, before he pulled his 'chute, and it snapped open in a splotch of white directly over the river.

Wild schemes shot through my mind like so many comets. If I could get to him I might slide underneath him—no, he still had the gun. I could take time to pour bullets from my guns into him, because there was a landing field on the bank of the river.

Crook, double-crosser, slimy snake as he was, I couldn't do it. He could have shot me, and did not. Perhaps it wasn't greatly to his credit. If he had, the Von Sternberg gang's end would be near. Even the United States couldn't have overlooked that little item, and the other boys at McMullen would have pieced in the story until it was a clear narrative which would force official action.

So I circled around him, and watched him helplessly as he slipped the parachute across the river, and disappeared in the mesquite a hundred yards back. I had barely altitude enough to make the small field by skimming over the river and stalling in above the undergrowth which separated the clearing from the water.

"This is one time," I told myself as I leaped out of the cockpit, "when international law can go to ——. I'm going after that bozo—he's probably hurt in that mesquite, anyhow. Gun or no gun, I'm going to take a peek."

My legs, which are longer than the average person's over-all height on roller skates, were covering ground in leaps that would make an antelope look like a hoptoad. I cleared the undergrowth in a running hurdle, and landed in the river

in a heap. As I picked myself up, dripping and cold, I heard a voice—

"How's the water?"

It was St. John, on the opposite bank. His face was bloody, and he was limping, but his gun was in his hand.

I ceased spewing muddy water, and did not try to go forward.

"Fine," I gulped.

"Better stay there, old thing," he advised. "Oh, by the way—well played, Evans, well played!"

"Not as well as I'd liked," I told him. "Pretty near got a fast one over, didn't you?"

"Bally shame that if didn't work, don't you think?" he drawled. "A topping joke, eh what? Go on about your business now, Evans, and be thankful you're alive. You won't try to break international law, you chaps, by flying over Mexico after me without permission, will you? It wouldn't be cricket, so to speak."

McMullen was only six miles away, at that. Of course, it would take a half hour to get the ships out and to the scene. It was getting dark, though, by the minute. Cricket or no cricket, it couldn't be done. I guess I wouldn't have been in favor of it, anyway.

"No," I told him.

"No use of shooting you—ship no good, what? Would have hated to, anyhow, 'pon my soul. I'd have heaved you out and opened your 'chute after thumping you on the head, doubtless."

"That's a kindly thought," quoth I thoughtfully. "Incidentally, Monty old bean, what the —— were you up to?"

"Things didn't work out quite as I had planned," he drawled. "In fact, not at all, what? Fred will be disappointed no end."

"No doubt. Well, I don't suppose you'll tell me, but did you have anything aboard when you came over?"

I liked Eric Montague St. John more than I ever had in my life—which is a tribute to the asininity of a guy like me—when I saw him, bloody and limping and at ease, standing there on the edge of the jungle and grinning that rare grin of his.

"I had a valuable cargo," he stated. "Thought I would be top of the deck when I landed at McMullen, and getting it to San Antonio would be easy, without the trace of suspicion. But when you ran into me I was in a bad way, eh? Landing at McMullen, with Percy there, would have been merely a matter of form. But you were going to search me, what? I was going to jolly well hustle back to Mexico when you hopped me, you know. No story of mine would have kept you from the old searching, eh, if I'd landed.

"You took me for a rare ride, chappie, a rare ride. Well, my regards to the lads, Evans—my very best. Perhaps we shall meet anon, what? So au revoir!"

Standing like a partly submerged pole in the midst of the Rio Grande, I watched him silently. Tall and lanky and languid, he disappeared into the deepening shadows of the chapparal.

I'd have felt better then had I known that we really were to meet anon. In fact, as one might say, anoner.

VII

AIDED by the car of a rancher who galloped up to see what was the reason for a forced landing, I got to a telephone in fifteen minutes and told my yarn to Captain Kennard. That gentleman's profanity melted the wires, almost. When he recovered he told me to get a guard for the ship and come on home by car, which I did.

It was after dark when the accommodating rancher dropped me at the gate of the field. I was about to go to the mess-hall when the distant drone of an airplane reached my ears. I'll swear that I thought, for a minute, that maybe we were going to be attacked from the air—Von Sternberg's minions had got me into a condition where nothing would surprize me. They seemed to work fast, furiously and without any regard for the amenities.

It was a De Haviland, however, and as

the landing lights flooded the field and the ship came down I could see who it was. The pilot's head barely cleared the top of the cowling. It could be no one but Penoch O'Reilly, who always looked like a flea in a freight car, flying one of those ton-and-a-half De Havilands.

I went to the mess-hall, and before the bunch could start firing questions at me I told them who belonged to the ship which was arriving. They were all at the door.

"I thought so," grunted Kennard. "Well, what happened?"

I repeated my sketch of the soirée in brief terms, and as I finished O'Reilly strode in with his ludicrous, short-legged strut. Beaman followed him.

"I thought you were off for the night?" Kennard told him.

"——, I didn't want to stay there. —— near got Jack and myself gray-headed getting out, though. Ho-ho-ho! Jack —— near fought me—"

"I should be back there now," Beaman said venomously. "Of all the —— foolishness! There was a little alley, sort of, through the mesquite and Penoch takes off, cocks the ship up and uses that alley to lengthen out his field and get up flying speed. We went through it—wasn't more than thirty feet wide, cocked up so steep—"

"As a matter of fact," boomed O'Reilly, "it *was* —— foolishness. We're lucky to be here. You were right, Jack and I was wrong, even if we did make it by the grace of God. That's that. Where's Monty?"

"He's toddling through the Mexican mesquite, to use his own expression," I said bluntly.

"Huh?"

It was a short roar, that syllable from Penoch, and I saw him sort of plant himself in that characteristic posture. His eyes held mine unwaveringly.

"Shoot!" he commanded.

I shot obediently. His face changed slowly as I talked, until it was bleak and cold. Every man was watching him fixedly, and there was a curious tenseness in the air, as if Penoch, somehow, was on trial.

"That's every bit of it," I concluded.

There was a moment of dead silence. It seemed as if O'Reilly was trying to control himself. And I, knowing in my heart that St. John, under the guise of friendship, had brought news which had shaken O'Reilly to the heels, wondered what effect the news of the Englishman's treachery would have on him. Would it make what he had said to Penoch have more force—or no force at all?

I thought for a few seconds that St. John's showing himself in his true colors had been the last straw which broke O'Reilly's back. The lines on his face were deep, and there was a haggard look in those indomitable blue eyes. For a few seconds he looked forty years old.

Then he threw back his head, and his laugh was louder, more abandoned, than I had ever heard it. There was evidence of strain there—a sort of hysteria, I thought.

"Ho-ho-ho!" he bellowed sort of wildly. "The war is on between the Border patrol in general, McMullen in particular and the great Von Sternberg, eh? Well, let 'em come on!"

I had the feeling that he had suddenly decided that whatever small opportunity he had to ease out of whatever was bothering him was gone; that the die was cast. I figured that Von Sternberg had some hold on him, knew something about him which might ruin him, and that now he knew there was no way to escape whatever consequences there might be. He'd have to face the music, and he was not worrying now because worrying would do no good. His chief ally, St. John, was his enemy instead.

In the rapid fire conversation that followed the conclusion of the boys was, briefly, this: Despite St. John's story, which under normal circumstances should be considered as composed of cock and bull exclusively, Von Sternberg really did plan to annoy us as extensively as possible. St. John's visit had been one gun to be fired, and the battery would follow. As Penoch put it:

"That's his kind, exactly—warn you

what he's going to do and then do it to prove how good he is! Theatrical, you know. Getting a big kick out of everything he puts over, regardless of the money angle.

"Well, that's another time his plans didn't work out, eh? Ho-ho-ho! Think he'll rest now, for any reason? Say, if the river was being watched closely before Monty broke loose, it ought to be inspected under a microscope night and day now! The Baron'll be on the warpath right."

"Much surprized at the way St. John turned out?" queried Kennard.

"Sure I am. I'd have staked my shirt on him. But then, he's a peculiar egg—you saw that. In for anything whatever that promises a kick—but I always thought it was anything that was on the level. It may be that Von Sternberg's got him tight, where he can't help himself. Get me?"

"He acted too —— whole-hearted, to me, for a man doing his stuff under compulsion," I announced.

"There's something in that, too," agreed Penoch snappily. "Maybe he was all for the deal. When a man has drunk a certain amount of liquor and has lived on the ragged edge of outlaw stuff for a certain length of time he often hits the skids. And he slides fast when he does."

O'Reilly said that with authority, and I guess he knew. Persistently the thought reoccurred to me—just how close had Penoch O'Reilly come to hitting those same skids when he was rollicking about the world?

"Telegram for Captain Kennard."

It was the orderly, at the door, and he handed the message, which had come through the town telegraph office, to the C. O.

He glanced through it briefly.

"This might interest you and Slim, Penoch," he announced. "Telegraphic orders from Washington. Listen:

> "*First Lieutenants P. E. O'Reilly and John Evans will proceed to Donovan Field, San Antonio, Texas, in time to arrive there by five* P. M. *on Friday, August 5th, to act as Army Air Service observers on the flight of the Navy dirigible* America *from San Antonio to El Paso, Texas. At the completion of their duty at El Paso they will return to their station and furnish the War Department, through military channels, with a report giving their opinions as to the possible adaptation of the dirigible type of airship to the work of a mother ship for airplanes, providing fuel for them in case of long reconnoitering journeys. The handling of the* America *and its stability in case of high winds or storms should be particularly observed if the opportunity arises.*—MALLORY."

"Well, I'll be ——!" howled Dumpy Scarth disgustedly. "Where in —— do you two bozos get away to be official observers? What do you know that anybody else doesn't?"

"We've got brains, Dumpy, we got brains," chuckled O'Reilly.

As Dumpy, who was so fat-headed about his flying that he had to pin back his ears to get into a hangar, was emitting insulting comments, I was wondering about exactly the same thing he had mentioned. Where the —— did we get away to be Army observers? And Penoch had warned me that he might be able to get the trip for us, long beforehand.

"That observer stuff sounds like a long-winded excuse for sending O'Reilly, with me trailing on at his own request, aboard that ship," I thought to myself. "Where does he get the drag, when half the majors in Texas would give their eyeteeth to have the assignment? What excuse did he have to get it, and why the camouflage in that telegram?"

Having asked myself these questions, I got no answer whatever.

As we went out of the mess-hall, the boys still talking about what the next few days might bring forth in the line of action from Von Sternberg, Penoch stopped me on the road in front of the

buildings. His eyes glowed like an animal's at night.

"Listen, Slim," he said in a hoarse stage whisper that could have been heard in San Antone, "I was wrong and you were right about St. John. But I was right in calling you for running him down, even so. In the same position again, I'd do it over again. You guessed right, but it was an accident. I don't take a —— thing back. No use of our bulling around like a couple of soreheads, though. If you've got anything in your system, spill it."

"Not a —— thing, except that I wish we were in San Antone right now."

And in those words the breach between the two of us was healed, so to speak. It was characteristic of Penoch to say exactly what he had—refuse entirely to back down.

"Me too," he answered me. "Gosh, I hope nothing happens down here until we get back, though. I'd hate to miss anything."

"I guess we won't," I told him. "I'm glad it's you going along, at that. Happenings seem to follow you around. You hold all records for missing nothing whatever."

"Ho-ho-ho!" he roared. "If you only knew how I got this trip—"

"What's that got to do with missing excitement right here?"

"Nothing, except that the excitement is supposed to be—"

He quit talking and grinned at me.

"You'll want to kill me, but I can't go any further—shouldn't have said so much. Unless Cap Kennard gives me permission."

I stood there with my mouth open. It was all Greek to me, but I'll be —— if I wasn't puzzled. Kennard's permission—getting the trip—he was talking in the craziest circles I'd ever observed.

"All right, man of mystery," I told him disgustedly. "I don't give a —— if you're Abdullah Bul Bul Emir, in disguise, as long as you can get passes to dirigible rides and bring your friends, like St. John, around to make things interesting."

"That's a dirty crack, Slim," he snapped.

It was more than my casual spoofing which drowned the light in his eyes and wiped the grin off his face. I'd reminded him of something. I could have kicked myself into a revolving buzz-saw, but all I said was—

"Sorry."

"Sure. 'S all right," he said, and went off to his tent, there to stay the entire evening.

Which was not a normal procedure for Percival Enoch O'Reilly.

VIII

AT FOUR o'clock in the afternoon of the second day following, cast your astral eye on two guys from the Border, standing on the western portion of the biggest flying field in the world, with their mouths and eyes open and their tongues resting in peace, for the moment. I know that I, listening absently to the flow of genial conversation which was proceeding from the lips of Ensign Jack Heinecke, was having difficulty in comprehending the true meaning of that two and a half million dollar tribute to the genius of Naval engineers.

"Six hundred and eighty feet long, a hundred feet high, and ninety feet wide, boys!" Henicke was saying proudly as we gaped at the great silver arrow which was careening in the chill wind that was sweeping out of the north.

To me it looked even bigger than that, although a matter of seven hundred feet put it in the ocean liner class. It was like a mountain, I'll swear, and to see it there, locked to the mooring mast, seemed like tying the *Leviathan* to a toothpick. That mooring mast was a hundred and seventy-five feet high and had an elevator in the center of it, but it looked like a sliver alongside the mammoth that it chained to the earth.

If you've never seen the *America*, except when it was in the air, you've got no conception of the way a bird feels when he's close up to it.

"Well, let's go aboard, eh?" suggested Heinecke.

We followed him wordlessly. A thousand people, or more, were milling around, outside ropes which had been stretched around the mooring mast, and I guess that all of San Antone had come out to take a look some time during the afternoon.

Penoch let out a deep sigh as we stood almost underneath the tremendous silver craft.

"That," he said in forthright tones, "is about the greatest thing built since the first non-refillable bottle."

Which was his particular method of indicating the admiration which he seldom showed for anything or anybody.

"Think we'll get off tonight?" I inquired, with a look at the cold, gray sky. There was no doubt that a norther was upon us, and as the elevator took us higher the force of the wind was nothing to sneeze at.

"Don't believe so," grunted the trim ensign. "I guess El Paso'll have to postpone their parade until next week."

"The *America* is the star attraction, at that," stated Penoch. "——, this wind is strong, and I believe we're going to have rain along with it."

A gangplank, which let down from the underside of the bow of the dirigible, was our method of getting aboard from the mooring mast. It led to a narrow eight-inch pathway which ran straight down the *America*, right in the center and a few feet above the bottom of the ship.

We had to hold to the railings to keep our balance as we looked around.

"This is the keelway," Heinecke told us. "Runs from end to end of the ship."

For a moment we stood there, just inside the ship, and I know that I was using all the eyes I had. High above us twenty great gasbags eddied around, set closely and covering the entire roof. I'd read something about them, but as a matter of fact I'd kept a general impression that the fabric covering one saw from the outside was the gas container too.

"Have the helium in twenty separate compartments so no single accident can lose us our gas," Heinecke explained. "The ship would fly without the outside covering at all—that's just protection against rain and wind."

O'Reilly looked down below the keelway.

"Looks nice and safe, doesn't it?" he boomed. "Don't seem as if you'd drop a few hundred feet if you fell off this —— keelway."

"That's no floor," Heinicke agreed smiling. "Just a layer of cloth hiding the ground."

The structure of the dirigible was a veritable maze of wires and duralumin struts. Imagine six hundred and eighty feet of flying-machine, ninety feet wide and a hundred high, with most of that cubic territory taken up by a tangled mess of metal.

"Got considerable wire here," I remarked, and Heinecke laughed.

"A hundred thousand feet of it," he told us. "Well, let's go down in the control car."

On the way down to the control gondola, hung underneath the bow of the ship, I saw a continuous line of little rooms, sort of, screened from each other by canvas walls. There were a number of tanks set alongside the keelway, as well, for gas and water. Everything was offset from that pathway running down the center of the ship and seeming to extend for an infinite distance.

We met most of the crew—nearly thirty officers and men—and except for a bite of supper Penoch and I never left the ship. Nor did any of the crew, except to eat. Instead of leaving just a watch on board, they all stuck there, and as the evening wore on, the Navy men became ever more tense and watchful. The norther, sweeping down from the northeast, was growing in fury every hour until at ten o'clock it was a veritable hurricane. Rain beat a savage tattoo on the acres of B.B. cloth which was the ship's only protection, and the wind lashed the great craft until it was careening wildly. The mammoth lock which

attached it to the similar lock on the mooring mast creaked and groaned, and the girders of the *America* kept up a continuous sound which indicated how they were being strained. Keelway inspectors and hull men prowled up and down the long ship continuously, finding it hard to keep their feet.

I slipped and skidded around the forty-foot control car, as I tried to keep my mind off the storm by learning more about the ship. What had seemed so solid and safe was now only a plaything for a sixty-mile wind. It was cold, dark as only a stormy night can be dark, and every resource nature had seemed to be striving to wrest the *America* from the mortals who controlled it. I didn't know much about dirigibles, but the faces of the officers and the quiet mutterings of the men showed plainly that they were worried.

Time did not lag, though, as I inspected the ramifications which centered in the control gondola. A complicated telephone system ran from the gondola to all parts of the ship, including the five power gondolas which were slung below it at intervals down its length. There were two on each side, and a fifth lonely one below the keelway at the rear end of the seven hundred foot dirigible. There were levers in the control car which could release gas from each individual bag, and a master lever which released the same amount of gas from all of them at once. Water tanks, gas tanks and signaling system were all worked from that car. There were navigation instruments, rudder and elevator controls, and all the paraphernalia one would expect on an ocean liner.

At ten-thirty Lieutenant Commander Gainsborough, captain of the ship, was thrown heavily to the floor, and the rest of us were knocked into heaps as the storm seemed to reach a crescendo. The shriek of the wind was horrible as the hurricane seemed to concentrate on us. Every part of the *America* groaned in torture, and the abnormal stress and strain of the tempest strained it to the uttermost.

"By ——," yelled Gainsborough, trying to peer through the water-blurred windows which surrounded the car on all sides, "if this —— thing lasts much longer—"

His words were drowned by a terrific rending sound. There was the noise of fabric ripping, and the clank and squeak of metal grinding against metal. There seemed to be an explosion of some kind, then a wild hiss as we were all thrown to the floor.

"She's got loose!" bellowed Thomas, officer of the deck.

He leaped for the ladder which led to the keelway, only to be thrown again. We all were. The control car was tilted forward at an angle of at least fifty degrees. We were standing on the side of a hill.

"The front gasbags—two of 'em—have been ruined, sir'!" shrieked a young sailor who had fallen down the ladder in a heap. "She bumped the mast after she got loose!"

Now Gainsborough was on the job clinging to a table. Orders were shouted in a continous stream to let out gas from the stern gasbags, to start the motors, to pull the elevators up as far as they'd go. The elevators and rudder were worked by wheels, with one steersman for each in the control car.

"She's not ten feet above the ground—that is, her bow, sir!" yelled Heinecke. "We'll hit the trees as sure as you're alive and smash her to pieces—"

"Let the water ballast go!" roared Gainsborough, and the officer of the deck himself handled the levers which let go two tons of water, held in canvas bags at intervals along the keelway.

"She's righting herself, sir, but she isn't rising much!" bellowed Thomas.

"Let three tanks of gas go!" cried Gainsborough, and in a moment huge gas tanks were dropped bodily.

"What the ——'s the matter with the motors?" some one asked hysterically.

Heinecke was up the ladder now, and his shouts were dimly audible to my stunned ears. He had the crew at their

places, it seemed, for he was yelling his orders in quick time.

"Head her into the wind! East and north!" Gainsborough was exhorting the pale young sailor who was heaving mightily at the rudder wheel while the engineer officer was trying frantically to get the power gondolas on the phone. The signal lever on the wall stood at full speed ahead, and the bells, if they were working in the power gondolas, should have got the motor started.

"By ——, we've missed the trees!" Gainsborough almost sobbed as the slightest of jars shook the control car.

The earth, despite the fact that it was but a few feet below us, was but vaguely discernible in the dim light cast out of our windows. And the mesquite which surrounded Donovan Field seemed to be reaching hungrily for the great monster which had barely eluded it.

"Trim ship!" Gainsborough was yelling, as it seemed that the dirigible, shaken from bow to stern under the power of that terrific wind, was listing badly. She was on an even keel, fore and aft, though, except as sudden gusts of wind shook it.

Heinecke came back down the ladder.

"There's a hole in the bow fabric twenty feet square, sir!" he reported. "The rain's coming in like ——, and I hope to —— this wind doesn't rip the —— envelope right off her!"

"The gasbags would go in this storm if it did," a lieutenant shouted, and plunged for the ladder himself.

"What the ——'s the matter with the motors?" roared Gainsborough. "Wilkins, haven't you got them on the phone yet?"

He stopped suddenly and looked down, and the next minute more of the priceless gasoline was being released to lighten ship.

"I'm going up—I'll see about the motors!" I yelled, for well I knew that every Navy man aboard had his hands full.

Penoch was standing in the exact center of the control car, feet wide apart, and such a transfigured look as I've seldom seen on his face. He was electric, somehow, and every inch of him seemed to crackle with the whole-hearted, ferocious joy he took in that mad flight. The howling of the storm and the vicious beat of the rain lent the last touch of weird unreality to the scene and made it impossible to forget that we were afloat in the air and, for the time being, helpless.

"She won't come round, sir," the rudder man was telling the officer of the deck.

"We're being blown southwest at sixty miles an hour," the navigation officer told them.

"Radio that to Donovan Field," yelled Gainsborough, his coat off now and his hair in wild disarray. "Hurry up, —— it, Evans! How the —— did the telephones go bad? What the ——'s the matter with the signals?"

"Wait for baby!" came the Gargantuan shout of Penoch O'Reilly, and together we staggered to the ladder and, clinging desperately to keep from being thrown off, we slowly climbed to the keelway.

With every step upward the horrible concert of the tortured girders became louder. They seemed about to snap in a million places. The air was cold and wet, and the wind was shrieking a thousand things as it swept through the gaping hole in our bow and rushed through the thousands of wires and made them sing a devil's song.

The rain was pouring in in torrents and soaking the once shining fabric. The cloth was eddying and rippling, distended as it was, as the wind caught it, and to my amateur eyes it seemed certain that the entire envelope would be stripped from its framework.

"——!" roared O'Reilly. "If she comes off those gasbags'll be torn loose, and this thing'll fall."

That was a certainty. Forty tons would drop like a stone. And those gasbags, even now, were bobbing about like balloons.

The crewmen were trying desperately to trim ship, if they had no definite duty, by disposing themselves where most needed along the keelway. They clung desperately to the railing to keep from

being thrown off. Hull inspectors, dragging themselves along, were darting their eyes about as snapping, creaking reports came from spot after spot along that mammoth craft.

It was cold and wet and dark. The lights weren't working properly. Suddenly I saw three men, dressed in blue denim, working their way along the keelway toward us. They were soaked to the skin—the men who had been in the power gondolas. I saw a fourth come up from the first starboard motor.

"What's the matter with the motors?" I yelled to the first one.

I had seen them barking something or other to all the men they passed, and the expressions on those men's faces was not the same after they had heard.

One had to put his mouth to my ear to make himself heard in that madhouse of noise.

"Motors completely on the bum, sir—ignition deliberately jammed up! Telephone not working, signals not working—nothin'!"

"You mean somebody ruined the motors deliberately?"

"Yes, sir."

"Great God!"

It sounded like a ribald shout from Penoch, but it was almost a prayer. My mind darted to our two parachutes—the ones we had worn when we flew up from McMullen and which had been brought aboard with our bags. We might have a chance to escape, no matter what happened. And that something was bound to happen I was as sure as I was that that hurricane, sweeping through the rent in our bow, was going to blow the *America* to pieces.

For a long second our eyes were fastened on each other, and in Penoch's glowing gaze I saw speculation similiar to my own.

"There's somebody aboard who's trying to destroy this ship!" I shouted, grabbing wildly at the railing as the ship tilted suddenly.

"He's either a nut," shouted O'Reilly, "or—"

"Maybe Von Sternberg's got a man aboard!" I interrupted without thinking particularly of what I was saying.

For a moment the idea seemed to stun Penoch. His red hair sticking up in all directions, his mustache and eyebrows bristling, his pugnacious jaw outthrust, he seemed to be daring fate to do its worst. I could fairly feel him think. Then, suddenly, he threw back his head, and that wild laugh rose above the din of the storm.

"Ho-ho-ho! Wouldn't that be right in his line? Bribe a sailor with nerve—"

"Let's go down to the last gondola while we can," I interrupted him. "See what's up."

As we fought our way down the keelway with hands that were blue from cold, my somewhat scrambled mind was running around in circles. It didn't seem possible that we were in this mess, that we were a thousand feet above the ground in a helpless, crippled ship, drifting before a storm which bade fair to tear us to pieces at any moment. That there was a traitor aboard, sneaking in his sabotage to destroy us, lent the last touch of horror to an experience which had reached a limit where I was inclined to laugh as O'Reilly had.

Not that his laugh had been hysterical. He was too hard for that. His had been the challenge flung to the world to do its worst—and Penoch would enjoy the battle to the last.

As we passed a group of four men clinging to the railing I heard one saying:

"—— it, the skipper should let out the gas easy and bring her down—mesquite or whatever! —— this staying up—what the ——'s the ship alongside my neck. All our necks? It's suicide, and by—"

The men were so taut with the strain that their eyes, some of them, seemed to have a sort of madness in their depths. And no wonder, with the might of the storm rushing in that hole to keep them constantly reminded of their position, and that envelop snapping viciously with

the strain. I wouldn't have been surprized to see any brace or girder bend and break beneath the strain.

"Some —— aboard trying to kill us all, by ——!" another man was raving. "Why, any second something's liable to—"

His words were lost in the uproar, and we did not stop our progress. Who was it? I could see the sailors glancing distrustfully at one another. Every man was above suspicion, but some man was a prospective murderer.

This thought brought up another: No one, save a madman, would fail to realize that anything which happened to the ship would put him in as bad a position as it did the rest of the crew. How did the criminal expect to escape if, by his machinations, he destroyed the ship which was the pride and joy of the entire country? He might have a parachute hidden away, but even a parachute jump in that storm was something to make a man's hair rise and his heart stop.

"He must figure on forcing the captain to bring her down in the mesquite—that would mean the end of it after the men had jumped," I decided. "It would blow away and destroy itself. But the chance he's taking! He must have nerve like Von Sternberg's himself."

We were at the small iron ladder, now, which led down through an opening in the fabric to the fifth power gondola. I kneeled on the keelway and yelled down into that black hole, through which the rain and wind were sweeping like an aerial millrace.

There was no answer, nor was there the sign of a light down there. I could see nothing, although it was but a few feet away.

I took a long breath and I shivered. It wasn't from the cold, either.

"I'm going down," I told Penoch, and he nodded.

His face, peering down at me, was a comfort as I gripped the sides of the ladder with a deathlike grip and started to inch my way down. I was out in the storm now, with a small gondola under me, clinging to a ladder while the wind seemed determined to sweep me off. I could scarcely breathe.

Rung by rung I went down that swaying piece of steel, and twice I had to flatten myself against the ladder and hold desperately as the ship was flung about. I dared to look down. I could see nothing but a vague bulk. Where was the light?

Then I sort of froze. My feet touched something soft and yielding. Never in my life has horror hit me as it did then—an impulse to scream like a nervous woman before I knew that there was anything the matter.

But there was. As I landed in front of the engine I saw the motor man, his body slumped down inside the gondola, motionless. As my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, the wan light from the porthole above was enough to enable my eyes to help my hands.

He had been hit by a heavy wrench, which was on the floor, wet with blood. There was a great clot of red over his temple, and dried blood was in his hair and over his face.

And after I had felt his heart I knew that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, he was dead.

I didn't bother to inspect the motor—I could have found out nothing. The light was not working. The man might still be alive, and I had to carry him up.

It was a full three minutes of heart-constricting toil to get him up that swaying ladder, a thousand feet in the air, but I got him to where the blazing-eyed Penoch could haul him up and relieve me. I was soaked to the skin and shivering with the cold.

Men were working themselves up the keelway toward us. Their faces a sort of greenish-white, their eyes staring, they mutely took in the evidence.

"This outlaw didn't finish his motor wrecking before the engineers got to their cockpits, and he had to hit this boy, probably, to save himself!" I yelled to Penoch, and my eyes roved from face to face of the men around me.

Any one of them might be the murderer —and that is a —— of a way to feel. I don't know any other experience calculated to make a man so certain of ending in the nut-house than suspicious horror of every person around him. Wondering who it was, what he might do next.

"God, we've got to get down!" howled a young sailor who had shrunk from the bloody body with anguished eyes.

"Never mind that!" I barked. "Get this body to the doctor, two of you, right away. He may be alive, but I think they crushed his skull."

As we started back I saw three officers coming toward us as rapidly as the careening dirigible would permit. We met and yelled our story, and they nodded, bleakly. Each man of them had two guns strapped on him, and they took stations all along the keelway.

Back in the power gondola we told our news briefly. Gainsborough, his ruddy, handsome face a lined mask beneath iron-gray hair, steadied himself against the compass and said wearily:

"Same man cut the telephone wires and signal wires, I guess. I'd give my right arm, gentlemen, to bring this ship back safe and to have this —— in irons when we land."

He straightened, and went back to his work. His orders snapped to the steersmen as he strove to keep the *America* on an even keel.

And he did a great job. They all did. The hours wore away in strained waiting. Every five minutes some one would take a look at the hole in our bow and return to report in clipped sentences—

"Getting bigger."

At two-thirty in the morning the chief hull inspector came down the ladder to say:

"The duralumin is startin' to give, sir. Number Three and Number Four are bent some. Wires gettin' loose all around. We'll do what we can to keep her tight, but this —— wind comin' is makin' the strain different than what she should be."

Scarcely a moment after the grizzled sailor of the sky had departed a young fellow, his mouth working, tumbled down the ladder, his eyes blazing into the haggard officers'.

"She can't stay up another hour, I tell you She can't She's givin' all over, and —— it sir you got to bring her down so's we can jump I'm going to—"

Smack!

It was the indomitable O'Reilly, his fist crashing to the chin of the crazed youngster, with authority enough to lay him in an unconscious heap on the floor.

"I'll put him to bed," stalwart young Heinecke said calmly. "I'll stay above, sir. Men must be getting restive."

Gainsborough staggered up and down the car nervously. His face was the weariest, most drawn countenance I've ever looked upon. Why not, with the lives of thirty men and the safety of the greatest dirigible in the world in his keeping?

"This murderer on board—God!" he said jerkily, and turned to his ceaseless vigil.

The only man aboard that crippled Leviathan of the air who was himself was Percival Enoch O'Reilly. No strain showed in his square face, nor weariness in the movements of that tiny body of his. He exuded vitality, and a savage joy in the fight. And he even raised smiles to the lips of the Naval men when his laugh rolled forth as he said:

"And I wanted this trip as a favor! Ho-ho-ho!"

The wind was gradually decreasing, and finally the rain stopped. The cessation of that artillery against the fabric of the ship was some relief to tortured nerves, but not much. Every man was on duty, and there was no officer to spare to conduct a detailed investigation as to who might be responsible for the sabotage against the motors and the death of the engineer. So far as could be ascertained, no man aboard had been seen acting suspiciously.

"Must be one of the motor men," Gainsborough said when the subject was

brought up by me. "I understand nobody was seen prowling around the motors except men who had reason to be there. Maybe it was done back at the field before we ever started, just to keep the ship from making the scheduled trip, but I don't know why. Every man of the crew will be under technical arrest the minute we hit the ground—"

"If we're alive," said an ensign briefly, and that was that.

TOWARD morning, limping through the air in front of a thirty-mile wind, I made my forty-ninth tour of the ship. High above me, swaying in the shadowy roof of the ship, nearly a hundred feet from the keelway, were the precious gasbags, the strain on their moorings not so severe now. That hole, though—

I stood looking through the opening into the wall of blackness through which we were lurching, we knew not where or for how long, and I went back to the radio room to avoid the sight. The radio had never ceased working, and the world was listening—or so much of it as was awake—to the minute by minute story of the trip.

I got a sandwich and a cup of coffee in the electric kitchen in the rear of the control car and felt a little better.

At five-thirty the storm had blown itself out, save for a thirty-mile wind, and the clouds parted to reveal a few pale stars.

"And by ——, we'll get somewhere, all together, if we have gas enough!" Gainsborough swore.

And when the sun came up it seemed as if we might. Below us was nothing but mesquite, but the sunlight made the men feel better. The navigation officer and the meteorological man were calculating.

Then a little settlement came in sight, and I looked down and, by the grace of God, recognized it. Allerton, a little mining town fifty miles from the Border, a little north of Marfa.

I was positive of it, and Gainsborough issued his orders without hesitation:

"Engineers busy repairing the motors! We go to El Paso to come down—can't buck the wind back to Donovan. Radio Officer, announce that! Shake it up, everybody!"

The ship was trembling from bow to stern, the motors were out of commission, and the town of El Paso hundreds of miles away; but the crew of the *America* were feeling better. And when word came from the power gondolas that new distributing heads and a bit of wiring would put the motors right again, it seemed a good omen.

The engineers were at work now in chill sunlight, and men were swarming over the bow to see what had happened. And we in the control car were dumfounded when a petty officer reported:

"She didn't tear loose, sir—she was unlocked! Lock O. K. every way!"

Gainsborough leaped to his feet.

"I want to interview every man of this crew, individually. Starting now! Officer of the Deck, take the ship. Get the men who aren't very busy first—man by man! In my cabin!"

By cabin he meant a little platform off the keelway.

I went up the ladder and started down the keelway to take a peek at the motors. Being an engineer officer, as I was supposed to be, doesn't mean that I was any expert, but I had some idea of what made a motor run, and it seemed to me that every minute lost might be the margin which would spell the difference between Slim Evans with his six-inch neck intact and "the late Lieutenant John Evans, who—" And I'd much rather be a live bum than a dead king.

The petty officer was bawling down the keelway, getting his men assigned to their places in the parade past the commanding officer. He was seventy-five or a hundred feet ahead of me. Three men, like monkeys, were high up in the hull inspecting the straining framework. They looked like spiders in the maze of wires, struts, girders and braces which made of the structure a gigantic web of metal.

Fifteen feet ahead of me was the particular little compartment, offset from

the keelway, wherein Penoch and I had fondly expected to get some sleep during the trip. Said sleep would have taken place in two hammocks made of netting and swung from an oblong framework of steel. The sleeping quarters, so to speak, consisted of netting between you and space.

The next second I stopped short. An apparition had appeared from that cubby-hole. It was one of the engineers—a big, broadshouldered, dark-faced chap that I had noticed before. He had a sort of bold recklessness in his face, which was deeply pitted with smallpox marks.

But now he had my parachute strapped on him, and a gun in his hand!

He looked over the side of the keelway quickly, as if preparing himself. Then, as a shout broke from me, he lifted his gun and a shot went singing through the ship, and the next second one of the great gas-bags was ruined.

I forgot gun and everything else as I plunged forward down that eight-inch pathway half a mile above the earth. He looked at me quickly as shouts came from all parts of the ship. Curses, and what amounted to prayers, burst from the men who saw what he was doing.

He dared another wild shot, and then, just as I was flinging myself at him, he dived headfirst over the keelway railing. For a second I had hold of his foot. His body snapped down and bumped against the side of the keelway.

I heaved desperately to hold the writhing outlaw, but the nearest man was thirty feet away, coming on the run, when my captive got his gun up and a shot whistled past my ear. As I saw the muzzle come down, and knew that the next shot must get me, I let him go. He crashed through the fabric below us and disappeared.

"He was going to shoot out enough gas-bags to make us come down!" I yelled, unnecessarily, as I sped down the keelway to a spot where great sheets of unbreakable glass were set in the fabric as a part of the *America's* covering. Through these windows it was possible to see a considerable area on the ground.

And I picked him up, pointing him out to the dozen men who were crowded, cursing, along the railing. The 'chute had opened and was a small patch of white against the gray-green chapparal.

By the time he was close to the ground almost every man aboard ship was gazing down to watch the landing.

"He isn't so well off in this wind, and with mesquite to land in," boomed O'Reilly, and a grizzled chief petty officer snarled:

"I hope he breaks every bone in his body and then lives to starve to death!"

"He's got guts, at that," stated a young sailor nervously. "Who'd o' thought o' Markwell—"

"There he goes!" roared O'Reilly.

We couldn't see the details, of course. But the 'chute, wrinkled and half collapsed, was a motionless splotch of white below, clinging to the tops of the trees. And so far as we could tell, Markwell had not moved since the landing.

"Hit the trees, got knocked and dragged from limb to limb and is just about unconscious with a lot of bones broken," Penoch said slowly. "Better get this broadcast quick—we might get him alive. And it'd be a mercy to get him quickly, anyway—there isn't a house within miles."

"Who wants to show him mercy?" grated a wan-faced, haggard-eyed keelman. "The —— murdering ——!"

Nevertheless, the radio was working in a second, addressed particularly to the Marfa flight of the Border patrol. The ships would get out, find the nearest landing-field and then keep him spotted until a searching party got him. It would take a long time, perhaps, for clearings were few in that country.

"I believe," I told Gainsborough, "that he must have figured that things were in shape now for a real investigation—which couldn't be made last night—and then it was inevitable that the possible criminal be spotted as one of four or five men who had been around the motors. Maybe some one saw him, and he felt that testimony would eventually point to

him as the sabotage artist, murderer, and what-not. And life in jail was the least he could hope for, with hanging most probable.

"In his position, I'd have done what he did—tried to finish the job of wrecking the ship to collect whatever pay I was going to get, and risk a 'chute jump rather than stay aboard and take chances on being spotted."

"——!" exploded Heinecke. "I can't believe that a man living would deliberately set out to murder thirty men—"

"He didn't," O'Reilly interjected. "I think he unlocked the ship in the storm for the purpose of destroying it, but he figured you'd be forced to come down somewhere, wreck the ship, but save the men. And a few minutes ago he was going to shoot out enough bags to make the ship come down, see? He wouldn't necessarily figure that anybody'd be killed, you know. If there were—too bad. But it wasn't exactly wholesale murder."

"And my 'chute got him down," I said mournfully. "God, I hope he's alive!"

"But what possible motive could he have?" Gainsborough insisted, leaning against the navigation table. "He must be a lunatic! Destroying this ship for what? Don't tell me any of you men seriously consider this ten-twent'-thirt' melodramatic stuff about a spy from some foreign nation and all that junk—"

"No, but I wouldn't be surprized if a certain bird in Mexico, a bandit who calls himself a revolutionist—like they all do—and hates America and everything about it, might not have bribed Markwell to do the job when he saw the chance."

It was Penoch, feet wide apart in the middle of the group, prepared to hold his ground.

"This item would be after Von Sternberg's own heart!" O'Reilly went on in a deep bass. "Here he knows—must know—that the *America* is going to make a triumphal tour along the Border. Big doings. Much excitement. Been advertised for weeks. He knows that it's the biggest dirigible in the world, new, designed and built by the Navy, has caught the interest of the whole country, cost nearly three million—all the dope. The apple of the airmen's eye, so to speak.

"So Von Sternberg, a German ace, a devil with more nerve, more audacity and more crazy desire to give Uncle Sam several kicks in the pants than he has to make money, just sits him down and says:

"'Let's just wreck their dirigible for fun—give 'em something to think about, and postpone their experiments a couple of years.'"

"Sounds fishy to me," stated Gainsborough, but it didn't after Penoch had finished with his biography of Von Sternberg.

"At that," Heinecke pointed out, "it's the simplest thing in the world to do—*provided* you can bribe somebody on board, and *provided* that said somebody's got guts."

"Which Markwell had," mused Warren, an ensign. "He wasn't a bad chap, at that—a little hard to handle, inclined to kick over the traces—but no worse than a lot of roughnecks. He must have got a pile of money for this."

"Probably hasn't got it all yet, and couldn't use it if he had," O'Reilly said grimly. "He was probably figuring on joining Von Sternberg's mob for good, after this job. Storm played right into his hands, too. Like to know what he'd have done in good weather."

"Plenty of possibilities," suggested Gainsborough, who looked to be out on his feet. "Let out the gas through the master lever, by accident or something. ——, I wish we were in El Paso!"

WE WERE, blown by the wind and helped by the motors, at four o'clock that afternoon. The stricken ship limped over the mountains, that great wound gaping in her bow, and staggered and reeled toward the Fort Bliss parade ground. And the sleepless, hollow-eyed crew looked down on the entire population of El Paso, I think, who crowded the streets and milled

around wildly as they flung unheard cheers to the gallant sailors above them.

Out at the parade ground there were thousands and thousands of people, and automobiles made a wide dark border all around that two-mile square expanse of sand. There were thousands of troops, too, and the colors shone brightly in the sunlight.

The sailors, even the officers, were excited, their eyes glittering as the long strain neared its end. The crew was busy, now, preparing for that touchy landing, but it was a happy, singing mob who stood by. Even Gainsborough, who had lived an eternity that night, fastened his blouse, combed his gray hair, set his cap at a rakish angle and was again the snappy captain of the ship on his own quarterdeck.

The radio receiving set was ticking off message after message. Fulsome congratulations were there from just about everybody on earth, and one of them, to officers and crew of the *America*, was from the President of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy, etc. Everybody in the country, I found out later, had been crowded around radio sets waiting to see whether the *America* would come through all right. Our radio officer sure had been a busy man.

A dozen airplanes of the Border patrol were frolicking around the limping, battered giant of the air as we came in, and none other than Dumpy Scarth, representing McMullen at the celebration, got his wingtip within a few feet of the control car windows and waved jubilantly at us.

Gainsborough brought the *America* down very carefully. He let some helium escape to make the ship heavier, and with the motors angled the dirigible downward in a shallow dive. When we were floating about two hundred feet above the ground and the same distance from the mooring mast, the motors were only idling and the long mooring cable was let down from the nose of the ship. Another long cable was on the ground, fastened to the mooring mast lock. The ends of the two cables were provided with connections, and a ground crew fastened them together. Then the ship was gradually pulled to the mast and locked there.

The crowd was kept at a good distance from the mast by guards, but there was an army of photographers and some other civilians who were probably newspapermen. The usual number of high officials, of course, were within the lines.

Word had come over the radio that photographers representing most of the papers of the world, to say nothing of motion picture news weeklies, wanted a picture of the entire crew as soon as we landed.

"There's no sense of you and me crashing into all the reception," I told Penoch. "Give the Navy all the credit—they brought the ship home."

And he agreed with me.

Don't get me wrong. I'm as flattered by publicity as any man, but I could see no reason or excuse for us to bask in the limelight at that moment. Besides, I was too tired, dirty and sleepy to give a ——. And there was nothing that we had done to help the *America* home except my happening to be close to that engineer when he was about to shoot us down.

Consequently, as the bands blared and the crew went swarming down the mooring mast, the elevator making trip after trip, Penoch and I were ensconced by ourselves in our little cubbyhole halfway down the keelway. We were making passes at getting our stuff together.

Now that the strain was over, O'Reilly was again quiet and depressed. During the height of our peril he had been sparkling with life, and it almost seemed as if he were sorry that the emergency had passed.

As I have hereinbefore remarked, my bump of curiosity is as prominent as my prodigious proboscis, which means not inconspicuous. And Penoch's unwonted glumness started the old bean revolving around the same old subjects. To see that guy down in the mouth was more

than unusual—it was a miracle. And it had happened several times in the past week. So I put the old tongue through a few warming up exercises, and gave vent to this—

"Say, Penoch, now that we've decided that we've been present at the saving of this ship from somebody that we firmly believe to have been under your old friend Von Sternberg's orders, how about spinning me a slight yarn or two about him that I haven't heard?"

"What do you mean?" he countered. "There are thousands of stories—"

"Tell the one about him and Penoch O'Reilly," said I casually.

And I guess he was in need of sympathy—which was another miracle—but he spilled it, finally.

"The little unpleasantness between us," he told me slowly, "was a matter of—of a rotten deal to the sister of my best friend in Mexico. In fact, Slim, one fine night I —— near killed him. Shot him in the lung. He's a bird without any ordinary decency. Get what I mean? Don't want to say more."

I nodded.

"Was I right or wrong in thinking that St. John told you something that scared you stiff, when he was bluffing us?"

"Uh-huh. Remember they had a revolution down there in 1921? Well, there was a bird named Manuel Alazara. Had a revolutionary band of about a thousand men. Bloodthirsty devil, but his men were crazy about him. I had a forced landing right after I left the Mexican Air Service and was doing a little payroll flying for the oil companies. Ran into Alazara. He took the forty thousand pesos I was carrying, and didn't treat me so well. That night I got a chance to escape; he woke up and caught me, and to make a long story short I knocked him out, got him in the plane and delivered him to the government and he was thoroughly executed.

"I left Mexico right then and there. Any one of a couple of hundred of his men would have shot me on sight—followed me anywhere to get me. I came back to the States, joined the Army again and got to the Philippines. But if it got noised around that I was anywhere in this vicinity my life wouldn't be worth a nickel. And I want to stay on the Border. Everything would have been forgotten by now, but St. John told me that Von Sternberg, now that his airplane smuggling isn't so successful along the Border and he's getting sore, was going to pay me back, now that he knew I was here, by spreading news of me where it would do the most good.

"All I can see to do was run away—ask for a transfer a long ways away from here, and then I wouldn't feel so safe. You don't know the Mexican idea of revenge. I—"

"But St. John was going to kidnap you, I'm sure, and took me just because he didn't dare wait any longer—"

Penoch nodded.

"I wouldn't be surprized if Von Sternberg wants me as one of his hired men," he said grimly, "and would hold his knowledge of me over my head to make me do his dirty work, see? He sort of thinks I can take care of myself, I think, and maybe doesn't think I'm so square-shooting, at that. Whatever he might have in mind, he wants to get rid of me because I know so much about him, I guess, and could help the patrol work against him.

"Maybe he just wants to see me killed. But according to St. John he hasn't opened his mouth yet, and I want to get to him before he does, if I have to go to Mexico to do it. When Monty turned out to be a thug I figured my last chance was gone. I've got to either get out of the Border country or be afraid all the time. I guess maybe he hasn't talked yet. Think he might want to wait and give me another threat or two to try to—make me do something before he has me knocked off. I could be a great man for him if I was crooked or scared into it—the kind he made out of poor Monty, I guess. And I—"

"Great Guns, though, Penoch!" I yelped. "I know you're in a —— of a

fix and all that, but didn't it ever strike you that you might fall in with Von Sternberg, pretending that it's on the quiet, and that you were acting as his secret agent while still a member of the Border patrol? Tip him off to something and then we'd go in and nail him right to the cross—"

"I know," he cut in, "but I don't think the chance of doing anything like that would be good enough for me to take the risk. In the first place, he wouldn't trust me unless I was openly with him down in Mexico. If I went down there to talk things over I'd be right in his power, see? And I'd never get back. I'd be dead—or so thoroughly one of his men that I'd be eligible for any jail in the world."

"I see," I nodded. "But oh, boy, won't this Border be a great place for all of us, except you, if he keeps on working and gets as sore as he ought to get over missing this *America* thing?"

For a second Penoch radiated delight at the thought of Von Sternberg foiled, I guess. Then he slumped back.

"And I'll miss it—either be gone or be dead," he mourned. "So I guess I'll go."

"Well, you've got a chance that he hasn't talked yet, I think, and we'll be careful about the guards around McMullen. When all this excitement is over we'll have a little talk about what can be done, eh?"

"Sure. I'm feeling better, getting it off my chest. Maybe we can spot some way out. Listen to the noise!"

"They've got guards enough around," I remarked. "I guess our yarn about Von Sternberg has had one result, anyway. The *America* won't be shown to many tourists this trip. I'll bet the Navy wouldn't trust the Secretary himself this minute!"

IX

WAITING for the tumult and the shouting to die, as it were, Penoch and I lay prone, just resting. I never have been so tired as I was then. I peeked through one of the windows in the bottom, momentarily, and I could see literally dozens of cameras clicking away at the crew drawn up in a line underneath the ship. Bands were playing still, lots of people seemed to be cheering, and finally man after man was taken individually, in groups of assorted sizes and with high dignitaries of the city, the Army and the country at large, for all I know.

"As soon as the excitement dies down and we can get out of here," I remarked, "I'm going to the Del Norte, get a room and a large-sized bath and sleep forever."

"I," stated Penoch, "shall be right alongside you. Well, let's get under way. There's a bunch of photographers coming up the mooring mast now—they'll be shooting all over the ship pretty soon."

In a moment there were voices from the control car and steps on the keelway.

"Wait a minute," I cautioned him. "Maybe we can lay low and escape long-winded interviews or something—"

"Good God—what's up?" snapped Penoch as there came shouts from below. "My God, Slim—*we're loose!*"

And we were!

"Von Sternberg, by ——!" whispered Penoch. "A couple of photographers—maybe more—were his men—fakes! Got in the first gang up the mast to take pictures aboard ship and cast her loose! She wouldn't have been left alone except for special pictures, anyway."

"Sh-h-h-h!" I hissed at him, and my gun was in my hand.

Men were running down the keelway, talking and laughing excitedly. I scarcely knew where I was, or why. If some one had told me I was the Duke of Yonkers, I'd have believed him. We were floating higher every minute—they had evidently let some gasoline go, and water as well. There was a system on the ship whereby water was salvaged from the exhaust gases of the motors, so that ballast was renewed when necessary, as the ship flew.

Cowering behind the shielding curtains, we heard four men go past us. They

were bound for various power gondolas. Evidently it never struck them that there was anybody aboard ship. Or if it did they had no time to waste on them for the moment—they must get the ship under way immediately. With the entire crew on the ground for a picture minutes before, they doubtless never thought of Penoch and me.

My mind darted to the airplanes below. They'd be under full steam within a minute or two.

But what good could they do? In a split-second I realized that the answer was "none." They wouldn't rake the *America* with machine-gun bullets; that would make the destruction of the ship a surety, which was the worst thing that could possibly happen. Just as well let Von Sternberg destroy it as for the flyers to do it themselves. All that the airplanes could do would be to break international law, under the circumstances, and follow the ship helplessly, waiting to spot where it landed. Von Sternberg's object—for I felt instinctively that he had engineered the thing—was to steal the ship and destroy the pride of the United States. He couldn't want it to use, of course, any more than a rabbit would want a Rolls Royce.

The outlaw crew could thumb their noses at the helpless flyers—until the landing in Mexico. And even then the Border patrolmen wouldn't shoot the thieves in cold blood. It would do no good—and birds that could carry out a proposition like this were *hombres*, crooked or not, who would get an even break, where life was concerned, from the Border flyers.

"There can't be more than half a dozen all told, I whispered to Penoch. "——, what nerve! Seizing the only minute when the ship was manless—and right from under the nose of all the guards in Christendom. They must be those imported flyers of his—some one knows dirigibles. Germans used 'em a lot."

"What in —— can we do?" Penoch said hoarsely. Once again he was on fire.

A wild idea struck me; I was literally incapable of hiding there quietly and waiting to see what would happen. We might save the ship.

Penoch agreed. A cautious peek showed the keelway vacant. There must be two men at least in the control gondola; the others of the fake photographers, in the power gondolas, which were widely separated along the ship's length.

We got out on the keelway and leaped ahead toward the nearest power gondola. Close to the ladder opening we gathered ourselves, and then, together, we were leaning over the hole, guns trained on a stunned young man, wearing ordinary civilian clothes, who had just started his three hundred horse-power motor.

He was blond, square-faced, and steely-eyed, with a huge scar running across his left cheek.

"Come on up or we shoot and shoot quick!" I told him. "*Prontol*"

Without a word he came up, and we put him in front of us as we forced him silently down the keelway toward the control car. We stopped him a safe distance from it, and I, barely able to talk, asked him:

"Who's in the control car?" Speak quick, —— you!" and I shoved the gun into his back with cruel force.

"Mr. St. John and—and—"

"Go ahead!" snapped Penoch, and his soul was in his eyes. His mouth was stretched in an eager, wolfish smile.

"Fred Von Sternberg, I'll bet my soul!" he said in a cracked whisper, and the stunned German's silence was consent.

"God, Slim," he breathed, "if we can put this through, I'd give all but the next five years of my life!"

"The second you hesitate in doing what we tell you, we shoot!" I told the German pilot with as much sincerity as I had ever shown in my life, and he seemed to have no disposition to doubt my word.

"Walk naturally," I told him after my directions.

With Penoch and me on tiptoe and him walking normally to make a little

noise, we came to the opening down into the control car.

"Von!" called the trembling German, and his head was the only thing that a man at the bottom of the ladder could have seen.

A resonant baritone answered.

"Come up a minute—this ship won't stay in the air more than five more minutes! She's buckling now—"

There was an imprecation, and the unseen commander had to leave his controls. He leaped for the ladder. We were waiting for him as his face showed on a level with the keelway.

I got one glimpse of exceptionally bright blue eyes and a big, handsome, lean face with high cheekbones and a wide, grim mouth.

"*Gott!*" he yelled, and just as his head started to duck downward Penoch's Colt spoke.

He got him in the neck, and as the German fell Penoch plunged headfirst down the ladder, smoking gun in hand. I pushed the first captive down, all in a heap, and followed myself as I heard another report from below.

I landed on the heap composed of the two Germans just in time to see Eric Montague St. John, disguised in horn-rimmed glasses and dyed hair, fall heavily at his wheel, shot in the stomach with his gun half drawn. All that had saved Penoch was that the Britisher had had his pistol hidden beneath his coat and could not draw quickly.

Airplanes were on the way up toward us, and we were being blown over Mexico, west of Juarez. Penoch leaped to the rudder wheel.

"We've got 'em, Slim!" he yelled delightedly. "Take that Heinie back to his gondola, then interview the other boys separately and tell 'em that their only chance to live is to obey orders. None of 'em have 'chutes; it's jail or a jump for them, and they won't jump! I guess we can get their guns one by one, eh? Give 'em these signals—one bell, half speed; two bells, full speed; three bells, idling."

In a moment I was shoving the Dutchman down the keelway, and got him back in his gondola. He was very docile. And at every power gondola my gun thrust down that ladderway resulted in complete capitulation, I got their guns one by one—remember that the gondolas were hundreds of feet apart, and that I, on the keelway, was protected from their possible fire and that I could have picked them off, had they known what was up, before they could shoot.

With American airplanes around us like so many hornets, watching the gondola men with machine-guns, Penoch and I at elevators and rudder wheels got the staggering ship back over that madhouse of a field and, with the mooring cable dragging, we succeeded, by more luck than brains, in maneuvering the ship to a position where it could be reattached.

The motors of the *America* were cut, and our crew seemed thoroughly resigned to their fate, when I grinned at the transfigured Mr. Percival Enoch O'Reilly. Our eyes met across the dead body of Eric Montague St. John, and the all but dead body of the huge Von Sternberg. We had found time to bandage his neck, but he was unconscious and really terribly wounded.

"Penoch, this is swell, although I'm sort of sorry they're dead and dying."

"Listen to 'em down there!" blared the indomitable little runt as the roaring of the crowd reached our ears. "And we wanted to avoid excitement! Ho-ho-ho!"

X

THREE hours later we had escaped from assorted newspapermen, photographers and well-wishers of various kinds. With the phone off the hook and a guard at the door, we were taking our ease in a room at the hotel.

"Well, you lucky little squirt, it looks as if your favorite enemy would bother you no more," I remarked as I lolled on the bed while hot water ran in the bathroom and I knew I'd soon be clean again.

"Don't believe the doctors," he told me. "That bird Von Sternberg won't die. But he won't bother anybody, whether he lives or not—that is, if they assign a regiment of light artillery to guard him."

"Which is about what they've done," I told him. "He's considered an important captive—by the Navy, at least. I'll bet Gainsborough would like to sail the Atlantic fleet up the Rio Grande to help watch him."

"And not a one would talk—of the Von Sternberg gang, I mean," Penoch soliloquized. "But from all I hear there isn't the question of a doubt that Fred and Monty and the other four pretended to be photographers, as we figured. Somebody told me they had forged credentials from a couple of newspapers and some movie companies."

"Sure. And I talked to one of the boys who'll be a hero the rest of his life," I interrupted. "You know—one of the camera men that went up in the same elevator load with Sternberg—"

"Sims," nodded Penoch.

"Yeah. Did you hear how his story got better every time he told it? But the net of the proposition was that Von Sternberg and his gang, along with the others, had permission to snap the damage to the *America* from the ship itself, and of course Von Sternberg and his bunch beat it quick and got the first elevator. They knocked Sims and two others on the head on top of the mast."

"Uh huh, so I heard. Ho-ho-ho! Funny, isn't it, about Fred's men, though? What peculiar ducks he gets to work for him. Look at that engineer that he bribed, some way or another. Was there ever a more cuckoo bird than he was? Jumping in a parachute in a storm like that, over mesquite—he was bound to be killed!"

Airplanes had reported that the Navy renegade was dead. Just about every bone in his body had been broken as the wing bounced him and his 'chute from tree to tree.

"A nut, sure," I agreed. "My idea is—and the various professional detectives around think so—that he was planted to help out the coup in any way he could, but he got too —— anxious to make a reputation for himself with his new boss. That trying to ruin the *America* by himself, under the circumstances, was crazy. He—"

"Absolutely. This El Paso stuff—the cameraman gag, and all that—must have been worked out weeks in advance," boomed Penoch. "Turn off that —— water or we'll wish we were back in the *America* again."

We would have needed life preservers in another minute, at that, but after damming the flood I still postponed my bath. Standing in the doorway, I said:

"Well, everything's hunky-dory except one thing. You got a little talkative aboard the *America*, and you might enlighten me as to the rest of the mystery.

"Say, old-timer, how did you get this doggone *America* trip, anyhow?'

"Ho-ho-ho I'm not supposed to tell, but I will. You'll keep your mouth shut. On account of Von Sternberg and all, and me knowing so much about him as a result of my years in Mexico, I got myself appointed to the Army Intelligence service, directly, and figured on fixing it up to go down and beard Von Sternberg in his den and get an information service working for us from Mexico, see? Help the Border patrol, and everything.

"Captain Kennard knew it. Then I was crazy to get a trip on the ship, and I acted like a —— of an officer by writing Washington that I thought, from vague hints and all, that his gang might be planning to do a little damage to the dirigible if they could, and that I'd have a good chance of spotting some of them that I had some acquaintance with if they were mixing around in the crowds—or something like that.

"I thought it was a cock-and-bull story—didn't think there was a chance of it, of course. I get the trip on that flimsy excuse and it turns out I was right! Ho-ho-ho!"

A New

Continuing A Novel of Old Iceland

YOU know—or do you?—that our spirits do not die, but return again and again to this world to live over in men's bodies. Here am I, therefore, in the body of Captain B—, wounded in the Great War and now slowly recuperating; but the strange thing is that I do not forget my other lives, as generally happens, but recall them much more clearly than anything which ever happened to Captain B—. So for my own gratification and that of Nurse Maryon I am setting down what occurred when I was Leif, son of Eric the Red, of Iceland.

A clever lad I was, for when but a little fellow I made the crew of my father's ship, the *Fafnir*, grapple and bring home a huge log, very valuable, for wood was scarce with us. But that log was our undoing through the trickery of Katla the witch, who had tried to marry my father, and hated us in consequence. She made us believe that Thorgest Skinflint would have us carve the wood into fittings for his son's bridal home—nay, would have it carved with Christian saints, unfit for any decent house.

On the way to deliver the work, next fall, I helped stone Katla to death for her witchwork against Arin the Peacemaker at Newlithe, whereby Arid was exiled and his little wife Aud lost her hand. But even in dying Katla called out against my father, saying his curse would yet fall on him.

And so it would seem, but through my fault. For having got the confession of Michael Craftsman, released by Katla's death from bondage to her, we were about to come to satisfactory understanding with old Thorgest, when I started a fisticuff duel with Bear Heliufson, captain of the warship *Flying Dragon*. The crew of the two ships took part, and Thorgest's three sons were drowned. Eric gave me a public flogging, as expiation for my offense; but Skinflint would take gold for honor, so my father lost his lands. Then with three ships and a hundred and fifty followers—men, women and bairns—he proposed fleeing westward to where once as a lad he caught a glimpse of a great unknown land.

NOW he made haste to start the holy rites which should bind them in stronger fellowship. Because we could hardly spare one of our thralls to be killed—not even Sty-ward—I had given my pet horse for the sacrifice to Odin.

Found World

By
ROGER POCOCK

When we had taken our places for the service, Eric as priest took up the copper blood-bowl from before the altar and with his brush sprinkled us all with blood. Then he made prayer and we knelt.

"O King of Heaven hear us! We thy poor creatures dwell in Giants' Home and seek thy mercy. We fear the Underground Fire and his red rock-floods which desolate men's homes. We fear the dread ice-streams, silent in the hills, roaring in the channels to wreck our ships. We fear the mighty terrors of the sea. We fear the menace of strong enemies. But most of all do we fear treachery which comes with whispered words and stealthy slanders to rive the loyalty of proven friends and scatter loyal allies. Guard us from snakes who come in the guise of men.

"Out of the winter night we cry for help in peril. Breathe into us thy valor, mighty Odin, thy subtle wisdom. By the flesh of this our sacrifice, by the blood of this our atonement, we do pray for a little measure of thy strength, that we may meet dangers with glad hearts, bear sorrows worthily, face death without being shamed and be right men who are the sons of gods."

We knelt for a while in silence. Then the thralls served the horse-broth, and the feast began.

Mother cooked sea-fowl so they did not taste fishy, and I remember that, besides the horse-meat—eaten for religion rather than for liking—we had a hundred smoked puffins, and much other cheer. There is nothing which can beat Icelandic pastry.

Did I mention that platters were still unknown in Iceland? Each man had slung from a neck chain a whittle or small knife which was used to cut from the roast. For the boiled dishes we dipped in the common pot with a sheep-horn or wooden spoon. After the meal basins were handed round the table in which we washed our hands; such finger bowls were used for ages before there were plates or forks.

Aesir had the high seat as guest of honor and, after dinner when I filled him the silver horn with mead, he stood up, bowing to mother who sat with her women about her on the dais.

"Surely," he said, "that horse of Leif's must have been in an awful fright about his fate that he must kindle a bale-fire to alarm the Isles. Well, good cheer! I'm with you, Eric, heart and soul in this quarrel, if only to get even with that sly old Heliulf for his insult to Hilda-Skold!"

Now we sent the women, save mother, to their bower, and the thralls to their

work with the livestock, while father took the high-seat, Aesir the lower throne, mother her great chair on the cross benches. She was wearing the falder of Icelandic ladies, a headdress shaped like a sea wave curling over to break above the forehead. Her state robe, threaded over with bright gold, shone bravely in the fire glow and the torchlight.

Ere our man-mote began, she spoke to us, showing the strength of our foes, numbering on her fingers just as children do when counting out at their games with the old numerals of some forgotten language.

"Thorgest's," she began, "*Yan, tyan, tethera, methera, pimp; sethera, tethera, novera, dovera, dick; yan-a-dick, tyan-a-dick, tethera-dick, methera-dick, bumfit; yan-a-bumfit, tyan-a-bumfit, tethera-bumfit, methera-bumfit, giggot*," and so on up to fifty. She counted Bear's folk, Snorri's thing-men, and a good fifty of our debtors roused to rage by Stir—in all three hundred and fifty. "In fact," as Eric said, "We're set 'twixt Loki and Aesir." Or as one would put it now, between the devil and the deep sea.

On that Steersman Smith began to wag his grizzled beard at us, and would have Eric shirk the summons for Thorsness Court, getting to sea on the first ice-free tide.

"Good man," said mother gravely, with a wicked twinkle in her eye as usual. "You have bone and sinew, muscle, brains and training to make a good escape and save your family."

"What less hath Eric?"

"Oh, nought," said mother, pouting, "nought less."

"Woman!" Smith struck a black fist into a grimy palm, hammering out the words. "Each day of waiting breeds a double peril. To —— with Thorsness and all Priests say I. Eric, what holds you?"

"Blood only," said mother gently. Then, with a sudden change of mood, she sprang up, pointing with gusts of laughter as she cried, "Run fox! Run! Gone away quoth the hunters! Run Smith! Run! There's a whole fleet chasing your skiff!" Then, turning proudly to Eric, "Stand Chief! Stand! Oh, neighbors, where's the sport in hunting a chief who stands?" She sat down, dismissing the subject. "My Eric comes of a stock which does not run away."

"Now look-a-here, mistress," Smith poked his chin at her and wagged his beard, eyes nearly closed. "I know full well as there be chiefs of steel like Eric, and men of iron like me."

"Aye, Smith," she answered, "men of iron with chiefs of steel to lead them. That is the test of gentlemen and princes in every age and land. For if they can not lead, who follows them?"

It was good hearing, as with the swinging sledges at an anvil, on either side the truth rang clear and clean.

"Lady"—Smith lost his temper—"I am not steel like this fool son of yours who whips out the sword for sport amid our sober trade, expecting good, hard-working men like we be to stake lives, homes, and childer on his folly. Call me right iron, Eric, which doth honest service. A plain man of my hands, a workman fending for his wife and bairns by use of the sea, by worthy craftsmanship."

"All that and more," said Eric. "Now, Captain Smith of the *Mani*, we all know your worth. You want my son Leif punished a second time for the same fault?"

"Nay"—Smith grinned at me—"the lad is still so sore he canna lie or sit. He had enough."

"What do you want, then?"

"Flight! No foolery at Thorsness."

"Aye! Aye! Aye!" There was strong support for that from all alike—save Aesir.

"The issue clears," said Eric. "Who has been asked to come with me to Thorsness?"

"Nay, but—"

"Way enough by Thor! Leif's quarrel is now my quarrel, and I attend the Thing. Alone if need be. Mine is the feud and mine the outlawry from whence there is no escape save in default of manhood. Stand clear! My wife, children

and thralls go overseas with me. Have I asked any of you to leave your homes and share my banishment? Nay, rather than that I have brought to our manmote these sacks of silver here beneath my chair, to buy you out, who, being my seaman-partners, own oar-shares in the *Fafnir*. Those of you who are tenants of me on farms or fishing stations take my gift, fee-simple of your holdings. You who owe money I release from debt."

There was a gulp of silence, then a voice from the back.

"Whither do you go?"

"A fool's question," said Eric sternly. "If any spy carries that news to my enemies we who sail hence will be ambushed and slain before we clear the isles. I say that we go, with a fixed plan, good hopes, great prospects and strong hearts. Who follows any leader trusts him without question."

Again, dead silence, but Hrut the Big, the man I had taken in battle, came to clasp my hand.

Then Chips, our carpenter, who was landless, loose-footed, and run away from a shrew of a wife, asked—

"May I come?"

"Aye."

"Men," said Aesir, "I'm not going overseas with my sick wife. I'm here to buy lands and housen of all who fare with Eric to Thorsness Thing."

Some breathed more freely at that, for nearly all had put their savings into land, buildings, fishing craft and livestock.

Now up stood Patrick. I wish I could make you see the old chap, spare and small, tanned, wrinked, bald on the crown, with streaming mud-colored hair, a servant with the air of a great chief—kindly, humorous, gentle, speaking Icelandic with a sweet, soft brogue.

"While I am out of Erin and my throne"—his ranging keen blue eye bore down our titter of amusement—"doomed to waste gifts of poesy and song on pagan savages withal, one hearth seems warm as another. Where you go, Eric, your fire will warm my hands."

"So you keep them off my beer," said mother grimly, and he bowed to her.

"I taste no liquor save to drink your health, and ever-increasing beauty, Lady Hilda. Now I would speak to my good shipmates. In the long-ago time, your blood-scattering gods and shaggy forebears were a pest in Swede-realm the great." He spake of Russia. "Being Northmen, which ever breed more bairns than you can feed, ye overslopped into the haggard wilds of Swede-realm the less, Dane-mark, and Norway. From there—bad cess to 'em, your sea-thieves and land rogues must needs be coveting and grasping lands of your betters, such as Holy Erin, green with saints' graves—likewise to Orkney, Shetland, the South Isles"—the Hebrides were so called—"bleak Scotland, Normandy, and eke hot Sicily, such time as they were not busied slitting Saxon throats in that accursed England.

"Ever they bred more babies than they coddled, aye murthered them when they had some to spare. Forever overbreeding and overflowing, your pirating, murderous, viking grandsires infested Iceland. Sure it serves you right that you inhabit this bare-boned shivering desolation. Which Iceland, a merciless desert after your own hearts, now fares like a ship with too many passengers, slaying each other to get elbow-room, while the stronger priests shove the weaker tribes out on to isles, and skerries, or overboard altogether.

"Now I am not standing here to scatter compliments to a pack o' rogues, but rather I'll be asking ye if any of you knows one little patch of grass which isn't occupied and squabbled over, or the least beach or anchorage not held for fishing right. Ye who are crowded off the mainland, perched upon rocky isles unfit for human use,—where shall your sons find farms or fisheries? Oh, ye may gawp! But had you the brains of men instead of the poor instincts of brute beaste, ye'd have thought that out for yourselves. Now, Lady Hilda, if there's any doubt about your keeping hale, I'm dry enough to be drinking your health."

Holding ourselves to be the noblest of mankind, and our dear country the fairest land under heaven, we all thought Patrick's speech a rare good jest, well worth the filling of the silver horn. Aye, and it set us thinking. 'Twas true, the land was crowded, and folk of the mainland jealous of our isles. What Patrick said gave us a strong feeling that all should stand together and not fail Eric, who offered to buy the oar-shares, give his tenants free-hold and forgive all debts of men deserting him in his peril.

"All of you know," said Eric, "that I am Norway born, a foreigner here, with not one kinsman to aid me in a quarrel. My father's labor, and some sea trading of mine have earned me good holdings, worth stealing. Yonder on the mainland are strong priests and other powerful chieftains, land-hungry, desperate to find decent landholds for sons and followers. All of a sudden they see the chance to get rid of the only kinless, friendless chief in Iceland, to put me outside the law, to seize my property and drive out my tenants."

"Whereas," said Smith, slowly and thoughtfully, "this Aesir here is cousin to all the robber priests ashore along the mainland. So you sell out to Aesir, and we become Aesir's men, safe as we were with you."

"Not on your life!" roared Aesir. "I make my living buying and selling lands. If you fail Eric, for all that I care you can go to ——!"

"I see," said Smith, "I think not for myself, but for my wife and boys."

Now Hotblack Smithson stood up, a tall man, swart and fiery, whose eyebrows met across a hooked nose. Boldly he spoke, and well.

"Father, you've told us many a time that in the days of Thorwald the Hersir as in these days of Eric Thorwaldson, no man of us, freeman or thrall, was either slain or drowned. But if our master goes which of us setting forth to fish or hunt or even to pluck the sheep would dare to leave wife or children on an unguarded island? You've told us since we were babies ever to pray for Eric, our best friend. Stand by him like a man or I've done with you!"

"Smith," said my father, "you alone of all these men had the manhood to speak out straight from the shoulder for the defense of your home."

Smith bowed down his head.

"Come," said my father, walking across to him and taking him by the hand. "Your son may have done with you, but I've not. All these men are my friends, but you're more like a brother."

Smith kissed my father's hand, then shook him off roughly.

"Get on with it," said he, and father laughed.

"Now as to the ships," he said, going on with the business, "we have our old *Dragon*, the *Fafnir*, the Wolf *Fenris* and the Moon *Mani*. With two other ten-oarer boats, the fishing skiffs—enough, you see, to carry all our families. I offer space to those of you who dread the future here and are ready to share my exile. I ask no man to attend the court at Thorsness or to fare with me to outlawry overseas; but those who come with me will get to work to-morrow, dighting the ship. And those who dare to stay out of debt, with free-hold of their homes."

Aesir jumped on the seat of his chair.

"Thor-aid!" he shouted, "for Eric the Red!" and cheering shook the roof for Eric, for Hilda, for Smith, for everybody in turn including me. Not one man stood out from following us to exile.

"Men, women and bairns," was mother's comment, "a hundred and fifty mouths to feed for all the rest of my life!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE DIGHTING OF THE SHIP

ON THE morning after the manmote, when Aesir had gone, Eric gathered the household at the west end of the house, and told us that all—men, women and children, free, freed or thrall—must get to work like a ship's company, serving in

four-hour watches, timed by the hour-glass. He named himself as master, myself as steersman.

Mother was steward for the starboard, and Hall the Hunter, Smith's son, for the larboard watch, each with women and children to get meals and tend the farm.

Smith's shrewd dame and the wife of our farmer on Brok Isle had the bower for work upon sails and nets, each with a staff, including the little children to make all sinnet and spunyarn.

Smith and Hotblack Smithson had a staff to enlarge the smithy and forge a set of anchors.

Tykir and Michael Craftsman—when he came back—must be master armorers, with men and boys to work helms and steel byrnies, swords, spears, axes, maces and arrowheads. In the armory they had an extra staff for leather-work.

Patrick and Catface Aesirson should need sixty hands for the rope-walk, to strip the ships and boats, scrape them with pumice, replace rotten timber, caulk and tar down, get the spars ready.

Chips and the carpenter's mate needed the rest of our people on casks for food and water, and the small woodwork of ships, boats and weapons. The timber from all our buildings must be taken to build pens and forage racks for the live-stock, decks for the large boats and the girding of the ship with a high bulwark.

"In Norway," said Eric, "they have a saying we Icelanders are lazy. We shall see. Our lives depend on getting a year's work done in the winter months. Moreover, there is such danger of attack that I shall post a garth-ward to watch for our enemies, to catch spies, aye, and to kill shirkers."

With that he stood for a minute, lowering upon my brother Thorwald. Eric called out the officers, allotting each to his watch or to mine.

"The Lady Hilda," said he, "serves in my watch."

She hated that, for serving in my watch she could have smacked me. I was rueful also, for my steward must be Hall the Hunter, Smith's second son, my enemy, four times my weight and well disposed to thrash me.

Yet the real fun began when Eric and I, by turns, claimed each man, woman and child for starboard or larboard watch. The men went quietly, but each mother must bring her children before she would move, the maids, climbing like goats, fled to the tie-beams and made eyes at me, the babies yelled the roof off, and there was such a skirling and shrieking, laughter and chatter of shrill tongues that I lost my temper.

I came to Thorwald, weeping in his bed, and sat on the edge of the bunk to deal with him.

All his life, he said between the sobs, he dreamed of being a hero, filling his hours with great thoughts and prayers to Thor, Tyr and Frey. Poor little devil! Yet when the moment came for action, it came so quickly there was no time to think until the chance was gone. He actually worried afterward on what he might have said! And surely he had plenty of words to spend, for now he was properly started he whirred and clacked like mother's spinning wheel, so I could hardly get a word in edgewise. Of what he had thought and felt, had said and hoped and feared there seemed no end—but I heard nought of anything he had done. Full] he was of intentions, but of deeds quite empty.

"What can I do?" he asked. "How should I learn to do things?"

I could have cried, I was so sorry for him in his emptiness.

My back was still one wound from the shoulders downward, after such a flogging as would last me all my life. I felt it had done me good. Maybe such medicine might cure my brother. So I took him out behind the hayricks, and there with my small strength did all I could for him. Lacking my father's weight to cure with a single dressing, I promised Thorwald to give him treatment daily after breakfast until his hide should be tanned to good hard leather or he saw fit to mend his ways and work.

Indeed, being rested, I offered another

dose; but Thorwald thought he had enough for the present. He would think it over.

"Nay," said I, and gave him a better thrashing than the first, until my belt was all bloody. "Now will you promise not to think it over?"

In haste he promised.

"Go ask father if he will have you for errand boy."

So he did, and the errands he ran took him farther afield each week until he was trusted at last with messages to Aesir, and to Stir, the buying of goods, the hiring of men and even the watching of our enemies. He still went mooning about like an ewe bereft and seeking for her lamb, but when I offered the use of my belt would turn quite brisk. Our men called him Thorwald the Helpless, a name which stuck for life.

FROM the beginning of that winter night there was such cold as I have never known, times of most dreadful silence, the sky one blaze of stars, or in still moonshine, or again filled with the many-colored, ever-changing splendors and shimmering silken rustle of the northern lights. But there were other times of screaming hurricane, when I could barely drag myself along the life-lines which were stretched between the buildings to save folk from being lost. Red light glowed from the forge with its unending clangor of sledges on the anvils, torches flared and spluttered at the rope-walk, slush lamps smoked in house and bower, smithy, armory and boat-sheds.

Six meals a day were served as the watches changed, and always a pot of broth was ready to warm a frozen sentry or help a fainting woman. Mother would give a prize for the most supple sword-blade or the neatest sewing, and fine was the rivalry of Eric's watch with mine for the best tale of work in a given time.

Then, in the daylight hours, when all of us were wide awake for amusement, the women and bairns had their practise at archery, wielding the sling-stones or fencing. All must be trained, said Eric; and they were, until in bouts with the men they sometimes won. So our lasses became quite used to wearing armor, handy with weapons, hardy against the coming days of peril and mighty pert, if you please, as I made my rounds, if I found fault with their work. When the spring came, with longer, sunnier days, all of us vowed the winter had been too short.

By this time, though nobody guessed our plans, all Iceland knew of some great adventure afoot, which brought young men, eager to join our ship.

Meanwhile, the ship and boats being launched, rigged and ballasted, then laden with water and stores, we began to allot the duties. Eric of course had the admiral, with Steersman Smith and Boatswain Patrick, mother and Hall the Hunter as first and second stewards. I had the twelve-oarer *Fenris* with Hrut the Big, my captured man, for coxswain. Catface Aesirson had the ten-oarer *Mani*, with Hotblack Smithson for coxswain. The three other large boats went to Thorwald my brother, to Michael Craftsman and a third man whose name has slipped my memory. The rowers, men and women, were told off to benches according to their strength.

The weapons were set in their racks, shields on their strakes. Under charge of stockmen—tail-twisters we called them—the beasts were housed in their pens, and old *Fafnir's* after-boat became a crowing, crooning, squattering, quacking orchestra for poultry.

The cows to be left behind came down to the garth and lowed, for it was milking time. Aesir was sending a man to take charge of these and to keep our house-fires burning with plenty of smoke lest our foes upon the mainland suspect that we had fled. Empty and desolate were the buildings. When we went back to what had been our home, the dead house came to life and haunted us.

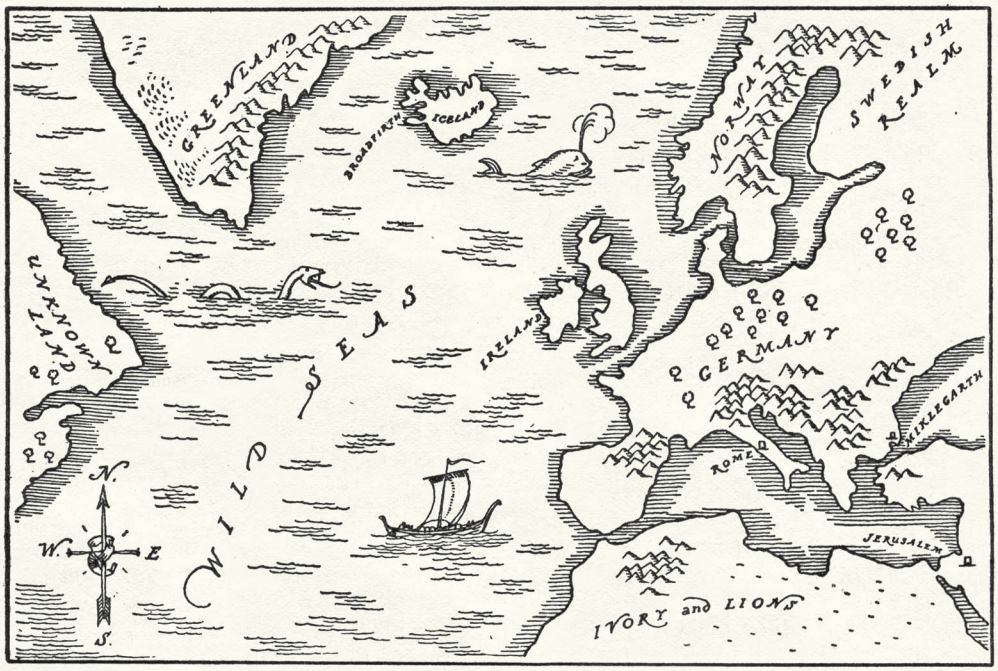
We had not intended to sail before day broke, but now a sudden dread came to my father. Spies might, unknown to us, have watched. If there were an onset of mainland men, our crews were ill trained as yet for any night alarm. Both of us

dreaded also the women's frantic mourning when it came to a last farewell. Eric called the boat-skippers ashore and gave us secret orders that when the women slept the men should weigh for sea. So daybreak found us not at Ericstead, but in Diamond Cove; there we landed the cattle and mounted a guard, taking great care that our cooking, done in a cave, showed neither smoke by day nor fire by night to guide our enemies.

While all our men attended Thorsness Thing the women must guard the ship. In preparation for that the women now manned the *Fafnir*, with mother in command, while all the men took to the boats. We used no weapons on either side, but night and day for three days we made boat attacks on the *Fafnir*. Five times we captured her, but in the sixth attack were driven off. I think it was then I first began to notice the twins, and how my brother Hallstein seemed to be somewhat girlish, but my sister Asdis a little demon when her blood was up. She grew to be a fierce, proud and very lovely woman.

What with the boat attacks and other sport, by the time we came to Thorsness our enemies were surprized to see how many of us men wore slings or bandages. We were too proud to speak, but knew full well that if these people dared to attack our women they would learn exactly why we were bruised, beaten—and scratched.

So came the day when we must fare to Thorsness. A thin rain drenched us and we were wretched at leaving, but the women showed great cheer and pride of seamanship. On the poop stood mother in full armor, like Freya leading the Valkyrs into battle. She waved into the air a threshing bat, not for her honor or in glory, not in triumph, but bringing down great whacks. We could not see where they fell, for that was behind the bulwark, but every whack was echoed by a shriek.



CHAPTER XIV

THE TRIAL AT THORSNESS

IT HAD been so ordered, between my father and Slaying Stir, that on our coming to take trial he and his people should meet us at the Tongue, the

northern point of Thorsness. So there we found Stir and hauled our boats aground. We numbered fifty-four, and Stir's folk thirty-six men.

While dinner was made ready Eric and Stir went inland, out of earshot, taking me with them. Stir was exceeding grave as he stood with his helm off, mopping with a kerchief his sallow face and high bald forehead.

"Eric," he said, "there's danger."

"When is my trial set?"

"This afternoon or evening. Never you mind about that. All shall go merry as a fuf-fuf-funeral. 'Tis that which cometh after."

"Here," said Eric, "on Thorsness is Truce-of-Thor, where no man may draw weapon, and I have right-of-way back to these boats in safety."

"I hear," Stir answered, "that Truce-of-Thor will be broken, and you and your people beset ere you reach the boats, unless we can divide the enemy. More, it is settled that twenty ships at least shall bar your passage seaward. Where's Aesir?"

We told him how Aesir had failed us.

"Where's Biorn Vifilson?"

He also had failed to come.

In turn we asked concerning Sword of Swordfirth and his five sons, with whom Snorri the Priest had been fostered. The youngest of them had been our seaman, speared in our sea-fight. The eldest, Leif Kimbi, had pulled the blade from that wound. And surely they would intercede with Snorri?

"Eric," said Stir, "I am the only friend you have, and I warn you—the mote is thronged with enemies. Of course," he went on, "I had that shipload of furniture for bribes, but the people say it's unlucky. Nobody dares to touch it. Some dangerous men I bribed in other ways. Full twenty others I promised to ki-ki-kill if they wouldn't gu-go away. They also w-went. You see, my friend, these beasts think they shall grab your lands, housen, goods, fisheries, pup-pup-pigs, gu-gu-gu—"

"All sold to Aesir."

"Aha! There's news, good news. I'll tut-tut-tell 'em!"

"Where lie their ships?"

Stir told us that twenty sail lay in the Temple-wick.

"I said your boats would come there."

That also was good tidings, and for some time I dealt with Stir about a scheme I had.

At the mouth of Temple-wick stood Snorri's oil-shed. As the tide flooded we could come there with our boats, seize the unguarded shed, spill all the oil-casks into the water and set the oil alight. So burning oil would sweep into the harbor and destroy the shipping. Stir was right merry at the thought, but said his own ships lay there and could not be spared. I thought him selfish.

My father walked as if upon the poop of our old *Fafnir*, three paces, a turn and three paces, to and fro. Then he laughed out loud.

"Stir," said he, "is there any among your men who hates me heartily?"

"Several whom you befriended."

"Among these is there one who would betray you also?"

"One. He is in Snorri's pay."

"Who told you?"

"Snorri. Not that my nephew loves me, but still he would not have me butchered by any common man. He who shall wed my daughter is a kinsman and a chief."

"Then why does he pay your traitor?"

"I told him to pay well lest, badly paid, this traitor sell me to Thord the Yeller. That would be bub-bub-beastly."

"So," said Eric, "if I send your traitor on an errand he will take that message straight to my enemies?"

"On that may you stake your life."

"By Milner, I will!" He swore by Thor's hammer, Möllnir. "For wit you well, Stir, I do not wish to see the enemy bring his fleet here to this beach when I would put to sea with a clear offing. Call you this traitor."

We were astonished when Stir called his own ship's steersman, good old Uspak, who owed much to Eric. This man

came eagerly and oozed with greetings.

"Steersman," said Eric, shaking him most heartily by the hand, "we place our lives in your keeping and call you into council."

Well Eric played at simple sailor man, the bluff and hearty mariner, and much he delighted in the part. It was the danger signal. That part he played only when he wanted to hide his sudden shrewd, unholy insight into the hearts of men, when he befooled some over-cunning dealer or turned an enemy to his own uses.

Uspak was charmed.

"Who wants new friends," he cried, "an he can have an old one?"

"You see," said Eric, taking his arm, confiding in him, walking him to and fro as on the quarter-deck. "Our foes," he whispered, "have spies out who saw us beach our boats here. But we old roughneck seamen know a thing or two, eh, Uspak?"

"Aye, that we do!"

"Now where would you have the boats hid till they're wanted, eh? Where should we meet our boats to get away unseen?"

Uspak began to think himself a marvel of shrewdness to fool such a seamaster as Eric. Nothing he thought of asking where Eric's ships might be, but stood there pointing westward, waving his arm and showing by his gestures how he would hide the boats under Milnerskerry, where we could hail them to us from Milner's Cove. Both men knew well that flight to westward would be against the tide, but Eric seemed to reck nought of such a trifle.

"Ah, good!" he cried. "Get the enemy fleet aground, eh? The rede of a true seaman! Now wait you here a minute, for I must speak with Stir and get a horse."

He came to Stir, and whispered:

"You're right—a traitor! Now tell me quick, how much does Snorri know about my ship?"

"He knows you dighted her at Ax Isle. He'll think you have her hid in Diamond Cove."

"Wheugh! That's bad." He sighed. "Ah well, it's all right—just watch me!"

He went back to Uspak.

"Stir grants you leave," he said, "to ride his own horse home to Lava and down to Bearhaven. Thence take a dinghy, scull out to Akrey—you know the place I mean. At dusk you shall kindle a fire on the rock and, when it burns brightly, cover it thrice with your cloak, counting five for each hiding, five for each showing of the signal. My wife will come to you." He took the sacred Odin priest-ring from his arm, the most precious thing on earth. "Give this," he sighed deeply, "give this to the Lady Hilda, as a token you come from me. You shall pilot my ship on the flood, under sail, with full strength of oars to meet our hunted boats. Remember that we pull against the tide."

Now our real line of flight from the Tongue to Diamond Cove would be northeastward, with wind and tide to our aid, through a maze of islands where we could not be traced.

Could Uspak the Steersman believe that Eric the Red was such a fool as to embay his ships where a strong tide would hold him at the mercy of a fleet in ambush?

But Uspak had no thought of going to Eric's ship. His only idea was to carry news to Snorri at Templestead.

"I'll go," said he, "so soon as I've had my noon-meat."

For a three-mile ride there was plenty of time after dinner. But then in Eric's eyes he saw how he had blundered.

"I'll ride at once," he said, and knew he could be with Snorri in time for noon-meat.

Trotting to the camp, this poor traitor got a trough saddle and a bridle with which he ran to the pony-herd. There he caught Stir's swift horse and, since the way was short, scarce troubled himself to draw the girth-strings taut ere he galloped off up the Tongue toward Templestead.

I asked my father why he had wasted the arm-ring.

"Oh, that!" he chuckled. "Wasted? Not if it saves our lives."

So Stir spoke:

"If Leif knew nephew Snorri as we do, Eric, he would not begrudge that arm-ring. Just think of Snorri when the ring comes to his claws. 'What? Humph!' he snuffles through his pinched nose. 'Would Uncle Stir send a messenger—humph—all the way to Bearhaven with saddle—humph—askew and the girth loose? Would shrewd Eric trust his life to this dirty—humph—dog?' But mark you, he's no sailor that he should smell out the foolishness of your father's message. An he thinks of a ship, he gets seasick.

"He thinks as a priest and snuffles over the ring. 'Oh, surely,' says he, 'no priest would part with the Odin-ring of priest-right—humph—unless of course he gets it back—humph—before midnight.' Young Snorri would never believe there's such a man on earth as parts with aught for nothing. So he knows that Eric gets the ring back; he knows that the boats put out westward to meet the ship. 'Get you the fleet,' says he, 'out there in ambush!'"

Now Stir snuffed at Eric.

"At Broadlair you called me an old fox, but—" sniff— "I thought I smelt a sort of fu-fu-foxy s-s-smell."

We would have joined our people at the noon-meat, but now a man came riding down along the Tongue, hailing as he drew near. Here was Leif Kimbi Sword-son, Snorri's foster-brother. He had a fine horse and rode gallantly in a fair-stained saddle. Golden baldric and strings had his sword, and a glittering scabbard. His spear was inlaid with gold, his shield of dark blue, much gilded. Well cut and Norway made were his brightly colored clothes. To see what we had to eat he set his horse curvetting round the fires, but grout was not to his taste and he always made much of himself, so he said he was dining with Snorri.

He came in haste, he told us, yet stayed to gossip and seemed to have no business. Stir set him roaring with laughter over the sale of Eric's goods to Aesir, and showed how Thorgest Skinflint would weep on finding there was no plunder. With that news Leif Kimbi rode away, saying that Snorri's mother would be in a rage if he came late to dinner. Over his shoulder he called back to say he could not be with us at the court, but his brothers sent their love, and he wished us luck.

"So there rides Snorri's spy," said Stir, "to tell the enemy that all the plunder they hoped for is sold to Aesir. For that will many men forsake old Thorgest. 'Unless there's lu-loot,' they'll moan, 'what's the gu-gu-good of being ku-ku-killed?'"

But my father had run to the boats and was getting the boat-wards to put them into hiding behind Sugand's Isle, until at nightfall they came in to wait for us. He took good care that Snorri's spy should see the boats put off.

Stir had much silver of ours; some was left with a trusty man at the camp, while enough was carried with us to pay our blood-gelt.

It being high noon, with the sun over Holy Fell, we broke up the dinner, marshaled our men and set out on foot for the Thing-field. Stir, Eric and I, who had had no dinner, ate some bread as we marched, and so an hour's walking brought us over a ridge from whence we looked out across the Temple Meads.

WHEN we marched down to his house Snorri was mounted, marshaling his Thing-men, but he rode forward apart from them to receive us. He rode a fine black mare, but was wrapped in a shabby black cape and was bare-headed, his weapons very plain, his worn trough-saddle dingy; a fair and slender youth, with delicate, pinched features and sun-gold mane of hair, the first red fluff of a beard and piercing, burning eyes, thin hard lips, an air of power restrained. In his bearing he seemed meek, almost humble, his seat in the saddle a slouch, but none could doubt that the man was able, far-seeing, cold as death, enduring in wrath and very deep in hatred.

Now all that father had told me I could see; how this chief of boundless largesse never gave aught for love or happiness in giving, but sold his bounty piece by piece, eagerly counting his full money's worth in men's good-will, in men's obedience, in subtle influence, in secret authority and every kind of power. He gave even words with a grudge. With his whole might he hated and envied the power of other chiefs, and spoke with biting scorn if rival men won love among their fellows. Later in life he had his rivals murdered—Arnkel the Generous, aye and Slaying Stir. I know that when he spoke my blood ran cold, so deadly was the malice with which he hated Eric—for being loved.

And there was Eric's arm-ring tied to his saddle-bow! As he rode forward he hid it under his rein hand.

"Snorri," said Eric, "I give you greeting. What grudge have you against me?"

"Priest," answered Snorri, "there's—humph—too much slaying in Broadfirth. I wish you gone."

"That is, you wish me slain?"

"Gone, I said, not slain."

"Tonight," said Eric, "as the tide serves, I'm leaving Iceland."

"That is well."

"Snorri," said Stir, "if my friend escapes to the main sea, you may count me on your side next time you get into trouble."

"Eh? Are you not my—humph—kinsman?"

"If Eric does not escape, count me your enemy so long as we both shall live."

"I understand," said Snorri very stiff, "the value of your friendship."

He turned away to lead his Thing-men.

"Pup-pup-pity," said Stir to Eric, as we marched toward the Thing-field, "my nephew would be a great chief if he were not a coward."

When we reached the Thing-field the court was sitting and we had long to wait. A bench of thirty-six judges yawned over a suit of Vigfus against Snorri. It was sooth that Snorri's shepherd ought not to have stolen that ewe of the Vigfus brand. It was true that Vigfus' shepherd, Biorn Arm-in-Sling, did wrong to strike Snorri's thief. It served Biorn right that Snorri's bailiff with stroke of sword on the arm disabled Biorn for life.

"I set the blow against the wound," claimed Snorri, and so the court gave judgment, with Vigfus to pay costs. It is very wrong of a poor man to cry 'thief' at so rich a chief. What else could Vigfus expect? Still I had time to send a man to steal my father's arm-ring from Snorri's saddle.

At last our case was called.

On benches, three deep, sat judges for thirty-six districts of our Broadfirth province. Just behind these, in a great throne at the top of the Hill of Laws, sat Arnkel, the priest, as speaker of the law—he who befriended Arin of Mewlithe in justice on Odd and Katla. I loved him well.

In front of the judges, on a little altar, lay Arnkel's Odin-ring on which the oaths were taken. Facing that altar on the judge's right was a stool for Thorgest Skinflint, who wore his funny scaled armor and winged helm, but drooped in his seat, his chin set on his sword-hilt, an aged, weary man. With him were two powerful elderly chiefs, the sons of Thord the Yeller, and at their back were ninety men well armed. At Thorgest's elbow stood Snorri, as his counsel, wrapped in that old black cape.

The judges had on their left my father as defendant, and Stir his counsel. In all the gathering I saw no stronger or more able men than these, as they stood talking with the nearest of the judges who sat as foremen of them for the defence.

From post to post around this court was stretched the hallowed cord, about breast high, a token that the ground within was sacred. Outside this cord and close behind our leaders I placed our men, a solid square walled about with shields, points grounded. The outer line of men were on one knee, the inner lines were standing, and all weapons ready. This made a shield-burg not easily attacked.

For six months Thorgest's woodstranders and they of the *Flying Dragon* had spent their time explaining how much we Islanders were in the wrong. Our only spokesman had been Slaying Stir—not very soothing. So now our little phalanx held aloof, on guard, alert, surrounded by the two thousand mainlanders who stormed and cheered for Snorri, for Thorgest and the Thordsons.

This was the first Thing I had seen, a little affair compared with the great Althing of Iceland at Thing-valla, but to my eyes wonderful. The sunshine was bright even on the yellow-gray homespun of our common clothes, but caught a fine glint from streaming hair, from leather jerkins, and a glitter and blaze of light from burnished helms, chain mail, spearheads and blazoned shields.

Snorri's first motion accused me. A shield-burg was unlawful! Stir countered him, asking if shields were weapons of attack. Arnkel gave rede as speaker of the law that we stood within our right.

Next Snorri claimed that the men of Arin's part in the Mewlithe slayings were outlawed. Therefore should Leif son of Eric be taken hence and slain. Stir asked how much I owed in blood-gelt, and paid the money. So twice was Snorri worsted before his suit began.

Thorgest's nine nearest neighbors were sworn as a jury of inquest; a long dull business that.

Snorri came to the altar citing Eric to hear his oath that he should plead the suit of Thorgest and the Thordsons in fair and lawful ways.

He bade Eric listen to proceedings, all snuffled through his nose, which seemed to have no end, before the jurors could be sent off to their inquest. Then, with a stealthy cattish malice he called upon Eric to challenge.

Eric yawned.

Now Stir for the defense—

"Doesn't it seem rather a pup-pup-pity," he stuttered, "that fuf-fuf-five of these nine gentlemen of the inquest are Thorgest's kinsmen?"

Being only a boy in those days I lacked the Icelandic zest in points of law, but this was rousing me. Who had summoned these jurors? Not Snorri, for it was done directly after the slayings. Not Thorgest. Our side, in pity for the desolate old man, reft of his sons, had sent for all his neighbors. Then Thorgest had selected from these, Snorri had checked the selection, but it was artful old Stir who spent the winter grubbing into their pedigrees. When the court examined them, four were found to be Thorgest's kin. The speaker ruled them out of court for bias, with heavy fines against Thorgest. Then a fifth juror was found to be Snorri's kinsman.

"Sharp practise this," ruled Arnkel, "and yet within the law. The inquest hath still a quorum, the suit is still alive."

There was a deep hum of approval over Stir's skill at law, which now had crippled Snorri.

So came a lull until Snorri, in a vile temper, brought in what was left of his inquest.

"I take witness to this," he snuffled, "that I bid those neighbors on the inquest—humph—in the suit which I set on foot against Eric—humph—of Ax Isle, now to—humph—utter their finding; and to find it either against him or for him. I bid them by a—humph—lawful bidding before the court, so that the judges may hear it."

So one of them uttered the finding and all the rest confirmed it.

"We take witness that we take now an oath upon this doom-ring, a lawful oath. We pray Thor to help us.

"We were summoned by Thorgest the Old, and by Eyolf and Mord the sons of Thord, who summoned nine of us on this inquest, but four have been challenged and set aside. Now we who are left are bound by law to utter our finding. We were summoned to bear this witness as to whether Michael Craftsman and Frogan, the bowsmen of the *Fafnir*, did slay Tind, Neal and Gunnar, Thorgest's sons, together with Hallstein Brynyulfson, by the hurling of a mooring stone through their boat, whereby they drowned; and

whether Smith Hallson, steersman of the *Fafnir* did slay Thrain the Thrall with a brain or a body or a marrow wound, which proved a death wound, and from which Thrain the Thrall got his death; and whether Eyolf Aesirson, Catface, did—"

And so on through all the woundings—naming the hurt man, the wound and the assailant.

All this had to be carefully rehearsed and word perfect, for if an assailant were named first and the hurt man second the whole suit would fall to the ground. Killings and lawsuits were the two national sports of Iceland.

There was a hum of applause when the foreman of the inquest finished without one blunder. So he started upon the second rigmarole:

"And we do bear witness that Michael Craftsman and Frogan the Thrall did slay—" and so forth all over again, through the whole tale of killings and woundings.

The judges had to commit all that to memory, for it would be their work to assess the blood-gelt. The foreman went on in a sort of wailing chant to the set form of words.

Afterward came another lullaby which set me to sleep all standing. It was Snorri's summing-up, something like this:

"I take—humph—to this: That I do call upon Eric Thorwaldson, surnamed the—humph—" then, with a sneer at Stir—"or that man who has to undertake the—humph—lawful defense which Eric has handed over to him—" that's a nasty one! he seemed to suggest—"to begin his defense to this—humph—which I have set on foot against him. For now all the steps and proofs have been brought forward which belong by law to this suit."

The Thordsons patted Snorri. The neighbors said—

"Smart man!"

"I wist I could speak like that."

"He'd make a prayer into venom!"

"Now list to Stuttering Stir make wreck of Eric's defense."

"This will be total outlawry for Eric."

The sun was over Snow Fell when Stir took up the defense. He knew no forms of law, no jargon of the law-men and nothing about the work which he had to do. As he blundered and floundered on his stuttering way he would have been smashed by Snorri time and again but for the foreman for defense upon the bench of judges, who prompted him in whispers.

Now Snorri demanded rede of the speaker to rule Stir out because he was being prompted by a—humph—judge. There was the crux of the whole trial, when the defense was breaking, and if it broke Snorri would claim full outlawry and all men get lawful right in slaying us.

Arnkel ruled—

"It is not law for a judge to prompt the counsel unless the bench of judges claims the right."

So the matter went to vote among the judges, and there was sharp debate. In the end they ruled their foreman right in guiding Stir against a counsel who had sought to swindle the court with an inquest of kinsmen instead of an inquest of neighbors.

Now began Stir to rally from defeat, and it was said that he always seemed to be beaten when he flashed out his death-stroke. One by one he took the five witnesses and with each man would gossip—as if they talked pig in the farmyard—friendly, neighborly, seductive, leading him up to fearless talk of facts. The first witness had been milking the cows when he got a message from Stir, saying, "Come quick to Broadlair. There has been fighting between two ships in the haven." The second witness had been fetching buckets of water for the good wife's laundering when word came, "There had been a battle."

"I thought," said Stir, cocking an eye up at Arnkel, "that witnesses ought to be more or less pup-pup-pup-p-present, shouldn't they?"

Snorri claimed this to be out of—humph, but Arnkel ruled for Stir and ruled the witnesses out of court.

Of the nine witnesses only three remained, and Stir asked—

"Is this a quorum?"

"Three witnesses," ruled Arnkel, "stand unshaken who saw the very facts, and the suit lives."

"Does it?" asked Stir very humbly, as if he were beaten at last. "Of course I know I'm stupid, and I may be deaf, but of these three strays from the flock of witnesses, I heard none mention Eric as defendant. It seemed to me so very rude of them to leave my poor friend out of the case altogether after the trouble he's taken, and bring no evidence against the very man who stands for trial."

The judges gasped, Snorri went white as death, Arnkel stood up from his throne.

"They mum-mum-mentioned all sorts of pup-people too," said Stir reproachfully, "but of course they cuk-cuk-couldn't very well bear witness against my client, b-because he w-w-wasn't there!"

Then with a ringing challenge—

"Does the suit live?"

"Nay," cried the speaker of the law. "How can it be law to bring evidence against one man for punishment of another!

"No witness was brought against Eric Thorwaldson. The suit falls dead!"

Stir made a low bow to Snorri.

"My learned fuf-fuf-fuf-f-friend!"

It was as if a volcano had burst, so wild were the passions loosed, so deafening the roar. Thorgest shook his fist in Snorri's face; the men of Snorri, Thorgest and the Thordsons, accused Arnkel as having betrayed the law; and our small phalanx cheered Stir until we tore our throats. Capsizing the benches, the judges formed two sides in debate. Then Eric took our bag of silver brought for the blood-gelt and laid it upon the altar. He lifted the Odin-ring with both hands in the red light of the setting sun, and so stood praying until men hushed their clamor waiting for his rede.

Arnkel bade the judges take their seats, and in the silence called upon Eric, giving him leave to speak if he had aught to say.

Snorri knew the law-forms, Stir knew the law, but Eric alone knew men.

"Pardon my rough sea manners, Thorgest," he spoke quietly, offering no offense, but frank and manful. "Have you been given justice?"

"Not while you live!"

"Nor am I given justice. In great Thor's name I say that the law of the people is not a parcel of quibbles, but justice 'twixt man and man. I came not here to juggle with facts like Snorri, the conjurer, to turn the point of truth like my dear counsel, or use a supple tongue where the straight word fails, or shirk my deeds, or lie, or cheat the court. I was not bred to this law which lets the sneaks go free. I was bred to seamanship out on the just sea which makes a man or drowns him according to his worth. No man can live at sea who shirks its claims upon manhood.

"Thorgest, last autumn ill thoughts arose between us."

"Through your fault!" cried Thorgest.

"Through my fault," said Eric, "that I did not respect your age. I steered for my best friend, Stir, a good friend of yours, to handsell peace between us. Before I could bear up again to Broadlair, your sons came with a ship, *The Flying Dragon*, which lay beside my *Fafnir*. The men of these two ships became embroiled; they would have fought until one ship or the other struck, but that I came with Stir, and we parted them. Now am I master of my ship, her deeds are my deeds, the guilt of her men is my guilt, and for the slain I came here to offer were-gelt that I may be atoned. The gelt by law is about nine hundred in silver, so I have laid two thousand there on the altar.

"It is the custom of Iceland that when a man is deeply embroiled in feuds and slayings he shall fare over the seas for three years until blood cools and reason takes the place of wrath. This night I and my household sail from Iceland."

Now stood up from the judges their

foreman for the defense who asked the speaker if it was in the law that the bench give verdict.

"No suit, no verdict," ruled the speaker. "Yet were there certain slayings and woundings of men, claimed by Eric son of Thorwald, who is untried, but yet had offered self-doom in presence of this court. The bench of judges may within the law accept or refuse this doom."

THE sun had set, and now in the slow gathering of night I saw the shipping as they got under weigh to fare down Temple Firth and lay their ambush for our boats off the west point of Thorsness. The light air and the strong tide being set against them, they would not get far until the ebb began to give them aid at moonrise. They reckoned that our boats would get no farther, or they might take our ship.

"They may catch crabs," said Patrick, which set a titter of laughter through our ranks.

My father's plot had made escape quite sure—if we could win to our boats. But could we? That peril made us grave.

Their foreman for defense gave out the judges' verdict—that Eric Thorwaldson's blood-gelt and a three-years' exile should be his full atonement.

Then Arnkel closed the court and left his throne.

"I wonder," said Smith, as he whipped out his sword, "how many lives I'll get by selling mine."

The Woodstranders, certain Hvammsfirth men of the *Flying Dragon* and many more were running hard to their ships. The Thing-men of Snorri and of the sons of Thord were swarming to bar the passage toward our boats.

Eric ran to Arnkel the Priest.

"I want you," he said, "to walk with me to my boats and see that all men keep the Truce-of-Thor."

"Gladly," said Arnkel.

Stir rushed at Snorri, took him by the hand and locked him with a wrist-hold.

"You come with me," he said between his teeth, and Snorri came in haste.

For my part I ran to Eyolf the Gray, first son of Thord the Yeller.

"Eyolf," said I, "you are my grandfather. My mother sends her love."

"What do you want?" he asked stiffly.

"Nothing," said I, "nothing. But do you want to walk with us to our boats?"

"We'd be dishonored," said Mord, his brother, "if Eric's people were to be slain on Thorsness."

Both of them came with me, but they were very grumpy.

And so it was that the priests, Arnkel and Snorri, and the two Thordsons came into our shield-burg. Well men knew that if we were molested on our march to the boats the first to be slain would be the four greatest chiefs in Broadfirth, now hostages for our safety. The crowd fell apart before us as we marched northward into the breast-high mists on Temple Mead, while the light waned into the murk of evening.

"I thought," said Glum Thordson peevishly, as we headed northeastward, "that your boats were waiting at Milnerskerry."

I gave my father his arm-ring.

"I thought," said I, "that Steersman Uspak was riding to Bearhaven."

"I thought," said Snorri, "that—humph—"

But Stir tittered, and all that the young chief thought was lost in a gale of laughter.

There is no need to dwell in detail upon our coming to the boats at Tongue, our parting with Stir's men and our farewell to Arnkel, to Snorri and the Thordsons.

When with flint and steel I had my lantern kindled, Stir took me in his swift wherry and we led the boats due eastward, heading for home at Ericstead. Snorri and the Thordsons took such comfort as they might from watching us fare due east while their pursuing fleet was making southwestward against wind and tide. Maybe they thought that this was only a ruse, but Stir and I did actually sail to Ax Isle, where with our lantern we kindled a bonfire made in

readiness. We proved we had gone to Ax Isle, then put the lantern out and slipped away to meet our boats and ship at Diamond Cove. The night was frosty, with no sound except the ripple under our bows as we glided upon a sea of phosphorescence under a glittering white sky of stars.

When we rejoined our people they had the livestock on board the ship, the anchors weighted and the sails filling, just as the moon rose. Far off across the firth our enemies had reached Ax Isle, and we saw the flames rise from burning Ericstead. We had left but little timber, except the roofs, but what there was belonged to Aesir—no concern of ours.

At sunrise we were far beyond pursuit on the strong ebb. At noon we were off Snow Fell, and Stir took Catface into the skiff. We did not envy Aesir such a son, whose heart had failed him when he saw the Main Sea broadening before our bows. We were sorry to part with Stir, who knelt in his wherry praying Thor's aid for us.

And so with full hearts we took our departure from Snow Fell, west southwest; the whole inhabited, loved world astern as we went to our exile in the great unknown.

PART II

CHAPTER I

GREENLAND DISCOVERED

WITH oar and sail, by aid of clear northerly airs and of the southward sea-drift, our third dawn outward from Snow Fell brought us to scattered ice-floes at the edge of the main ice.

Just as the sun rose, a very little square gray patch stood up on the western sea-line, a skerry perhaps, or a berg—for it could not be a sail. My father and I would often take bearings for practise, so when Eric hailed my *Fenris* from the ship, I made haste to level the instrument for angles. This was a disc which carried two pointers like a modern clock-face.

Aiming the fixed pointer at the sun, I set the loose rod by the scale on the disc-edge, which gave the bearings of Eyktar for each summer week. This pointed to the edge of a small floe due S. W. Now, with right arm at full length and fingers extended, I measured off the sea-line northward from the floe, two spans. On my clenched fist two knuckles brought me thence to the berg or skerry, so that I had true bearings and shouted them to Eric.

"From Eyktar-Stathr to Number Two spans, two knuckles."

"Flotilla!" he hailed from the poop to all our boats. "Check, from Ut-Sudur south by north, allowing one span sea-drift. The *Fenris* to lead as pilot."

This course being checked and proven, I laid it with copper pins set into holes on the plane. That day the hour-glass had good check by sun while I led the flotilla. What with the blink from the main ice, and belts of fog it was not until sunset that we saw our mark again, the patch we had sighted at daybreak

Now the setting sun made visible not only the Black Sark as we called that mountain, but on either hand an army of rock-giants ice-armored, arrayed for battle. Above them, outstretched like a cloud, was the level sun-flushed ice-field of that ice-continent. Beneath the snow-robed feet of the giant host we could see clustered and scattered bergs of the great berg-stream, set in the field of the main ice.

For a long time our people stood up from the oars, silent and stricken by the awfulness of that coast impregnable. Floes of the main ice were closing in about us, so well we knew that nothing but flight could save us from being destroyed and that a landing was impossible. After these many centuries that coast, longer than Norway, is very little known and seldom visited. There is no house there.

My father's orders roused us, setting both watches at oars for instant flight to southward. All night we pulled hard and the wind served our sails; but morning broke upon a coastline still beset with berg-fleets and the ice-pack.

Our leaders boarded the ship, and

council was held in the cabin with closed doors.

"If we turn back," said mother, blithe as ever, "we shall be killed, and if we go on we shall all be drowned. Since we must die in any case, and it's no use worrying, I'm for going on."

"I have seen many countries," said Patrick, "and all alike they set a bleak face toward the sea, their enemy, yet at the heart are kindly."

Smith was gloomy, preferring a fight with all Iceland and brave slaying to falling by slow starvation in such an unfriendly land.

Two of the others spoke of escape to Europe, which has plenty of trade for Vikings. Then we had Eric's rede:

"I see no gain in slaying of our Icelandic kinsmen or in Viking raids when we sail with our wives and children. Flight is a saving of cowards. I go on. I name our landfall of yesterday as Mid-Fell. I name this country Greenland."

We laughed, but Eric was in earnest.

"The gods," he said, "hate men of doleful speech and sour faces, yet they reach out strong hands to help a seaman because he shows good cheer, and they strive with all their might in aid of valor. So I give our new country this good name of Greenland, and when they hear of it, many men will leave their homes to come here."

DURING the days which followed, skirting the new land southward, we found its coastline trending away southwest, so that we crossed the berg-stream, and after a while left the deadly main ice behind us. Indeed we had come to that southern point of the country which was afterward named Cape Farewell and from thence onward the ice; free coast went westward to northwest. This coast too was like some greater, grander Norway, with its snow-clad main range all cut and bitten into by narrow fiords, its outlying mountain islands with channels deep between them, and out beyond lay shallow fishing-grounds, littered with rock islets, skerries and sunk reefs.

So long as the north wind holds in the Greenland seas the water is calm, the sun bright and air clear, save where there are belts of fog. There is only one other wind, the thick, wet boisterous southwester in a roaring gale. Such weather drove us to cover of the inner channels, but here were squalls which romped down out of gullies.

Our passage at sea had been short, but our search was long before we found a place where we could winter. It was not until our water and forage were spent and the beasts grown gaunt with famine that we came to Eric's Isle. Here was a much better pasturage than our isles in Broadfirth, with a deep clear spring not likely to freeze solid and a most perfect haven with ground for beaching four ships abreast.

Our first work was to set up the ship's tent, and the sails as a general camp. I took the *Fenris* for a hunting cruise to get seals and render their fat for our winter lights. The *Mani* went off and spent weeks gathering driftwood for our winter fires. The two other large boats took cod and dried them, not only for our people but also for the cattle in case we ran short of hay. The jolly-boat and the skiffs were used for collecting brushwood to make charcoal. Sea fowl and eggs from the bird rocks and fish were our daily food. The ship's company dismantled the *Fafnir*, scrubbed out, beached and housed her. The timber brought from home was used to build our booths for wintering, set in a hollow between two little cliffs where the deep snow would settle and shut out drafts.

Next came the haying, long labor for all of us, on ground too rough for scythes. When that was finished mother sent all hands to the nearest mountains, where we gathered the ripe berries to be dried, a sure charm against scurvy. And still mother was not satisfied until we had laid up a great store of crabs, mussels, sea-urchins, bait for the winter fishing and food for the ducks and hens. There is no better cure for laziness than a desert continent.

CHAPTER II

A BEAR AND A MAID

LET ME cast back to the evening of the Broadlair sea fight, when I offered self-doom to Thorgest Skinflint, rendering my life as the price of peace for Eric, for my mother, for our household. From Thorgest's refusal of my blood came the ruin of my people, their outlawry and flight out of the world into this unknown region beyond the edge of Manshome. It was from that moment I saw my god Tyr, guardian of man's honor, to be a bloodstained, ravening murderer, a demon to whom I could not even pray. And from that moment was I an atheist.

"My son, why have you ruined me?" asked Eric.

With never another word so long as we both lived in the way of reproach, reviling or regret. For disobedience I had a splendid thrashing worthy of us both, but from that time onward he made me his partner. One may betray a partner, but can not disobey an equal. All love I had once for Tyr, all worship toward the gods went now to Eric and mother. I who had offered to die for them now lived for them, a much more difficult business, filling every moment of waking life with tireless ambition to serve well.

As to terms of endearment between us, "good night" or "good morning" or other empty phrases, that sort of gush is sickening. I gave him "sir," he gave me his orders. That others should feel as I did toward the master never occurred to me, until the question arose at our first Greenland camp of getting the dollies ashore. Thorwald suggested that, but mother gibed at him.

"Think you," she said, "the gods can see us here beyond the world's edge? I should go black with sunburn for all Freya cares. There's no god here but Eric."

That rede was a joke in our camp and yet, like a flash of lightning through darkness it showed us how the land lay. We had left our gods behind us and given all our worship to our leader.

There have been many Arctic expeditions, but none I think like ours, adventured with women and children. We were not furnished with shiploads of costly stores. We had no thought of rescue or relief-ships if our voyage went wrong. For us the one chance of life was in Eric's leadership, his perfect foresight, his unwavering, undaunted strength of purpose, his easy, laughing valor, his absolute command.

Out of our plight as ruined outlaws Eric made discovery of a new world, and laid therein the foundations of a colony destined to unaided endurance through five centuries. That was not the work of any small adventurer. It needed Eric the Red, one of the world's great men.

ON TOWARD the spring, there was such a thaw an ice-bear came ashore by night, and while we were all asleep broke into our byre, where he killed the she-goat. Thence he dragged the body across the island to take his meal in peace. When day broke, and this was all plain to us by the tracks and blood on the snow, Eric set out, taking me with him, and also Hrut the Big, the three of us being armed.

On the seaward shore of our island we disturbed the bear at his breakfast, and father gave me the fight. It was a good fight, for this visitor was about as large as our little red bull, and much more able-bodied. When he reared up to inspect us I thought he was much too tall. His charge was a blind rush, so that he took no note of my spear as I ran it into his shoulders; but when the blade came nearly to his vitals he checked, slithering forward on his haunches. Next he rolled and broke off the spear shaft, swearing horribly at the pain. The instant I had my belt-ax loose I jumped sidewise, ramming it down his gullet. He bit off the half, but was well nigh choked by the blade and coughed blood.

Having no weapon left, I turned past Eric, snatching his spear, but the bear pursued my father who had to run for his life. I asked him to circle and bring me

back my bear, which he did right gladly. As they came and Eric leapt past me I knelt, planting the spear-butt while I set its point at the bear's throat. Too late to swerve, the poor brute ran on the blade, which finished him. I made a stave to sing in his honor and took a claw for my necklace.

While Hrut ran off for a horse and sleigh to bring the prize to camp, Eric and I with our whittles flenched the skin to make us a rug to sit on, kindled a little driftwood fire with flint and steel, then broiled the tongue for our breakfast. It was some months now since we had been alone and at our ease with nought to trouble us.

"Leif," said he, "you remember when I went from Broadlair to fetch Stir?"

"You said you would borrow a horse and ride to Lava."

"I found no horse able to carry my weight. I had to walk just as I did when I crossed Iceland from Njal's house."

"I thought you stiff with riding!"

"Walking, son. I grow heavy in body, heavy in brain, sometimes heavy at heart when I think of the years to come."

I asked him what he feared.

"Famine," said he, and I remembered finding that human thigh-bone, split to get its marrow. "When Iceland was first settled, the sea harvest was more than folk could use, but to-day a little food needs a deal of getting. It will be so here and worse, for this land is too cold for oats."

I said we could buy food in our Norway trade.

"I doubt," said Eric. "There may be no trading. Long years ago, when first I sighted Greenland, the main ice ran far south'ard. That bar may close our trading three years out of four. Moreover, son, since we came here Thor does not hear my prayers."

Now I supposed the sky might fall at any time; but never before had Eric been like this, except on that night at Broadlair, when he cried. My heart became quite small, like a hard button.

"That you should speak like this!"

"Only to you Leif, who shall come after me, inheriting the greatest land-take a chief has ever claimed since the beginning of the world."

"Of rock," said I, "of bergs and the main ice."

It was then I told my father about the bone, the proof of famine which had emptied the land of its people in long-ago times.

"I think," he said, "our people are not cowards to shirk the facts."

So we resolved together that all our folk and every settler who should come to Greenland should swear a solemn oath upon the bone to be known as the Bone Oath: "I swear upon this bone, by Thor, Tyr and Frey, to save all livestock, eggs and young for breeding of tame beasts and fowl against the day of famine."

That oath saved the Greenland colonies from death.

At the end of this business Eric reached out his hand, pointing toward the south.

"Leif," said he, "great Ireland is yonder. There is Brennan's Isle."

But Hrut was long in coming with the horses, and I was sulky.

"How do you know?" said I.

"Use your brains," he answered. "Saw you not last autumn the south-flight of the birds? Think you the ducks and geese flew to the storms of the main sea for their refuge? Look at this fire of driftwood. Whence came the timber?

"Aye, there is land out yonder, and by the signs it is no little country such as Iceland. What Norway is to Europe, that much is Greenland to some great unknown World-Riding. We have groped to the gateway but have not found the yard, or seen the house. It is the will of the gods that we northmen, who came from the east out of great Swede-realm, march through Swede-realm the less, Norway and Denmark, Normandy, England, Scot's-realm, Erin, Iceland, Greenland,

stepping-stones all of them across the ocean stream. Remember Patrick's song?

"A long-ship fares on seas a-fire.
A son shall dare beyond desire;
And Christ-realms out of darkness won,
Shall bless thy name, Leif, Eric's son.

"Much do I hate the Christ-priests for foul conjurers but, son, if Patrick made up that rhyme out of his own head, he would not have risked his life in the telling of it. 'Twas a rede of the gods in the mouth of a fool. No man's teeth have strength to withhold that which the gods would say. There is a realm out yonder, and you shall go there."

At that my heart began to jump. Moreover, I recalled some talk of Patrick's who, being a far traveled man, having fared to Rome, to Jerusalem and even to Micklegarth, was the best guide we had as to the shape of Mans-home. He supposed that our west coast of Greenland fronted upon a bight, whose farther shore must have a southward and easterly sweep, joining to Africa. Thereabouts dwelt Sudri the Dwarf, but according to Patrick this was the Giant Atlas who bare upon his shoulders the southern of the sky.

"This season," said Eric, "you shall have the *Fenris* and follow our coast to the northward to see if it bends round toward Africa."

"Which land," said I, "shall I know by token of the crocodiles and the unipeds."

"So Patrick tells me. The crocodile hath four legs and a smile which charms men to their bane. The one-legged men hop, their speed a marvel, so that they set on you all unawares. Mermaids also are very dangerous."

We sat on the polar-bear skin shivering, knowing full well the perils of foreign travel. Then came to us a creature more deadly than crocodile, uniped or mermaid. This was a thrall herd-girl by name of Grelad, who came with the horses, riding and leading, crying as she drew nigh that Hrut had sent her, having strained his ankle.

We bade her bring the horses up to windward of the bear, but our warning was too late, for now they snuffed the smell, reared up, swung round and bolted, throwing Grelad. Eric went after the horses, but the slave girl stayed near me, pretending to be hurt. Only when my father was out of hearing she sat up in the snow to dust herself saying—

"I did that on purpose."

She blinked at me through her hair, laughing and panting.

NOW of late the lasses had begun to pester me, one with gifts of mittens and other knitted rubbish which the fish rejected, one languishing over a cut finger, while all alike poked fun or made eyes at me. Too coarse were these their snares even to fool an owl, but both my parents warned me that mischief would brew up quickly unless I kept the thrall girls at a distance. At mating time they said I should wed some gentlewoman, set high above the jealousies and bickerings of our servants.

Of all the pesky hussies Grelad was foremost, a very coarse, rough wench. The creature had wild beauty, which thrilled me, haunted me, kept me defensive, almost frightened me. Now she sat in the snow, binding back the rough bright flaxen hair from her face. The health of her glowed warm; her eyes allured and challenged, her white teeth flashed as she laughed.

"Am I not fair? Am I not very fair?"

She crept to me on all fours to the edge of the bearskin.

I shrank away. An ice-bear was easier dealt with—had less of evil.

"Chiefs," I said, "mate not with thralls— Get to ——!"

Now she was changed, shrinking back till she had the knife, then suddenly in a blind rage, smooth, lithe, silent, fierce as some great cat as she gathered herself, flashed out the knife and sprang.

Thrice as the knife came down I grabbed the blade in a bleeding hand before I could wrench it away. She

moaned with rage, so I rolled her in the snow until she pleaded.

More wiles, eh?

I ran for my life, with Grelad shrieking at me threats of murder.

CHAPTER III

OF GRELAD'S VENGEANCE

ERIC was gifted with a double mind. In sending me to explore he spoke of our needs: land where grain would ripen, timber for ships and housen, and some seaward way clear of the main ice. He spoke also of crocodiles, unipeds and mermaids.

But under all the talk lay his unspoken purpose, my training in manhood and in leadership. To give advice was useless, for well he knew that a boy will pretend to listen while elders give advice, yet go his own way to grief. When the time came for sailing he made me promise to wear mother's comforter round my neck, and bade me turn homeward on the eightieth day of the journey.

My coxswain was Hrut the Big, an easy-going lout, bound to my service because I saved his life in the Broadlair fight. He had great strength, was willing enough and liked me, but he had married Grelad and would not sail without her. That woman was resolved upon my death. Smith's two younger sons were bowsmen, not much given to work. The rest of the names I forget.

Grelad made Hrut believe that I had assailed her virtue, so that the man I trusted became an enemy. As to the women, Grelad persuaded each that I had insulted them. She wrought into the feeble Smithsons jealousy of my power, and with the rest she ridiculed our voyage as a perilous venture of folly, wherein they had no profit. The women jibed at the four men who still were loyal to me, dared them to disobey, goaded them on.

At the outset all twelve of these youngsters had seemed quite frank with me, blithe at the oars and ready for any fun; but now there was no more singing, sulky faces turned away from me.

The voices in camp were hushed when I drew near, and every order had to be given twice before it won slow compliance of unwilling hands. She of the mittens, a tender-hearted wench, warned me of mutiny brewing and my life in peril, but I drove her away with curses. So, heavy-handed, void of tact or any sense of humor, in high disdain of danger from mere servants, I wrought my own undoing. I camped alone now, slept always in the boat, gave up my evening swim and kept my weapons ready. I made the people writhe under my mastery.

I had outgrown my armor, and would sit in the boat of an evening, unbending the linked mail to open seams, along the under side of each arm and down the flanks. Then I laced the seams across with leather strings, making a loose fit. I slept in armor now, and would anchor the boat a little way off-shore for fear of attack from the camp.

By the maps I see that our east settlement on the seven fiords just westward of Cape Farewell is known as Fredericsdal. Westward of that for two hundred and fifty miles the inland ice overflows the coast range, leaving no room for settlers. Beyond is our western settlement, known now as the Godhaab—Good Hope—district. Some hundreds of miles to the north are the two wide firths, with berg fleets putting to sea on either side of Disco. On our last day we crept along under the gray, ice-crowned sea-cliff which in after ages was the landfall of Captain Davis. Off the foot of this fearful wall is a rough island, where stands today the most northerly village on earth, Uper-Navik, which hath three Danes, or four in crowded seasons. Two days northward thereof is Tassiusak, the last house in the world.

It was on the site of Uper-Navik that we hauled the *Fenris* on rather bad ground, when the sun was low in the north, an hour short of midnight.

Now as we grounded, only Hrut and I were facing forward. I asked him whether he could see a little puff of

steam or smoke beyond the ridge of the isle; it might be a hot spring such as we had in Iceland. Though Hrut saw nought, I said I would go to make sure while he made camp for supper. It was fully a fortnight since I had left the boat, but the people were weary, their only thought was for food and a night's rest.

I had gone perhaps a hundred yards up up from the beach when I came to what might be a bear-path, although it had the look of a man-trail. Could it be camp smoke yonder behind the ridge? My heart leapt. I broke to a run on this pathway until it led past some boulders which hid the *Fenris*. The brow of the ridge was now within a stone's throw. And then I found human tracks!

The tracks led toward the spot where I had seen the smoke, no doubt from a driftwood camp-fire. Should I venture to stalk just fifty yards or until I could get a glimpse over the ridge? Would it not be wiser first to bring my men? There might be many people. They might be hostile.

Yes, it would be better, at least to beckon and bring the men to support me. I went back a few yards clear of the boulders, whence I could see my camp. It was empty. Out there on the sea, a quarter-mile from shore I caught the flash of oars and saw the *Fenris*. The people saw me, for they threw up their oars in salute. They shouted insults, too far off to be heard. Then they made sail, and I watched my twelve-oarer heel over a little to the wind. The oars were housed, the mess-ward was lighting a fire on the ballast abaft the mast, Hrut was at the tiller and the others resting.

Then I knew fear.

Having no sense of shame, because they were void of honor, these wretched creatures supposed they would go home. Dared they face Eric? Yes, they would make up some tale about my drowning and think the story good enough till Eric took them one by one with questions, prying their facts apart as with a spear-point. Little they knew of Eric. To lie on such a business and to such a man was very certain death.

Surely they knew all that. Then did they seek merely to teach me a lesson? Did they expect me to wave my arms and shout, run shrieking to the beach and try to catch them by swimming while they enjoyed the sport? Little they knew me if they supposed that a son of Eric would pardon them, or command them, or sail in their company, or fall short of bloody vengeance for such a deed as this.

I was afraid, yet well does he deserve death who shows fear. I took off my helm and waved a cherry farewell, not to these traitors, but to life itself.

Behind me in the north the low sun blazed among red angry clouds, for it was midnight. In front was the sea where lay shadow, deep purple haze wherein a little sail melted away in the distance. On my left out of that shadow soared the faint, pink bird-rock, six or eight hundred feet, making a fleck at the foot of the cliff whose vast heights glowed like still flame, and its cornice of ice with a tinge of blood against clear steel eternities of sky. From top to bottom the wall was scored with one streak of ice like a sword stroke.

It would not be from any carelessness or lack of courage if I were to leave my dead body lying about for the eagles. Where my heart had been was a great ache, not to be warmed now by thoughts of a red vengeance. There was cold need for reasoning if I would save my life.

It seems curious to me now that while I sat on a boulder through those red midnight hours I never thought of the little path at my feet, the tracks which led over the hill to a camp-fire. The sun upon his eastward way went behind the cliff, leaving me in gray shadow and the frosty chill, while my mind wrought upon driftwood and bones for a boat-frame and sinew to bind the parts together with the sewing of many sealskins into a sheet which would cover these bare boat-ribs. I must hunt for a living the while I prepared the boat, the sail, the cordage, the

oars; a winter's labor that, before I could leave. I must get herbs and berries against scurvy, some sort of shelter, fuel.

For all these purposes I had my whittle knife, my spear and the fine sword which I captured from Bear Heliulfson; but when it came to fishing— Yes, I could fashion links from the byrnie into hooks, and for lines the strands from my mother's woolen comforter. Well for me I had kept my promise to wear the silly—

Something whizzed, and a sharp point caught the small of my back which bruised me through chain mail. Looking to see what had struck me, I picked up a lance which brought to my mind the trail, the human tracks, the camp-fire. Yes, there were certainly people about, up early too, who disliked me. I was not annoyed as I had been with my crew, for whoever these folk might be I did not know them and could not possibly hate them.

As for being afraid as yet, perhaps I was too tired. I was merely curious, for this lance had an ivory point and three wings made of bone lashed near the head with a neat serving of sinew. The shaft appealed to me most, for it was wooden, so with my whittle I began to trim off some slivers to make me a fire. Another lance grazed my cheek, a third struck my helm, glancing. It fairly rained good fuel.

I would not encourage these strangers to think themselves worthy of notice, yet there seemed many of them who hid behind boulders, forming a circle about me, closing in as they found cover. At the least show of fear they would rush me, and my armor gave no protection to face and hands and legs. The weapon-rain was heavy, yet no spear yet had missed me, and these good strangers threw at twice the range we used in Iceland.

When one stays out through a rainy night, failing good shelter, it is best to kneel with shoulders humped and head down, facing the weather. When I had my chips I knelt so that my legs were covered, face hid and only hands exposed. With the English flint from my belt-pouch and my whittle I struck a shower of sparks into some tinder held in the cup of my hands, then blew a flame and set it among my slivers, piling a little fire.

On this the strangers supposed me to be a spear-proof fire-breathing wizard, for the moment I blew my flame the weapon-rain ceased, and when I broke up their lance shafts to make fuel they fled away, yelping like scared children. It was then I tried to stand up, but found that my legs were shaking so they would not support me. The palms of my hands were wet, my mouth was dry, and by these tokens I knew I had been in terror.

Unless I took swift action now the savages would rally, and I could never be safe until they were subdued, for when men feel their weakness in war it turns to treachery. What act of mine could best enact the disdain of a god toward beasts? I gathered up some lances into a bundle, walked by the trail which led over the brow of a hill and came down to Uper-Naviks-haven. Upon its water-side was the savage camp, and at the front of the largest tent I threw my bundle down returning their weapons to the tribe.

It is but human nature that men renowned for valor in action may be terrified of ghosts, priests who can scold the devil frightened of a battle, and most heroic women run from the scratch of mice behind a wainscot. These Eskimos, whom our settlers afterward knew as the Skrellings, were brave in the way of their hunting and some of them would even fight the walrus single-handed. With the known danger they were lions, but from anything unknown they ran like hares. So was it when I threw down the weapons in their camp. They supposed that the spear-proof fire-breathing demon came to destroy them with the evil eye.

"*Torngak!*" they yelled. "*Torngak!*"

Men, women and children bolted to their tents, to their boats or to the hills.

IF YOU split a bell into halves, and lay one half upon its broken edges, you have the shape of the sealskin tents, wide open at the mouth where they make

the fire, and tapering to the end where they sleep warm. Of these there were four or five making the camp. On the beach lay boats of two kinds. The larger was a frame canoe, sheathed with oil-dressed, transparent sealskin. It takes a crew of half-a-dozen people with paddles and carries a ton of cargo. This is the woman-boat.

The man-boat or kayak is also a framed canoe, sheathed with translucent skin, but this is decked except for an opening framed by a ring in the middle. Sitting within this, on the keel, with his legs straight out filling the bows, the hunter fits the edge of his waterproof sealskin shirt over the ring. To travel he plies a double ended paddle which balances the skiff.

For weapon he has a harpoon. When the barbed point strikes a seal the shaft comes looose and floats away, but the head is fast to a line, and the line is coiled on a frame in front of the hunter while its end is tied to a bladder which lies on the stern. When the seal dives the line runs out until the bladder marks the spot where he must come up to breathe. Then the thrust of a lance ends the business. When the hunter comes home his meat belongs to all who may need food.

For a long time I studied these two vessels. If I took a woman-boat I should be pursued by the swift kayaks. If I took a kayak, not knowing its balance, I should capsize and drown. In the end I took a little meat from a seal carcass hanging at a tent door, then went beyond the dirt of the camp to make a driftwood fire, cook my breakfast and, being well fed, enjoy a sleep in the sunshine.

Now if the savages feared me, they were also full of curiosity, hiding in cover to get a peep at me. If I let them grow familiar they would so lose respect as to spear me through the neck while I slept. For that I chased them with my sword until they learned that the place where I chose to live was sacred ground. At meal-times, walking into their camp to take such meat as I needed, I soon made friends with the children, although I found them rather grubby to handle.

Apart from a very high-flavored, cheery sort of smell, I admired the fashion of their sealskin clothes. The hooded shirt was so close at the wrists and neck that it made a bag of air warmed by the heat of the body. With that they wore breeches and long boots with a soft sole. The winter clothes were of fur. As to the women, their cold-weather dress was much like that of the men, except that they made the hood large to carry a baby, and the boots came up to the hip.

These Eskimos are different from other peoples in having a blue spot on the small of the back and a thick coat of fat between the flesh and skin. They are a chubby brown folk with faces blunt and broad. I never met any in the world so cheery, kind and generous, good-humored and fond of fun. They soon lost all fear of me and I of them, while I made hearty friendships with women who taught me their speech and men who gave me lessons in their arts.

To show that I trusted them I left off wearing armor or carrying weapons, while as to food they offered ten times more than I could eat. Still I kept my clean camp to myself, nor would I eat my meat raw like these savages. Daily I watched the hunters fare out to sea in their kayaks, but so soon as their backs were turned I borrowed a spare skiff, and a boy to teach me.

The empty kayak is stable, but with a man therein becomes top-heavy, only kept right side up with delicate balancing, flatting, feathering and thrusts of the paddle blades. When she upsets one is held at the waist by the kayak ring, unable to use the legs for swimming clear. Yet is this frail transparent bubble of a thing used for hunting, fishing and travel, riding the mighty swell and storms of the Main Sea.

Before I began a lesson I had strong broth, ready cooked, in my helmet. I stripped and oiled my body, for dozens of times a day when the skiff capsized must I wriggle and swim clear in that ice-littered harbor. Chilled and cramped, I

had the soup to revive me, before I tried again. So passed a month of desperate work while the tribe laughed at me, and I was near despair when all of a sudden the art came of itself.

My strong purpose won me the friendship of the best hunter—Suak, I called this man—who made me put on the kayak shirt. It has mittens, one with the sleeves, and the shirt fitted over the ring of the kayak hatch, so that no water may enter when the skiff upsets. With this defense Suak trained me to certain strokes of the paddle whereby one may overset the kayak and bring her up again. This learned, I could not drown, and so was able to go with Suak to the hunting, then after practise to take my share of the game, towing a seal to camp for the tribe to eat. In all weathers, in the dealings with berg ice-currents, tides and fog I mastered the art of the kayak. For my armor and weapons Suak gave me the full equipment of a hunter. So when the time came for breaking up the camp, I went with Suak's family, a week's journey, to their winter house where now is Godhaven on the south shore of Disco.

UNTIL this time the people supposed me to be a mighty wizard, come to their camp through the air or over the sea floor, spear-proof and breathing fire. For all our hearty friendship, still they feared me, dreading my strong magic. Now coming to their winter house they found another marvel. Some horrible sea monster, whose mark was plain on the beach, had come up out of the sea to plunder their goods and scatter the turf of their house. Well could I see that my curs had beached the *Fenris*, sacked the place, and used the house to play turf-game.

The matter of my revenge, which in the last two months had died down to a spark, now flamed up red within me. No longer was I content with mere escape alone to Eric's Isle, but must have men with me to aid in a full vengeance. So when my friends began to plead with me, that I should winter here, defending them from sea-dragons, I used all the words I had learned, the signs they understood, and drawings with a lance point on the foreshore mud. The people must stay to rebuild their winter house, but Suak should come with me to kill the dragon. Wit you well it was not a small toy dragon I drew for them, which had the *Fenris* wolf-head, bat wings and several fathoms of curly sea-serpent tail. It well nigh frightened me, while it set poor Suak in such a sweat of terror that he would not come.

I took the steel-headed spear I had given him, and showed upon my drawing its fell magic, whereby at the very sight the dragon would lie dead, wings drooped and tail uncurled. Suak might take the spear upon his kayak, and at this he was content to come with me. But still he would feel braver if he had his brother to aid, who was a sorcerer.

Mik was the name I had for Suak's brother, a wizened, dry, harmless little man, supposed to be terrible with his sorceries. I let him come with us.

The lengthening nights, the sharpening edge of frost, the first autumn storms were warnings enough to hasten us with a five hundred mile voyage to be made before the winter. We would stop to take a halibut, or a seal, camp for a meal, sleep till the turn of the tide, then hurry on. One by one we picked up the landmarks of my outward journey along the low coast, then past the great white highlands where the North Stream, South Stream and Eternity fiords pour out their yellow ebbs and heavy berg-fleets.

We rounded the wondrous pinnacled heights of the Sermersuit, labored past the Kist fell in heavy weather—but I shall weary you. It is better to come direct to that rough skerry where we found the *Fenris* piled up, with a hole in her bows. It blew a southwester, with sleet.

Take now the measure of Hrut's seamanship. Of course he was too lazy to keep his stores housed and spare gear lashed down. Driving along a lee shore with a fair wind, of course he was too proud to reef down, and nobody had

sense to let the sheet go before the sail was split, flying away in ribbons. Instead of plying oars the people prayed, so that the *Fenris* broached, half filling, while the curl of a tall comber capsized her, spilling out all the gear. Instead of baling and righting the boat they swam, so that Hrut's wife, Grelad, was drowned. Smith's youngest son was broken to death on the reef.

The rest of these fools, delivered, sat to watch the *Fenris* drive ashore breaking a hole in her bows. After that they sat down to a fire of good boat-timber while they starved in a deluge of rain and bewailed their fate; but none of them thought of making hooks and lines, or any shift for saving rain-water to drink.

It needed no confession of this tale to show me the plight of my curs. As we three in our kayaks came near I told the savages that this sea-monster, which they saw lying wrecked, was the same frightful beast which had destroyed their home. Mik scowled and muttered, but that was a way he had in pretending sorcery, and meant no harm at all. Suak laughed till he cried. Both I sent off to scour the skerries and isles for wreckage of oars or other useful gear which might have drifted ashore. As to my curs, they supposed us to be demons come to avenge my murder. By signs I made them kneel all in a row, I made them beg like dogs.

It was when I was ashore out of the kayak, with my hood thrown back, that they knew me, and yielded what weapons they had left. They wanted to explain, but I took their weapons to another reef. When I came back they pleaded for water, and that I promised so soon as they brought the *Fenris* to the mainland where there were running streams. They begged for food, so I promised good fish when they made hooks and lines. Unless they worked they could die for all I cared. So one or two complained, and had a thrashing.

As to the wreck, I found we should need the skins of two seals to make patches. I set out for these, hunted and killed them, flenching off skin and blubber; but they of the wrecked crew sat up and begged like dogs before I gave them the meat. My savages brought in eight oars, a patch of canvas and a breaker full of fresh water with much other jetsam; but the people begged like dogs before I let them drink.

For a night and day all worked without a moment's rest, and very scant was the time I allowed for feeding. A second day's work got the *Fenris* afloat before the weather fouled. The more she leaked the harder the people bailed for fear of drowning, but when they would have beached her I harpooned Hrut the coxswain from my kayak, jerking him overboard so that he well nighed drowned.

It was in such order I brought my prisoners and the sinking *Fenris* late in that autumn home to Eric's Isle. My father was away with the ship, and wintered where the ice held him northward at Ericsholme. Mother was in command, with the boats' crews to mind the livestock; and right glad was she to have me back again, although I had not brought her African crocodiles or even a mere uniped.

In her high seat she gave judgment upon my prisoners, bidding them take the *Fenris* to Iceland or the pit, so she was rid of them, but at the last had mercy and let them stay. Many and great were the favors shown to Suak and Mik, my savages, who wintered with us and afterward took greetings to their kinsfolk in the north. While I lived the Eskimos were our friends. It was from them we learned the best manner of dressing, hunting and camping for men in Greenland, but mother hooted at me when I spoke of Eskimo breeches and hip-boots for Icelandic ladies.

CHAPTER IV

BRATTELID

LET us come now to the spring of our fourth year in Greenland, with the exploring done and Eric away in the *Fafnir*, outward for Iceland. Our term

of three years' banishment was finished, and Eric would not appear among his friends and enemies in Broadfirth quite as a ruined man. The people there should see his wares for sale, of walrus ivory, seal-skins and rendered oil, fox furs, white bear-skins, eider-down, and whalebone, proofs of a newfound continent with farms surveyed for two hundred families.

So soon as Eric was gone, I took command of the four large boats, lading them for the journey to our new homestead.

Eric's Isle, our camp for these first years, lies off a headland, the cape between two inlets; these walled and narrow channels cleave their dark chasms through the coast range, and thence widen inland across a vale of open grasslands, bright in the early summer with harebells, angelica and all manner of wild flowers. It is as if one came through hell's gates into Paradise. The little lakes are a breeding-place for myriads of geese and ducks. There are bushes also, and at our first coming the waters teemed with fish. As to the number, size and vice of our mosquitos later in the season, mother would have us thank the gods, "for none of these are nearly so large as eagles." Beyond the vale, eighty miles inland, the fiords end at the foot of that ice desert which covers the main of Greenland.

That summer we laid out steadings for our seamen partners, and built houses for them so far as our timber would go. There was work enough for all, what with the haying, fishing and hunting, the building of kayaks, and teaching men to ride them, a *naust* for the *Fafnir*, housing for the stock; yes, that was the year when a great herd of reindeer wintered in the vale, so that we fared well, hunting venison, and even had a yule feast. The maids could be pert on fish, but now we had fresh meat, they were quite above themselves. So winter passed, and with the summer Eric came home in triumph.

We were in the hayfields when the *Fafnir* rounded the point with mighty sweep of oars and bursts of cheering, to berth in our new slipway. You may remember that unlucky timber, the cause of our feud with Thorgest Skinflint, that wasted shipload of house furnishings we left at last in charge of Slaying Stir. My brother Thorwald had built this lumber into a sharp-nosed raft, brought it in tow with the *Fafnir* and gallantly stuck to it through every peril. That was a great deed which I begrudged a little at the time, being jealous of him. And this was the making of our seamen's homes, on the north shore of Ericsfiord, with enough to spare for our bower, barns and sheds.

Steersman Smith had the *Fafnir* ballasted with ingots of iron, steel and copper, dangerously overladen with livestock and their forage, grain and salt, beside being thronged with passengers. These would see the farms before they bought.

And still came greater news. Tidings of our discovery had roused all Iceland, including Thorgest Skinflint, who set on Eric with drawn sword, crying a *holmgang*. Ill were Eric's fame if he struck that peevish old man, and short his shrift unless he made a defense. As Eric said:

"By Thor, if he beat me fighting I bested him at running!"

He had no breath to run, but quite enough to swear by. You never heard such language!

So Thorgest swore, while Eric laughed and Iceland with him. My father went about the country with Patrick's silver tongue praising the new land, and Smith's secret, whispered to all the world of trolls, gnomes, sprites, Kobolds and fairy rings, the surest tokens of riches underground. Our sailors talked not only of seals and ice-bears, but hinted as to mermaids as if Ran had sentries out to guard the fishery.

Now the Icelandic temper sets folk at a rush on anything perilous, difficult or forbidden. Did Eric forbid men to land in Greenland, whole provinces would join in a land-rush. Yet to

persuade men is to arouse a suspicious caution, so only fifty families resolved to take the risk. They had the winter for selling farms, buying or dighting ships, packing their gear and making their farewells; yet it was dangerously late in the summer before a fleet of only twenty-five sail gathered at Daysmealsness.

The speed of a convoy is that of the slowest vessel, but few of these could keep up with the fat old *Fafnir* as she waddled seaward, towing her great raft. And so they were caught in the main ice. Nine ships left behind lost heart and put back to Iceland. Two were nipped and sunk, and only half their people rescued from the ice-pack. The *Fafnir*, with fourteen ships, came on to Greenland and four of these were beached at Eric's Isle in time to prevent their sinking. Thence Eric sent orders that I should come at once with Hotblack, Michael Craftsman, and all able men to help him with repairs.

SETTING out after supper in the *Fenris*, we had the ebb to our aid, a northerly air in the sail and the low golden sunshine. Most of us went to sleep, but I watched the wild-geese homing, the gulls flying inland. Just as we entered the coast range, I saw a reeling scud across the sunset glow, caught the seaweed smell of southwesterly weather and heard a little moaning in the high snows.

I reefed down close while the wind whispered among the gorges, and a suddenly whirling cloud-race blotted out the sky. A pulse of swell came up the glassy fiord showing gray teeth of surf along the wall. We settled to steady oar-stroke in an eddy of the flooding tide, then swept into the backwater. Black squalls ruffled under the headlands. Out of the murk ahead came biting sleet, squalls and sudden furies of wind whipping the water on edge until an ever-growing vicious sea was maned with flying spray.

There is an artistry in clawing a boat through these fiords when wind and tide are hostile. A twelve-knot tide makes an eight-knot backwater along the bight of the shore, very strong aid if one could win round the headlands. And so from one backwater to another I had a fine winning fight, while the wind was breezing up to a strong blow. The swiftly mounting sea kept our half-decker awash and, as man after man went to bailing, we lost our oar strength. Led by Hall the Hunter and Hrut the Big my men would fain run for shelter, but I kept heartening them, and if they were scared of the sea they feared me more.

I was all afire to see Eric, nursing boat and crew. The less cover they have to run to the braver will men be. We were out of the fiord now, the heavy sea-way white under black sky, the gale blowing up toward storm, the men in terror. To put back? Nay, if there should be weather, Eric needed us.

In such a sea the watchers are always frightened; the workers seldom, because they had no time. Twelve hours I kept my people at the oars before I had offering enough to run for Eric's Isle. It was afternoon and my people far spent as we bore up the windward shore of the harbor to our warehouse, where we could beach in safety and cook some food. I would not go to the ships.

The gale had breezed up to storm and threatened hurricane, yet, as far as I could see, Eric's fleet showed no signs of alarm. There seemed to be nobody in command, so Eric must be away. The tide was making, and would be at flood just about supper time. Some of the ships might last until after supper.

On the left lay the four beached vessels, deep laden, too heavy to haul up clear of the flood. They were already half afloat, with the tide lifting them—doomed to be battered to wreckage before the ebb. The ten ships in the anchorage were getting out bags of ballast by way of extra moorings. Their tents were blowing away, most of them dragged and all would be ashore within that tide. I watched the signs of panic spread from ship to ship, as the people saw their peril and began to crowd for the boats. It was no use shouting. No voice could be heard in that storm.

Down from the warehouse I trundled a barrel of seal oil, broaching it at the tide rim. As the oil filmed the water it took the rough off the surf, giving some hope *to the people, allaying their panic.*

As I left cover the wind whipped me off my feet but I won to the beached ships, had out the landlubber owners, got the people roused and set them to work getting all cargo ashore.

Back to the *Fenris*, I spoke to the men. If we lost the fleet, that was an end of any Greenland colony. I told them that they were heroes, bade them set an example, showed them how we must give the landsmen a lesson. They left their dinner untasted. Now, making a warp fast to one of the great boulders which would make a good enough ballast, we passed it down aboard of the largest ship, the *Strom-worm*, whose people hauled her up into smooth water under lee of the shore. I sent my *Fenris* people aboard of her for food and rest, but took her crew away to aid the other ships in their great need. One by one we got them into safety. This finished, I took the whole of the crews and hauled the beached ships clear above all danger.

WHEN the whole fleet was safe, and the time well on toward midnight, the storm, which had lulled a little after sundown, was now at the height of its fury, blowing a hurricane. I kept the harbor oiled, but the surf from the outer sea lashed over us in sheets. I groped back to the *Storm-worm* to see how my men fared, and found that the cook had denied them fire, food or shelter. This person told me he dared not rouse his master, and the steersman had gone to the beached ships. I think my temper came to an edge as I asked this cook—

"Can you swim?"

He could not.

"Try."

WHEN I had a fire for my men to make their supper by, I went aft in search of the master. The cabin was in darkness, very stuffy and, making a light, *I found the bunks filled with women and children asleep.*

The table was littered with flagons and cups, and under it on the floor two *men were bedded. I roused them. The owner of the ship proved to be Easy-all* Heliulf. The other was my father.

"Your mother," he asked under his breath, "she lives?"

"Aye, sir, and sends you this—"

It was a sickening thing to do, which I had promised. I kissed him, whom I would fain have bitten. I gave brief tidings sulkily enough about the twins, Asdis and Stein and that Heliulf might overhear, spoke of our peace, our plenty and success at Brattelid. Heliulf should not see what I felt, and since he was my host I gave him greeting. I mentioned that his cook had gone out swimming. He brought a flagon of wine, for which I gave him thanks, and took it to my men. Not one of us had ever tasted wine in all our lives. Then I came back.

Roused from their sleep, disheveled and half-clad, men do not look at their best. Maybe my weariness gave color to the thought that Eric had neglected to command his fleet. What right had I to judge him? Yet well I knew what a fool I had been in my worship, who had expected to kneel to this man for his blessing.

Once upon a time there was a god, and a man who worshiped. All his life the man worshiped until he came to die and his eyes cleared. Then he looked up at his god—and saw an idol.

Since I renounced the gods to worship Eric I always thought of him as taller than Tyr, stronger than Thor and fair as Balder. I had intended reverence—but found him on the floor. When he stood up I was two inches taller. I saw his fiber softened. He was thickset about the waist. He was puffy beneath the eyes. He looked unwashed. He blinked. For the first time in my life I saw him, not as I dreamed but as he really was. My god had fallen. Henceforward I was to love the real Eric very tenderly, helpfully, and protect him now that he needed my strength to lean upon. He had grown jovial.

And there was Easy-all Heliulf—soft, unctuous, pompous, despicable, with his cry-baby mouth turned down at the corners by the sulky hang of his cheeks, his rollicking good fellowship; like a cracked bell, the mirthless laughter because I drowned his cook, the fear of me in his eyes. It was just like the fear men show when any one goes mad, while I sat smiling at him across the table, while his jokes fell flat, while his trembling hand poured and spilled wine from a flagon.

There could be no safety in this man's friendship, but he would behave himself quite prettily while he feared me, a very mouse so long as I played cat. So he made jokes about his son my old friend Bear. Oh, yes, Bear still commanded the *Flying Dragon*. Now, scold! Drink hearty! How like you the southland wine? Bear made a gainful business with that warship.

Bear had turned Viking! Well if Bear Heliulfson kept the sea in that trade! As sneaky as any of my chicken-thieves, but not half such a man toward robbery-under-arms as Hrut Chicken-heart, or gentle Michael Craftsman, Hotblack, or Harald Hawk, or even Windy-nose. Yes, for so long as Ethelred the Redeless reigned in England, with Dunstan turned out of court, there was good money for Vikings along the English coasts. The Danes took scat of England nowadays, but still there were pickings for real sea heroes like Bear Heliulfson. More likely I reckoned Bear went buying thralls in the English slave marts.

"Doth Bear still love me?" I asked.

"More than ever!"

"Shall I fly now, or hide when the Viking comes?"

It was as if poor Heliulf said, "I am only a mouse, but my son a very lion!"

Then I was sorry for him. The only real thing in the man was that loyal love for Bear. He would not go to the good inland country, but have his land-take on the poor outer coast where Bear might the more easily find him. I said I had the very place he needed, and offered pilotage.

Before the gale was over Eric had me ashore to tell me secrets. Heliulf was one of the richest men in Iceland; but, like a fat goose neighbored by many foxes, had such misgivings of being murdered by them that he was fled to Greenland. His good report of the country would bring settlers. He was ambitious also, who, born in thralldom and bedded with a thrall by way of marriage, now hoped to wed his daughter among the gentry. Heliulf had bidden for me!

To meet all this I promised to kiss the girl, who was not so plain as her sire, to do my best for Heliulf as to a land grant, and show him how to build a place of strength. And so when the weather eased I conned the *Storm-worm* to a headland, much too good for Heliulf, where grass was plentiful, the harbor safe, the house-site on a very defensible rock, the fishery wonderful, the outlook seaward. Every four hours I bussed his daughter, who took the treatment well. I showed steadings and tenancies until the old rogue felt he would be a chief with priest-right.

The harbor was as good a cheaping place for shipmen as Hladir in old Norway, and if so be the seafowl took to shopping, Heliulf would thrive as a chapman. As to the fellow who said, "What's in a name?" I reckon him a poor salesman in dealings with real estate. I called the place Heliulfness, and gave that name to the district, which cost me nought but mightily pleased Heliulf.

As to the price, I sprang that, much as one touches off a trap, so soon as the prey is inside. I bussed the daughter, also, and Heliulf was surprized to see, on counting out, how much of his silver it cost him. I would not have him underrate the value of what he got. The man was more rogue than fool and made such gainful use of his lands that his messages to Iceland brought out the best of our settlers.

TO BE CONTINUED

The Camp-Fire

A free-to-all Meeting-Place *for* Readers, Writers *and* Adventurers

OUR Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The spirit *of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.*

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

CAPTAIN DINGLE identifies the five-masted full-rigged ship shown in the photograph sent us by a Southern comrade following Gordon Young's question as to six-masters:

Yes, the picture you sent me is the *Preussen*—so far as I know, the only five-masted full-rigged ship ever built. She belonged to F. Laeisz, of Hamburg, and was in the Chili nitrate trade. To the best of my recollection she was wrecked in the English Channel just before the late war.

There was a five-masted barque, the *Potosi*, in the same trade and ownership, which was interned in Chili in the war and afterward allocated to the Chilians, who renamed her *Flora*. I hear she has been wrecked on the West Coast. *Preussen* was built in 1902. 5081 tons register; 407.8 feet long; 53.6 beam; 27.1 depth. Could carry probably twice her register tonnage.

Potosi was built in 1895. 4026 registered tonnage; 366.3 feet long; 49.7 beam; 28.5 depth. Both vessels were built by J. C. Tecklenborg, A. G., at Geestemunde. Laeisz at the same time owned fifteen square-riggers, barques or ships, all large vessels, all named beginning with P and all in the nitrate trade. *Potosi* and *Preussen* were the only five-masters; and *Preussen* the only five-masted full-rigged ship.—DINGLE.

OUR brief word about a Canadian herd of buffalo led to a request to the Department of the Interior of the Canadian Government for further particulars, and the following information was courteously supplied by Commissioner J. B. Harkin, Commissioner of Canadian National Parks.

Buffalo National Park is situated at Wainwright, Alta., on the Canadian National Railway, 127 miles east of Edmonton and 199 miles west of Saskatoon. This park was originally reserved by Order-in-Council on March 7, 1908, and comprises an area of 161.5 square miles or approximately 100,000 acres. It is the home of Canada's national buffalo herd, is the largest wild animal enclosure and contains the largest buffalo herd in the world.

Winter quarters are fenced off from the main range and during the summer no buffalo are allowed therein. In the fall the cows with calves by their sides are brought into this enclosure, where they find good pasture that usually lasts for a couple of months, after which they are fed hay and straw when the weather is severe.

From the time they were brought to Buffalo Park some eighteen years ago, the herd has continued to thrive to such an extent that their numbers have increased over tenfold, nearly eight thousand animals now being within the confines of the park as compared with the seven hundred and sixteen originally secured.

The story of the inception of the present herd is one of the most interesting in the annals of wild life conservation. Since 1909 and up to September, 1914, a total of seven hundred and forty-eight buffalo were safely transported to the park. Of this number six hundred and thirty-one were from what was known as the Pablo herd. Of the balance of one hundred and seventeen, eighty-seven were obtained from Rocky Mountain National Park, Banff, Alberta, while thirty came from the Conrad herd at Kalispiel, Montana.

The history of the Pablo portion goes back to 1873 when Walking Coyote, a Pend d'Oreille Indian, captured four little buffalo calves, two bulls and two heifers, on the Flathead reservation in Montana. These calves came into the possession of the Mission of St. Ignatius and under its fostering care the buffalo increased until in 1884 Michel Pablo, of Ronan, Montana, bought ten from the Mission for $250 each.

Until 1906 Pablo was able to provide grazing ground for his constantly increasing herd, but at this time the United States decided to throw open the reserve for settlement and Pablo was faced with the problem of securing new range. At first he endeavored to get the United States Government to purchase the animals, but failing in this he applied to the Canadian authorities for free grazing land in Canada. The Canadian Government, realizing this was an opportunity to save this interesting species for Canada, opened negotiations and obtained an option on the entire herd at the price of $250 each and, before the general public in Canada or the United States realized it, the ownership of the Pablo herd by the Dominion Government was an accomplished fact.

The animals are kept within the confines of the park by a steel wire fence nine feet high, the total length of fencing around and inside the park being approximately one hundred miles. The cross fencing provides a Visitors' Park at the Wainwright entrance in which are kept seventy-five buffalo, about two hundred elk, twenty yak and a number of moose and deer. Fire guards plowed on each side of the enclosing fence serve as protection for the herd against the ever-present menace.

On the main range of the park buffalo are not the only inhabitants. At the time the park was fenced one male elk was enclosed and thirteen have since been imported, their numbers now totalling over three hundred. Mule deer now number over one thousand head while there are four antelope, two having been imported and two reared in the park. The territory is not suitable for moose and they do not thrive there although every effort has been put forth for their propagation by the importation of about twenty animals. A small herd of yak has increased by five over the original importation of sixteen.

About a dozen cattalo are in the reserve. These are animals produced by crossing the buffalo with domestic cattle, an experiment which is being carried out by the Department of Agriculture. The name is universally applied to all crosses. These animals are splendid grazers and like the buffalo are able to forage and thrive on comparatively poor pasture. During the winter they graze through the snow and, no matter how severe the winter, do not require to be fed, as do domestic cattle.

Statistics show that the annual birth rate in the buffalo herd produces approximately an equal number of males and females. It is therefore not surprizing that a surplus of male animals is yearly created that is rapidly increasing in volume. The present strength of the herd is such as to tax the grazing capacity of the park and it was on this account that a slaughter was undertaken in the winter of 1923-'24. At this time nearly two thousand animals were killed, the meat prepared for market, and the hides, heads and other marketable products disposed of.

During the past two summers another plan was carried out for the disposal of the surplus buffalo. It is estimated that there are approximately two thousand wood buffalo in the region of Great Slave Lake, near Fort Smith, Northwest Territories. They roam on a natural bison range, and a survey was made of this territory in 1922. Two thousand surplus buffalo from Buffalo National Park were transported to this tract each year. The animals were coralled at Buffalo Park, branded, loaded into cars and taken by rail as far north as Waterways or Fort

McMurray, Alberta. Here they were transferred to scows and taken down the Athabaska River to the vicinity of Fitzgerald, Alberta, where they were liberated. If the experiment proves successful and the transported animals thrive in their new environment, it seems reasonably assured that an outlet has been found for the surplus animals of the national buffalo herd.

Buffalo Park is under the immediate supervision of Mr. A. G. Smith and a resident staff, while the entire establishment is administered by the National Parks Branch, Department of the Interior, with headquarters at Ottawa. Approximately five hundred buffalo are in Elk Island National Park, which is a secondary buffalo reservation situated thirty-five miles east of Edmonton. An exhibition herd of twenty-three animals is kept at Banff, headquarters of Rocky Mountains National Park.

HOW cold does it get in Saskatchewan? In one of his stories William Byron Mowery had 70° below zero with no wind and 59° with wind blowing. One of you questioned these figures and his letter and Mr. Mowery's reply set forth the facts.

Sioux Lookout, Ontario.

I have frequently felt the urge to write on some point in "Camp-Fire," but it took Byron Mowery's Texan impression of Saskatchewan climate to stir me to the point of action.

Discussing with my wife his figures for Prince Albert temperatures, we recollected our own residence in that beautiful sheltered little city, for five and three years respectively. During these periods we jointly recollected only one cold, windy day—22 degrees below zero F. We often had 40 to 55 below, but it was still and calm on every occasion. We used to compare the Dawson figures in the meteorological reports and they were always 5 to 25 degrees colder than those of Prince Albert. I recollect returning from a dance in evening dress, with my coon coat collar turned down and every thermometer on River Street showing 49 below, without fear of frostbite. On the other hand, when in the C. E. F. I got badly frozen in Saskatoon, where the wind *does* blow sometimes.

Prince Albert can only get a short run of north wind, being sheltered by hundreds of miles of forest lands, right up to the river bank. A winter on the shores of Lake Ontario worried the writer with cold winds far more than ten winters in Northern Saskatchewan. Official figures for P. A. were taken in our time, on the hill, about 2 degrees warmer than the river bank.

I cherfully admit the possibility of a spirit thermometer's showing 78 below. I have seen 72 below on one at Vanda, Sask., when it was really 48 below.

The topography of inland Canada causes some remarkable variations, I will admit, for Mr. Mowery's justification. White River, for example, southeast of my present location, always breaks all Canadian records, while here we have had, in two winters, only once a temperature worse than 30 below zero F. The worst blizzard I was ever in I met in London, Ont., only 10 below, but it froze my ears in two blocks and sent me to my quarters for my old Western fur hat.

Finally, Mr. Mowery; Saskatchewan has a forest belt of hilly land between her hilly "park country" and Hudson's Bay. I would rather live in Prince Albert than Regina or Winnipeg or Toronto for winter comfort, and I have had the chance to judge of all.

So now my "kick" is over. I now come to my appreciation. I fancy Mr. Mowery's *Rev. Duncan* was the man who threatened to have me "pinched" for boating on Sunday, and, as one who lived in the Doukhobor country, knew and liked them, I can say they ring true in his story. *Adventure* itself rings true to us, here in "the town without a road anywhere," in latitude 50, with the nearest city 220 miles away, and waterways the travel highways of our hunters, trappers, fishermen, lumbermen and tourists. My boys and girls sneak it upstairs before I get it read, and it is finally passed on to our Scout troop. If any reader wants big "muskies," good pickerel, huge lake trout, and moose or deer, I can put him on the right track in a country just becoming known to tourists.

Please add to your list of appreciative readers a school master, ex-bank manager and army officer.—H. O. GUDGIN.

Mr. Mowery's reply follows:

Montreal, Canada.

My dear Mr. Gudgin: I have your letter concerning "St. Gabriel Zsbyski." After the good things you had to say anent the novelette I hate to argue with you about the weather, but facts must out.

My impressions of Saskatchewan weather were not formed in Texas, but Johnny on the spot. When I was a young lad I went into the hills north of Red Deer Lake with two kinsmen now in Battleford. We stuck till the eleventh of January and then simply had to get out. The weather was a beast. High winds, sudden terrific woollies and temperature from 40 to 45 below right along.

I will freely admit that such a blizzard as I describe is not a common occurrence. In fact I say specifically that it was the worst Zsbyski had ever known. I will admit also that my Camp-Fire statement that P. A. has it all over Dawson City for degrees of coldness is somewhat misleading. P. A. does get six or seven degrees colder than Dawson ever gets, but the Klondike town has a considerably lower mean, I believe.

It may be that your winters in P. A. were not severe ones, although eight of them ought to be a good test. It may be, also, that P. A. itself is not wide-open to woollies. I don't remember for sure

but I seem to recall that north of the town is a range of hills. If so, they would afford shelter for about ten miles south and would therefore help account for the absence of high wind and extreme cold in conjunction. I think that the facts point strongly to that possibility, without damaging at all your general statement about winters in P. A.

In the story I make two out-and-out commitments: still cold at 70 below and 59 below with a wind blowing. The first of these is fortunately of such a nature that it can easily and sharply be proved one way or the other. If you will consult the meteorological table for P. A. over the available period, you will find several entries at 65 to 68 below and one at 70.4. These are government figures and, I suspect, are conservative.

So the argument narrows down to the possibility of 59 below with a wind blowing. So far as I can discover, no official data on this exists, but here are a few points and instances.

I am no meteorologist but according to my limited understanding of the subject there is a belt of land about four hundred and fifty miles wide cutting down through Saskatchewan to western Dakota and Montana, which for geographical reasons is peculiarly subject to winds and low temperatures in conjunction. The strong woods afford shelter to any spot right within them, but naturally do not check the general sweep of the blizzards. Nothing short of a mountain range will do that. A stretch of park country, such as my story is set in, would therefore get all that the woolly had.

That is the theory side of it. Here are some instances. Blizzards are like fish—one can hear almost any old story; but I sorted out a few statements which seem to me hardly open to doubt.

Captain Sir Cecil Denny in the sixth annual of Scarlet and Gold, page 38, describes one storm of 65 *below with a terrific wind blowing*. This, the memorable storm of 1875, is amply corroborated by various people. It goes my figures considerably better. Furthermore, Denny encountered it on the Milk River, away south of where my story is set, but in the same wind belt as cited above. I mentioned the engineer who told me of experiencing (200 miles north of P. A.) 78 below still cold and 60 below with a high wind. He seemed to me a reliable person, and his instruments ought to have been pretty exact since he was doing official work.

One of my present neighbors lived for three years in the C. P. tract between Cut Knife and the Beaver. His farm is now a part of the famous frozen assets—he could not stick it out. He read my story and his comment might be worth while. He said he had not seen it as cold as I give—50 below with a wind and 65 still cold was his limit. But he was there only three years and his figures after all are not greatly below mine.

And in Thompson's "Travels" I find one instance of 61 below with a strong wind. I am unable to make out his location except that it was on the Saskatchewan west of P. A. Thompson is noted for his accuracy of observation and fidelity to fact.

The theory and the well-authenticated instances, therefore, seem to support my story. As I pointed out above, they do not necessarily damage your statement at all about the P. A. local conditions.—William Byron Mowery.

IT'S an old Camp-Fire comrade asking about belt holsters for pistols and by way of thanks in advance he brings us an interesting little item on the prowess of the old English archers. Members of our writers' brigade—as well as Donegan Wiggins of A. A.—should be able to give him the information sought.

Visalia, California.

Some day I hope to complete a story of the "short gun" that will carry a true picture of the evolution of this handy article, its use, abuse and transportation. Data regarding early custom is hard to find. Books written in description of game and Indian hunting go long on the shooting, sliding or eating and short on the tools employed, the actual dates (particular as to exact hour, day of week and month and omit year) and other items of actual value. How valuable to a student of firearms is the common statement "shot with an Army rifle" after a complete description of the phase of the moon, the sound of the striking bullet, the color of the blood and all that—remembering that our Government adopted for use in the Army more than 140 different kinds of rifle. Or they say "he was shot with a Colt revolver at noon on the umteenth of May." Now that would be interesting if they added that it was in the year 1825 (also valuable in that it would class the writer as a liar); or that in 1869 the revolver used was a double-action Colt of any particular caliber.

I enclose separate sheet with a query regarding holsters. Believe that Gordon Young or A. D. H. Smith must have found answers to it in their research for "Days of '49" and "Manifest Destiny" and many others may have had access to illustrations bearing dates that would serve to locate the missing facts. One of your contemporaries recently put out a cover with a well posed figure aiming one of the old Colt Dragoon or Army revolvers and wearing a belt filled with metallic cartridges thrust in the belt bullet up. Supposing one of these preserved, a kid four or five generations in the future collecting data on the subject of firearms will have a hot historical substantiation of almost anything he wishes to prove. No salve, but your magazine is the only one coming to my notice that has not had either one or many "historical sketches" put over on it that were full of inaccuracies.

The other enclosure regarding archery is supposedly authentic as I copied it from an old encyclopedia, but shows that either liars date fairly well

back or that the "high-brow" editor was in error (as usual) and coupled a speed and accuracy test with a test of penetration at a far different range—but *you* explain away those 240 yards.—MORVE L. WEAVER.

P.S.—Old gun catalogues, if one had files of them, would indicate fairly the introduction of the belt holster. I am scraping —— for ammunition catalogues prior to 1890 to locate the date of certain ammunition—how's your portion?

IS IT possible to reach some of your authors who have recently made research in early American customs and get an approximate date of the introduction of the belt holster for carrying pistols?

I know that pistols carried on horseback and in coaches were holstered in the very early days but have a hunch that the belt holster is comparatively modern. One old friend who crossed the plains in 1852 says that returning miners (going east from California) impressed him because they carried revolvers in belt holsters, rode horses and had saddles with horns. We know that Colt classed his revolving pistols (*a*) holster, the 3-pound, eight-inch barrel, "Dragoon," (*b*) belt, which included the 1851 Navy model, and (*c*) pocket, those of .36, .31 and .28 calibers, regardless of the length of barrel of some of the last class. Early magazine illustrations as well as the cuts in bound books, even up into the '60s, show pistols and revolvers carried thrust through a belt. Personally I believe the belt holster came in during or subsequent to the Civil War.

Mayhap the archery experts who have entertained us at the Camp-Fire in the recent issues have not read the following: *United Service Journal*, Sept., 1832, quoting Moritz Meyer in "Technologie des Armes de Feu—note anno 1471," says "The English archer who did not discharge twelve arrows per minute, of which only one should fail its aim, was disgraced" and "at the distance of 240 yards the arrow could penetrate two or three inches of oak." Long bows don't, apparently, all shoot arrows and are no modern innovation.

WHO can give us first-hand information on this woods poet whose verses are favorites of the cattlemen of British Columbia?

Quilchana, British Columbia.

I am in the cattle country of British Columbia and at last among the real cowpunchers. I was born in Boston and I am 23 years old. I have wandered all over seeking for the true cowboy but all I ran across were fakes, but at Douglas Lake, 60 miles back from the railroad, there are to be seen the real genuine article, and true to life. One gets in by stage from Kamlogis. I have seen actual roping, not exhibition roping, and they use the rawhide rope, and still ride the range, not fences, and they dress for use and work, not like the imitation cowboys.

I HAVE been among the lumberjacks also, and do any of the Camp-Fire members know of the songs and stories of one George Eels or Elas or Eils or some such name? I heard of him among the lumberjacks and also of him in the cattle country, and again I heard of him among the school-teacher class, and even heard of him in Kamlogis among the what is supposed to be the educated class. He is said to have a bush homestead on Shusway Lake, and one piece of his poetry is this:

In the heart of Christ's teachings
There does it appear to me
Somewhere, somehow I can't quite tell,
A jewell there seems to be.

A jewell that has the flavor
Of the finest clear spring day
The glory of a starlight night
And the mystery of the milky way,
The vastness of the mountains,
The depth of the deepest sea,
The ease of a bird when flying,
The grace of a tall upstanding tree.

The sweetness of cool water
When you're hot and tired and dry,
The artfulness when you're sore in need
As the smile of a friendly eye.

There are lots of other pieces and stories of him that I haven't got clear—one piece that ends up with a goat eating a banknote, and one verse like this:

That slimy politician
Trying the people's votes to gain
Scheming for a high position
And their money to obtain.

Another verse:

A wondrous land is the States
But it has met the saddest of sad, sad fates.
Some one turned the land dry
But the wet stuff git by
And made a bootleg bog of the States.

Now I have heard considerable talk of him. The first piece I copied from a copy that a wandering preacher had, that he said was a copy from an original handwritten copy of the man Eler. Now, isn't it a piece only to be thought of by an outdoor man? In Kamlogis I am told there are other copies of his writings that are being repeated all over by different men, and one story is that some have been just

in the *Literary Digest*, but I can't get any definite news. About the stories, I am told some are outdoor, some are mystic like the old Scotch Highlander stuff, some rollicking. Now do any of the outdoor people of the Camp-Fire know him? I am told he has a caustic and sharp biting style of wit. Here is still one nice little piece that I think is called "A Limeach Boy":

There was a young man of Noo York.
Of Noo York he's continually talk.
When given some work
That work he'd shirk
And of Noo York he talk and talk talk
And talk talk and talk talk still talking.

That was posted up on the bunkhouse door. Yet, in spite of the rhymes, still there are some beautiful pieces, and the bit on the teachings of Christ is carried around in the pockets of some of the outdoor men, some who you'd never suspect and more than any one would imagine, and in spite of the religion in it, yet there are pieces knocking the preacher.

Well, can any one of the *Adventure* readers tell anything about him and his songs and stories? All I have of him is that he is short but very wide and husky and travels all over, has a bush ranch on some lake away back, and he seems to charm any one and all with his stories and songs. And also with a tin whistle which he plays, just like the pipes of the Old Greek poets. And also he is a scrapper. It all sounds romantic and perhaps it is or maybe not. Anyway, track it down if possible and find out the bare facts, as maybe there is another Billie Bucos running loose and not acknowledged.—ANGUS MACDONALD.

NO FURTHER word has come from Gordon MacCreagh since the brief cablegram announcing that he had been received by the regent of Abyssinia and had been given permission to penetrate that part of northeastern Africa where, it is said, the real Ark of the Covenant, stolen from Solomon by the son of the Queen of Sheba, lies hidden away. Any mail now may bring us Mr. MacCreagh's report on the experiences of the expedition up to the time it left Adis Abeba and set out into the field. Plans for investigating the other native legends that interest the expedition will likely be put into the report. Personally, I confess that I am especially curious to know what truth lies in the story that tribesmen of the Sudanese border hunt elephants and tigers with swords, but none of the work that the expedition has cut out for itself will be what you would call especially dull. Incidentally, Gordon MacCreagh's name will be on the cover of the next issue as notice that there is a fiction story by him inside. Don't take it as an indication that the expedition report is in print. It won't reach us in time for that, but we'll pass it on to you just as soon as we possibly can.—J. E. C.

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of *Adventure*, published twice a month at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1927. State of New York, County of New York, *ss.* Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared LEVIN RANK, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Treasurer of The Butterick Publishing Company, publisher of *Adventure* and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, THE BUTTERICK PUBLISHING COMPANY, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City. Editor, ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN, 223 Spring Street, New York City. Managing Editor, JOSEPH COX, 223 Spring Street, New York City. Business Managers, none. 2. The owner is: THE BUTTERICK PUBLISHING COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City, whose stockholders are: THE FEDERAL PUBLISHING COMPANY, a corporation, 15 Exchange Place, Jersey City, New Jersey, whose stockholder is: THE BUTTERICK COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City, whose stockholders are: ASIEL & Co., 11 Wall Street, New York City; WM. BLAIR BAGGALEY, 5 S. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Ill.; WM. G. BAGGALEY, 5 S. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Ill.; CHAS. D. BARNEY & Co., 65 Broadway, New York City; WILLIAM FREIDAY, 65 Broadway, New York City; WILLIAM O. HAMLIN, 60 Broadway, New York City; FREDERICK J. HART, c/o Moore & Schley, 100 Broadway, N. Y. C.; WILLIAM HAVERTY, c/o Moore & Schley, 100 Broadway, New York City; HEIDELBACH, ICKELHEIMER & Co., 49 Wall Street, New York City; HENDRICKSON & Co., 61 Broadway, New York City; IDA J. LATSHAW, Haddam, Conn.; STANLEY R. LATSHAW, Butterick Building, 223 Spring Street, N. Y. C.; LUKE, BANKS & WEEKS, 14 Wall Street, New York City; MERRICK & Co., c/o Customers Securities Dept., The New York Trust Company, 100 Broadway, New York City; Jos. A. MOORE, 300 Park Avenue, New York City; FRED SIEGMUND, c/o Moore & Schley, 100 Broadway, New York City; J. A. SISTO & Co., 68 Wall Street, New York City; J. W. SPARKS & Co., 66 Broadway, New York City. 3. *That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are:* DIME SAVINGS BANK, De Kalb Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. LEVIN RANK, Treasurer. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29th day of March, 1927. BLEVINS C. DUNKLIN, Notary Public, New York County. County Clerk's No. 179, Reg. No. 7113; Bronx County Clerk's No. 9, Register No. 2710; Kings County Clerk's No. 18, Register No. 7076. (*My commission expires March* 30, 1927.) (Seal.) Form 3526—Ed. 1924.

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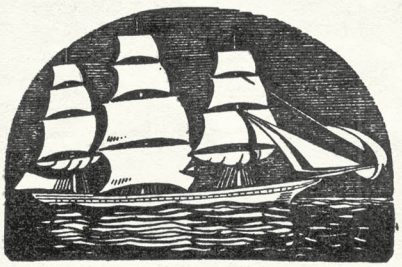

Questions and Answers

Accurate Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere

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Old Songs that Men have Sung

Collecting and Discussing Old Songs still Living among the People

Camp Cooking

ONE of the most primitive methods of cooking meat carried out on an indoor range in an outdoor manner.

Request:—"How is a real barbecue sauce made?

Must meats in small pieces such as loin of pork, leg of venison, ribs of beef be continually turning over the fire? Is there any special way of banking the hot embers? We had to do away with our drip pans on account of the heat not striking the meat.

Is there any difference between fresh killed meat and meat which has been hung and aged? Now if I give you an idea of our barbecue range you may be able to help me better. It is 15 ft. long, 3 ft. wide, 3 ft. high with a rack on the top for the spits. We use hickory wood cut in store lengths. We build our fire in the bottom of the sand covered pit. Our draught is created by fans which draw our heat and smoke from the front of the range. While overhead there is a regular hood to draw whatever smoke and smell which comes from the cooking out.

A few years ago I was out West where I attended a barbecue and if I remember rightly the man kept basting the stew while another kept turning it. The meat was very delicious and juicy while ours is black and dry."—W. G. BRESWENGER, New York City.

Reply, by Mr. Horace Kephart:—Your inquiry relates to one of the most primitive processes of cooking meat. It interests me particularly because this is the first time I have ever been called on to help in a city kitchen by showing an outdoor trick. Incidentally, I have cooked thousands of meals in the open, but never in my life have I used a kitchen range. You and I could have some fun if we got together.

I don't see why your town barbecueing rig should not work well with small roasts, game, etc., if well managed. Your trouble is that the meat turns out black and dry, instead of juicy. It is bound to do so if the meat was tough to start with, or was not basted while cooking, or if the fire is either too fierce or too low. Moreover, any barbecued meat is improved by a good sauce.

As for the meat, before cooking. It certainly should have been "hung" long enough to be tender before you accept it from the butcher. This is just

as true of venison and small game as it is of beef. Beef is not at its best for steaks until it has hung a month. In camp or on the march we often have to eat fresh-killed game; but we wouldn't do so if we could help it. Such meat is always tough, unless from a young animal, and it hurts a man's insides until he gets adjusted to it. If you must use fresh meat for your barbecues, parboil it first until tender. This applies even to such small animals as squirrels, unless they are young.

In barbecueing, the main thing is first to sear the outside of the meat by a fierce heat, so as to form a thin impervious coat that will seal up the juices inside and not permit them to leak out. As quickly as that is done, either raise the meat higher, for a lower temperature, or cover the red-hot embers with a thin layer of ashes, which has the same effect. Then cook slowly till done. That trick of imprisoning the juices is what makes meat juicy instead of dry. The outside will not be black unless it has been smoked from wood or from drippings.

To keep the outside from getting too dry while the slow cooking is going on, baste it occasionally. In camp we do that with a bit of bacon on the end of a twig. But there is a better way when the materials are at hand.

Take one pint of vinegar, half a can of tomatoes, some chopped pepper pods, a teaspoonful of black pepper, same of salt, two tablespoons of butter. Simmer together until amalgamated. Put a swab on the end of a stick, dip in the sauce, and baste the meat as long as it is on the fire.

On the subject of sauces I am mute in the presence of a professional cook. Personally I like a Mexican sauce, or a Spanish sauce, that has tomatoes, onion, red and green pepper, and a suspicion of garlic in it. But you know a darned sight more about that than I do.

You ask about continuous turning over the fire. The idea is to turn often enough to cook evenly all around. In a camp barbecue we do not turn continuously, as on a spit, but just now and then as we see it is required.

Embers are banked with ashes. You should not begin cooking until enough ashes have accumulated for that purpose. You can brush off the ashes for a final browning. Hickory embers can be kept hot and solid for hours by covering with a layer of ashes so no air gets to them. I have often kept them that way all night, in a hole in the ground.

Japan

SOME advice on traveling in a curious country where the innkeepers are actually anxious to make you comfortable —and where the inns are inexpensive.

Request:—"I am twenty years old, and plan a trip around the world, starting this fall.

1. What is board and room in Tokyo and Yokohama?

2. Is it under any circumstance possible to obtain employment on land for even a short time in Tokyo, Yakohama or Osaka? (I should like to study the country closer, and this will necessitate a temporary employment.)

3. What is the railroad fare from Tokyo to Osaka? Are the highways between those parts good?

4. What is the steamship fare from Osaka to Tientsin in China? How long does it take to go this route?"—EDWARD JENSEN, Detroit, Mich.

Reply, by Mr. Small:—You must remember that Japanese conditions right now are not normal: for example, a moratorium has just been declared. As an example of conditions there, the Bank of Taiwan, one of the largest, has closed its doors. However, here's the questions asked:

1. Room and board, in Japanese inns or with private families, may be had as low as ¥6 to ¥10 per week, sometimes even less. Depends upon what you are willing to put up with. But it is the way to see the country and the people. Worth years in foreign hotels or the larger inns.

2. It is possible to obtain employment—but not easy for one not speaking the language. And, as I said, conditions are "tight" right now. Depends upon what you are willing to do.

3. The railroad fare: I have the first-class fare, but there is no reason why you shouldn't go 2nd or even 3rd. I haven't those rates. But they are about 2½ *sen* per mile. No reason for not making the journey on foot, and really seeing the country. Inns along the way are very inexpensive—just the kind you'd want. Clean food, clean rooms, and innkeepers anxious to make you comfortable.

4. Sorry, but I haven't the latest steamship fare from Osaka to Tientsin. That is not in my territory. I am, however, sending you the folder of the Osaka Shoshen Kaisha under separate cover, which gives the information you require as to time, steamers, sailings, etc.

Crocodiles

WHAT is the difference between a crocodile and an alligator? If you think you know, try to answer before you read Mr. Emerson's reply.

Request:—"Will you tell me whether the crocodile or the alligator has the broadest nose or snout and where is the vital spot to hit if one wishes to shoot them?"—ROBERT ELLIS, Los Gatos, Cal.

Reply, by Mr. Emerson.—There are several differences between alligators and crocodiles.

The head of the alligator is broader and shorter, the snout more blunt, and its canine teeth "receive" into a pit formed for it within the upper jaw, also there is no jagged fringe on the hind legs and feet, and webs only half way up to the tips of the toes.

The alligator never leaves fresh water; whereas the crocodile is sometimes seen swimming at sea.

The place to hit them is in the eye.

Horses

BOOKS on breeding Belgians, Percherons and Clydes are not so easy to obtain as you might think.

Request:—"Would you kindly inform me where I may purchase books of the history, breeding and any other information on the following breeds of horses: Percherons, Belgians and Clydes?

Is there any paper or magazine published weekly or monthly dealing with draft horses only?

If there is, where may I subscribe for it?"—E. K. GARDNER, Patten, Maine.

Reply, by Mr. Dameron.—I know of no periodical at the present time which is devoted exclusively to the draft horses. The various farm and stock papers devote very little space to them considering the fact that at least two-thirds of the hualing in the cities still falls to the lot of old dobbin.

The U. S. Depatrtment of Agriculture, however, has not forgotten us, so I will give a partial list of pamphlets you may obtain from the Superintendent of Public Documents, Washington, D. C.

G. A. Bell—Breeds of Draft Horses.
Williams & Krantz—Care and Management of Farm Work Horses.
H. H. Reese—Breeding of the Morgan horse at the U. S. Morgan Horse Farm.
H. H. Reese—Horse Breeding Suggestions for Farmers.
Williams—Developing an American Utility Horse.

Dinsmore wrote a paper on "Why Breed Drtaf Horses," in 1918. This was distributed free by the Percheron Society of America, Union Stock Yards, Chicago, Illinois.

Dinsmore and Sanders wrote a book, "History of the Percheron Horse," in 1917, which was sold by the Breeders' Gazette, 542 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill. The address of the American Association of Importers and Breeders of Belgian Draft Horses used to be Wabash, Indiana.

I. P. Roberts wrote a book in about 1905, "The Horse," in which he devoted a chapter each to the origin of the draft animals.

Our Experts—They have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

They will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assume any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible.

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2. **Where to Send**—Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine. All questions on actual travel should be addressed to "Adventure's Travel Association," care *Adventure*, not to this department. All questions, however, on equipment (except ordinary travel equipment) should be addressed to this department, not to "Straight Goods."
3. **Extent of Service**—No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.
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Yachting BERIAH BROWN, Coupeville, Wash., or HENRY W. RUBINKAM, Chicago Yacht Club, Box 507, Chicago, Ill.

Motor Boating GEORGE W. SUTTON, 6 East 45th St., New York City.

Motor Camping JOHN D. LONG, 610 W. 116th St., New York City.

Motor Vehicles *Operation, operating cost, legislative restrictions, public safety.*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care *Adventure.*

All Shotguns *including foreign and American makes; wing shooting.* JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers *including foreign and American makes.*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. 3, Box 75, Salem, Ore.

Edged Weapons—ROBERT E. GARDNER, 423 Wilson Ave., Columbus. O.

First Aid on the Trail *Medical and surgical emergency care, wounds, injuries, common illnesses, diet, pure water, clothing, insect and snake bite; industrial first aid and sanitation for mines, logging camps, ranches and exploring parties as well as for camping trips of all kinds. First-aid outfits. Health hazard of the outdoor life, arctic, temperate and tropical zones.*—CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D., Falls City, Neb.

Health-Building Outdoors *How to get well and how to keep well in the open air, where to go and how to travel, right exercise, food and habits, with as much adaptation as possible to particular cases.*—CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D., Falls City, Neb.

Hiking CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M.D., Falls City, Neb.

Camp Cooking HORACE KEPHART, Bryson City, N. C.

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economic minerals such as pitchblende or uranium, gypsum, mica, cryolite, etc. Questions on investment excluded.—VICTOR SHAW, Loring, Alaska.

Forestry in the United States *Big-game hunting, guides and equipment; national forests of the Rocky Mountain States. Questions on the policy of the Government regarding game and wild animal life in the forests.*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Tropical Forestry *Tropical forests and forest products; their economic possibilities; distribution, exploration, etc.*—WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, care *Adventure.*

Railroading in the U. S., Mexico and Canada *General office, especially immigration, work; advertising work, duties of station agent, bill clerk, ticket agent, passenger brakeman and rate clerk. General Information.*—R. T. NEWMAN, P. O. Drawer 368, Anaconda, Mont.

Aviation *Airplanes; airships; airways and landing fields; contests; Aero Clubs; insurance; laws; licenses; operating data; schools; foreign activities; publications. No questions on stock promotion.*—LIEUT.-COL. W. G. SCHAUFFLER, JR., 2940 Newark St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

Army Matters, United States and Foreign LIEUT. GLENN R. TOWNSEND, Fort Snelling, Minn.

Navy Matters *Regulations, history, customs, drill, gunnery; tactical and strategic questions, ships, propulsion, construction, classification; general information. Questions regarding the enlisted personnel and officers except such as contained in the Register of Officers can not be answered. Maritime law.*—LIEUT. FRANCIS GREENE, U. S. N. R., 2200 Kinzie Ave., Racine, Wis.

U. S. Marine Corps LIEUT. F. W. HOPKINS, Fleet Marine Corps Reserves, BOX 1042, Madford, Oregon.

State Police FRANCIS H. BENT, JR., care *Adventure.*

Royal Canadian Mounted Police PATRICK LEE, No. 2 Grace Court, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Horses *Care, breeding, training of horses in general; hunting, jumping, and polo; horses of the old and new West.*—THOMAS H. DAMERON, 911 S. Union Ave., Pueblo, Colo.

Dogs JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

Ornithology PROF. ARCHIBALD RUTLEDGE, Mercersburg Academy, Mercersburg, Pa.

Photography *Information on outfitting and on work in out-of-the-way places. General information.*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, New Jersey or SIGISMUND BLUMANN, Claus Spreckel Bldg., San Francisco, Cal.

Linguistics and Ethnology *(a) Racial and tribal tradition, history and psychology; folklore and mythology. (b) Languages and the problems of race migration, national development and descent (authorities and bibliographies). (c) Individual languages and language-families; interrelation of tongues, their affinities and plans for their study.*—DR. NEVILLE WHYMANT, 345 W. 23rd St., New York City.

American Anthropology North of the Panama Canal *Customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions.*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Museum of American Indians, 155th St. and Broadway, N. Y. City.

Taxidermy SETH W. BULLOCK care *Adventure.*

Herpetology *General information concerning reptiles (snakes, lizards, turtles, crocodiles) and amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders); their customs, habits and distribution.*—DR. G. K. NOBLE, American Museum of Natural History, 77th St. and Central Park West, New York, N. Y.

Entomology *General information about insects and spiders; venomous insects, disease-carrying insects, insects attacking man, etc.; distribution.*—DR. FRANK E. LUTZ, Ramsey, N. J.

Ichthyology GEORGE S. MYERS, Stanford University, Box 821, Calif.

Stamps H. A. DAVIS, The American Philatelic Society, 3421 Colfax Ave., Denver, Colo.

Coins and Medals HOWLAND WOOD, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., New York City.

Radio *Telegraphy, telephony, history, broadcasting, apparatus, invention, receiver construction, portable sets.*—DONALD MCNICOL, 132 Union Road, Roselle Park, N. J.

SPORTS

Football JOHN B. FOSTER, Amer. Sports Pub. Co., 45 Rose Street, N. Y. C.

Baseball FREDERICK LIEB, *The Evening Telegram*, 37 Dey St., New York City.

Track JACKSON SCHOLZ, 303 W. 107 St., New York City.

Tennis FRED HAWTHORNE, Sports Dept., New York *Herald Tribune*, New York City.

Basketball JOE F. CARR, 16 E. Broad St., Columbus, Ohio.

Bicycling ARTHUR J. LEAMOND, 469 Valley St., South Orange, New Jersey.

Swimming LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 260 Washington St., N. Y. C.

Skating FRANK SCHREIBER, 2226 Clinton Ave., Berwyn, Ill.

Skiing and Snowshoeing W. H. PRICE, 160 Mance St., Montreal, Quebec.

Hockey "DANIEL," *The Evening Telegram*, 73 Dey St., New York City.

Archery EARL B. POWELL, Terrace Hotel, Sidney, Ohio.

Boxing JAMES P. DAWSON, The New York *Times*, Times Square, New York City.

Fencing LIEUT. JOHN V. GROMBACH, Military Police, Headquarters, Panama Canal Dept., Quarry Heights, Canal Zone.

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The Sea Part 1 *American Waters.* Also ships, seamen, shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, small-boat sailing; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; fishing vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks. (See next two sections.)—BERIAH BROWN, Coupeville, Wash.

The Sea Part 2 *Statistics and records of American shipping.*—HARRY E. RIESEBERG, Apartment 330-A, Kew Gardens, Washington, D. C.

The Sea Part 3 *British Waters.* Also old-time sailoring.—CAPTAIN A. E. DINGLE, care *Adventure.*

The Sea Part 4 *Atlantic and Indian Oceans; Cape Horn and Magellan Straits; Islands and Coasts.* (See also West Indian Sections.)—CAPT. DINGLE, care *Adventure.*

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The Sea Part 6 *Arctic Ocean (Siberian Waters).*—CAPT. C. L. OLIVER, care *Adventure.*

Hawaii DR. NEVILLE WHYMANT, 345 West 23rd St., New York City.

South Sea Islands JAMES STANLEY MEAGHER, 5316 Pine Street, Inglewood, Calif.

Philippine Islands BUCK CONNOR, L. B. 4, Quartzsite, Ariz.

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Africa Part 5 *Morocco.*—GEORGE E. HOLT, care *Adventure.*

Africa Part 6 *Sierra Leone to Old Calabar, West Africa, Southern and Northern Nigeria.*—W. C. COLLINS, care *Adventure.*

Africa Part 7 *Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Natal and Zululand.*—CAPTAIN F. J. FRANKLIN, Gulfport and Coast Enquiry Depot, Turnbull Bldg., Gulfport, Miss.

✠**Africa Part 8** *Portuguese East.*—R. G. WARING, Corunna, Ontario, Canada.

Europe Part 1 *Jugo-Slavia and Greece.*—LIEUT. WILLIAM JENNA, Fort Clayton, Panama, C. Z.

Europe Part 2 *Albania.*—ROBERT S. TOWNSEND, 1447 Irving St., Washington, D. C.

Europe Part 3 *Finland, Lapland and Russia.* In the case of Russia, political topics outside of historical facts will not be discussed.—ALEKO E. LILIUS, care *Adventure.*

Europe Part 4 *Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Poland.*—THEODORE VON KELER, 153 Waverly Place, New York City.

Europe Part 5 *Scandinavia.*—ROBERT S. TOWNSEND, 1447 Irving St., Washington, D. C.

✠**Europe Part 6** *Great Britain.*—THOMAS BOWEN PARTINGTON, Constitutional Club, Northumberland Ave., W. C. 2, London, England.

Europe Part 7 *Denmark.*—G. I. COLBRON, East Avenue, New Canaan, Conn.

Europe Part 8 *Holland.*—J. J. LEBLEU, 51 Benson St., Glen Ridge, N. J.

Europe Part 9 *Belgium and Luxemburg.*—J. D. NEWSOM, 4 rue des Toxandres, Etterbeek, Brussels, Belgium.

Europe Part 10 *Switzerland*—DR. ALBERT LEEMAN, Kramgasse 82, Bern, Switzerland.

Europe Part 11 *France.*—CYRUS S. ROBERTS, 38 E. 85th St., New York City.

Europe Part 12 *Spain.*—J. D. NEWSOM, 4 rue des Toxandres, Etterbeek, Brussels, Belgium.

South America Part 1 *Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile.*—EDGAR YOUNG, care *Adventure.*

South America Part 2 *Venezuela, the Guianas and Brazil.*—PAUL VANORDEN SHAW, 21 Claremont Ave., New York, N. Y.

West Indies *Haiti, Santo Domingo, Porto Rico, Virgin and Jamaica Groups.*—CHARLES BELL EMERSON, Adventure Cabin, Los Gatos, Calif.

Central America *Canal Zone, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, British Honduras, Salvador, Guatemala.*—CHARLES BELL EMERSON, Adventure Cabin, Los Gatos, Calif.

Mexico Part 1 *Northern. Border States of old Mexico Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas.* J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Mexico Part 2 *Southern. Lower California; Mexico south of a line from Tampico to Mazatlan.*—C. R. MAHAFFEY, 236 Fox Ave., San José, Calif.

Mexico Part 3 *Southeastern. Federal Territory of Quintana Roo and states of Yucatan and Campeche.* Also archeology.—W. RUSSELL SHEETS, 301 Popular Ave., Takoma Park, Md.

Newfoundland.—C. T. JAMES, Bonaventure Ave., St. Johns, Newfoundland.

Greenland Also dog-team work, whaling, geology, ethnology (Eskimo).—VICTOR SHAW, Loring, Alaska.

Canada Part 1 *New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.* Also homesteading.—FRED L. BOWDEN, 5 Howard Avenue, Binghamton, New York.

✠**Canada Part 2** *Southeastern Quebec.* JAS. F. BELFORD, Codrington, Ont., Canada.

✠**Canada Part 3** *Height of Land, Region of Northern Quebec and Northern Ontario (except strip between Minn. and C. P. Ry.); Southeastern Ungava and Keewatin.* Also Indian life and habits: Hudson's Bay Co. posts. No questions answered on trapping for profit.—S. E. SANGSTER ("Canuck") Box 393, Ottawa, Canada.

✠**Canada Part 4** *Ottawa Valley and Southeastern Ontario.*—HARRY M. MOORE, Deseronto, Ont., Canada.

✠**Canada Part 5** *Georgian Bay and Southern Ontario.* Also national parks.—A. D. ROBINSON, 115 Huron St., Walkerville, Ont., Canada.

Canada Part 6 *Hunters Island and English River District.*—T. F. PHILLIPS, Department of Science, Duluth Central High School, Duluth, Minn.

Canada Part 7 *Yukon, British Columbia and Alberta.* Also yachting.—C. PLOWDEN, Plowden Bay, Howe Sound, B. C.

Canada Part 8 *The Northw. Ter. and the Arctic, especially Ellesmere Land, Baffinland, Melville and North Devon Islands, North Greenland and the half-explored islands west of Ellesmere.*—PATRICK LEE, Tudor Hall, Elmhurst, Long Island.

Alaska. Also mountain work.—THEODORE S. SOLOMONS, 1427 Lareta Terrace, Los Angeles, Calif.

Western U. S. Part 1 *Calif., Ore. Wash., Nev., Utah and Ariz.*—E. E. HARRIMAN, 2303 W. 23rd St. Los Angeles, Calif.

Western U. S. Part 2 *New Mexico.* Also Indians, Indian dances, including the snake dance.—F. H. ROBINSON, 200-202 Korber Block, Albuquerque, N. M.

Western U. S. Part 3 *Colo. and Wyo.*—FRANK EARNEST, Sugar Loaf, Colo.

Western U. S. Part 4 *Mont. and the Northern Rocky Mountains.*—FRED W. EGELSTON, 1029 Litch Court, Reno, Nev.

Western U. S. Part 5 *Idaho and Surrounding Country.*—R. T. NEWMAN, P. O. Drawer 368, Anaconda, Mont.

Western U. S. Part 6 *Tex. and Okla.*—J. W. WHITEAKER, 2903 San Gabriel St., Austin, Tex.

Middle Western U. S. Part 1 *The Dakotas, Neb., Ia., Kan.* Especially early history of Missouri Valley.—JOSEPH MILLS HANSON, care *Adventure.*

Middle Western U. S. Part 2 *Mo. and Ark. Also the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Especially wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps.*—JOHN B. THOMPSON, ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

Middle Western U. S. Part 3 *Ind., Ill., Mich., Minn., and Lake Michigan.* Also clamming, natural history, legends.—JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

Middle Western U. S. Part 4 *Mississippi River.* Also routes, connections, itineraries; river-steamer and power-boat travel; history and idiosyncrasies of the river and its tributaries. Questions about working one's way should be addressed to Mr. Spears.—GEO. A. ZERR, Vine and Hill Sts., Crafton P. O., Ingram, Pa.

Middle Western U. S. Part 5 *Lower Mississippi River. (St. Louis down), Atchafalaya across La. swamps, St. Francis River, Arkansas Bottoms.*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

Middle Western U. S. Part 6 *Great Lakes.* Also seamanship, navigation, courses, distances, reefs and shoals, lights and landmarks, charts; laws, fines, penalties, river navigation.—H. C. GARDNER, 3302 Daisy Ave.; Cleveland, Ohio.

Eastern U. S. Part 1 *Eastern Maine. For all territory east of the Penobscot River.*—H. B. STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Me.

Eastern U. S. Part 2 *Western Maine. For all territory west of the Penobscot River.*—DR. G. E. HATHORNE, 70 Main Street, Bangor, Me.

Eastern U. S. Part 3 *Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I. and Mass.*—HOWARD. R. VOIGHT, P. O. Box 1332, New Haven, Conn.

Eastern U. S. Part 4 *Adirondacks, New York.*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, Calif.

Eastern U. S. Part 5 *Maryland and District of Columbia.* Also historical places.—LAWRENCE EDMUND ALLEN, 1505 C St., S. E., Washington, D. C.

Eastern U. S. Part 6 *Tenn., Ala., Miss., N. and S. C. Fla. and Ga. Except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard.* Also sawmilling, saws.—HAPSBURG LIEBE, care *Adventure.*

Eastern U. S. Part 7 *Appalachian Mountains south of Virginia*—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Lost Trails

We offer this service free of charge to readers who wish to get in touch with old friends from whom the years have separated them. All inquiries of this sort received by us, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with the inquirer's name. We reserve the right, in case the inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any number or other name, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and in general to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. For the benefit of the friend you seek, give your own name when possible. Give also your own full address. We will forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal Star *to give additional publicity in their "Missing Relative Column" weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred. Full lists of those unfound are reprinted semiannually. Whenever practicable inquiries will be repeated in newspapers in the town in which the person inquired for was last seen.*

SANTEE, ROSS — The managing editor of *Adventure* would like to get in touch with you concerning a business matter.

SPONABLE, EVERETT—Mother is very anxious for you to come home. We have proven you were not in the city that week. Anyone who knows the whereabouts of this youth who has a restricted speech please inform his mother—MRS. ADAM SPONABLE, Rome, New York. No. 522 W. Liberty Street.

EVE, ERNEST—Last heard of in 1920 employed at an arsenal in New Jersey. Was formerly a member of the Motor Transport stationed at Fort Hancock, Sandy Hook, N. J. An old buddy would like to get in touch with him.—BURTON E. CORTS, 25 Norway Park, Buffalo, New York.

BECKWITH, CLARA—Married a Doctor McInnis of Brandon, Manitoba, after Dr. McInnis' death moved to New York. Your nephew would like to hear from you.—FRED. BECKWITH, 613 Balmoral Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Would also like to hear from his brothers Dick, Jack Chris, or his sisters Flo, Sarah and Jane.

JACK—Please write. I have your discharge, and you may have it. There will be no trouble.—MAMMA and BENNIE.

JESSE—Request you let me know your present address. Dad wants to see you very much.—E. F.

MOLLIE—Dear Mother, your two girls Jennie and Myrtle would like very much to hear from you or any of the Patlons.—JENNIE MAE HOWELL HALBROOK, Douthat, Okla.

NELSON, WILLIAM H.—formerly of the Continental Insurance Co., 46 Cedar St., N. Y. C. Am anxious to hear from you. Any information concerning him will be appreciated—MRS. HENRIETTA NELSON.

FREDERICKS, MRS. JAMES—of 2627 Madison Ave., N. Y. C. Am anxious to hear from you. Any information concerning my mother will be greatly appreciated. Daughter—MRS. HENRIETTA NELSON.

MOORE, JAMES NORMAN—Left Dartmouth, Nova Scotia for the United States in '1914. Last heard from in U. S. Military Service, Niagara Falls, 12 years ago. Mother—MRS. SAMUEL MOORE, 72 Rose Street, Nova Scotia, Canada.

KEHOUGH or KEHOE, CHARLES H.—About 37 years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. tall, dark hair, brown eyes. Coal miner by trade. Belonged to the United Mine Workers of America. Worked in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri. Last heard from in 1911. May have been in World War. Sisters—NORAH, FRANCES, KATHRYN RAYMOND, Dawson Creek, B. C., Canada.

VAUGHN, LESLIE DEXTER—Do you want to live to be an old man haunted by the memory of a mother who idolizes you, but who will slip away from earth and give you no chance to retract the cruel words you wrote to her at another's dictation? She would welcome the least kind word from you.—"GRAMMIN."

BLAISDELL, JIM—Enlisted with Australian Imperial Forces, Sept. 7, 1914. Reported missing after landing at Anzac, April 25th, 1915. Afterwards seen in Cairo and in France with 2nd Div. A. E. F. in 1916 under the name of Private Lanston. Then said to be without his memory. Since the Armistice has been traced to Greenland, Spitzbergen, Stockholm, New York, Dawson City, etc., was last heard of in the Athabasca, Canada, 1924. 6 ft. 3 in., well built, red hair, blue eyes and very quiet. Please communicate with brother—DAVID BLAISDELL, care Camp-Fire Station No. 326—ARTHUR SEALES, Victoria St., Pyramid Hill, Victoria, Australia.

FUNK, SILVESTER O.—Was a sergeant in the M. G. Co., 8th Inf., Fortress Ehrenbreitstein, Germany. Later transferred to Co. M. Have something that may interest you.—J. W. KOSIR, 17 West Broadway, Butte, Montana.

BOHAC, CHARLES—Age 28 years, about 5 ft. 4 in., dark hair, blue eyes. Last heard of in Washington, D. C. Served with U. S. Marines in Haiti, also as mail guard on trains in U. S. Any information greatly appreciated by his mother and brother—FRANK M. BOHAC, 2541 South Keeler Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

SPARKS, ROBERT S.—Last heard of in London Dec., 1920. Was one of a party of twenty men leaving at once for South Africa on an exploring trip, Dr. Roberts in charge. Any information concerning my son will be greatly appreciated by his mother.—MRS. JOHN SPARKS, Box 73, West Union, Ohio.

DRAYER, ROBERT E.—About 22 years of age. Has been missing three years. Last seen Colon, Panama. Born in Luxor, Egypt. Has blue-gray eyes, dark hair, 6 ft. tall. An old friend would like to get in touch with him. —CHARLES LYLES, Bat. E., 55 C. A., Fort Ruger, Honolulu, T. H.

COLE, C. C.—Last heard of in Long Beach, formerly of Deming and Alhambra. Would like to know how the family is getting along.—G. W. M.

SUNNY—Write me care Elk, 916 Grand—"FAT."

BRISTOW, ROBERT—How about a trip to "Blighty." Write Chicago Opera Nick, care *Adventure*.

LOVETT, LORTON — My sorrow is for you. Your mother passed away Sunday, Jan. 16th, 1927. Write GRANDMOTHER.

THE following have been inquired for in either the March 15th or the April 15th, 1927 issues of *Adventure*. They can get the names and addresses of the inquirer from this magazine.

BAILEY, HENRY A. "Big Hank"; Bloomenthal, James; Bubel, Herma; Carter, Iola; Casey, James B.; Cooley, Capt. C. O.; C. V. G.; Daley, John; Dawdy, Charles Hudson; Donley, Richard Paul; Dunkel, Frank; E. W. B.; Farson, relatives or descendants; Graham, Albert Edwin "Buck;" Griffin, A. H. Bittoklite; Halton, Fred J.; Harnett, Fred; Harrold, Arthur; Hennessey, Edward; Hull, Harry H.; Imlay, John; Irons, Mrs. William; Jantz or Gantz, Joseph A.; Kohl, Bob "Pop;" Lindsay, Thomas; Mack, William; Newton, Othie; Piner, Jack; Roemer and Armstrong, Nellie; Ruben, Shaffer (Shocky) Sharpe, Cecil; Sklenar, William; Spranks, William B.; Stade, Harold W.; Stalker, William Moodie; Strain or Fairley, Mrs. Jane; Wilow, M.; W. J. S.; Will all who served with the 54th Art. C. A. C. in either the U. S. or France send their name and address; Would like to hear from any of the fellows who were in Co. M., 19th Inf. 1918 Galveston, Camp Travis.

"Old Songs that Men have Sung" appears in alternate issues.

Verdicts by Adventure *as to the authoritativeness, reliability and authenticity of fact-material, local color and general soundness of current non-fiction*

BOOKS *you can* Believe

Given by Experts having first-hand Knowledge of the Material involved

PERO TAFUR. TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES. 1435–1439. Translated and edited from the Spanish by Malcolm Letts. Broadway series: Harper & Brothers. Pero's account of his voyages, in the years 1435-1439, now for the first time completely translated into a foreign language, is a book worth while. It is a work that has a worthy if humble place in the history of Spanish literature; an honorable place in the vast collection of the voyages of those who rolled back the boundaries of the known world, and revealed the charms of the unknown to the stay-at-homes. Traveling from Spain to the Near East, by way of Italy, Cyprus and Egypt, Pero Tafur finds on his route strange adventures and stranger sights. In the disguise of a Moor he penetrates a sacred mosque forbidden to Jews and Christians; he is shipwrecked off the isle of Chios; he has a narrow escape from capture by Moorish pirates off Rhodes; he is sorely wounded in the Dardanelles, while trying to rescue Christian captives. He sees and records things worth while for the student of manners and customs of that age, when Europe was beginning to emerge from the Middle Ages into the chrysalis stage of Enlightenment.—POST SARGENT.

BERBERS AND BLACKS, Century. By David P. Barrows. This book presents modern Morocco and Sudan, with personal impressions and historical sketches of localities visited. The reader can obtain a solid idea of the general conditions past and present. The chapter on Timbuktu, in particular, gives a clear outline of the penetration of the Sahara from the south. An occasional minor inaccuracy creeps in here and there: General Barrows states that the men with the Foureau-Lamy Mission that crossed the Sahara from Ouargla to Chad were Senegalese. As a matter of fact, they were Algerians. He mentions "Colonel Mangin, now a Marshal." At the time of his death, Mangin was a general. Among the few Frenchmen who have visited the salt mines of Taodeni, he fails to name the first Europeans, Cauvin and Cortier, who penetrated within the walls. Samory, the Greatest Sudanese, is mentioned but once. Coming down toward the Coast from the Sudan, the author seems to have been depressed by his sudden plunge into the forest. He writes: "They (The European West Coasters) live in little shabby settlements, where whites and blacks commingle." Konakry, Abidjan, Bingerville, while not health resorts, are neat, picturesque little towns. But those are matters of personal opinion and small errors of detail. As a whole, the volume is sound, true. The chapters on the "Black veteran" and "Exploitation" will be of especial interest to those who know the country and its problems.—GEORGES SURDEZ.

STATESMEN AND SOLDIERS OF THE CIVIL WAR. By Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice. Little, Brown & Company, Boston, Mass. A plea for a sane system for the conduct of war. The author wonders why so few young men, aspiring to public life "make a study of how to deal with the greatest evil of all—war." Three-fourths of the volume is devoted to a critical examination of Lincoln's relations with McClellan and Grant; of Davis with Johnston and Lee. These lessons from the Civil War, applicable to the conduct of other wars, when or how they may come, are presented with irresistible logic. A most excellent work, and so simply and sympathetically expressed as to be understood by youngsters of high-school age as well as the average, busy citizen, and very much worth the attention of those in high places.—HUGH PENDEXTER.

THE BUGLE SOUNDS. By Major Zinovi Pechkoff, Appleton. This is the best book on the French Foreign Legion that it has been my luck to read in English. The author is a Legionnaire himself who piloted a company of the famous professional soldiers in Morocco before and during the Riff Campaign. The events of which he speaks are the routine of his trade. He presents his men simply, but nothing is more striking then those glimpses of Legionnaires, short, clean cut as etchings. Major Pechkoff states somewhere that before the Great War the German element in the Legion was about twenty-five per cent. All the information that I have on the Legion previous to the "War to End War" places the German element as clearly predominant. As far back as 1844, General Lamoriciere said of the Legion: "The French spirit animates the officers, but the German type dominates in the ranks." In 1908, nearly thirteen hundred Germans enlisted in the Legion, and various writers state that the German element reached anywhere from forty to fifty-five per cent of the total number in the two pre-War regiments. —GEORGES SURDEZ.

The Trail *Ahead*

The next issue of ADVENTURE, *out June 15th*

A Complete Novelette

Rag-Town

By Hugh Pendexter

Joseph Smith the Prophet was dead and the Mormon hosts about to swarm from the Illinois country in a Westward exodus to a new promised land. Along the yellow reaches of the Mississippi, from above Dubuque down to far Louisiana, flocked numberless outlaws, to prey on the river trade, become brisk with the Oregon land boom. In this seething time counterfeiters were diluting the currency with a spreading stream of silvered lead. And then came an Easterner who promised the coiners gold.

The Gritti Luck

By Arthur D. Howden Smith

Slanting across the carven chimney-piece in a gray shimmer of steel was the sword Gray Maiden. By its power *Old Nicolo* had won and maintained for himself the almost impregnable Castello Gritti and all its tithes and seigniories; and by that same power both his treacherous sons hoped to wrest them from him. And *Ciutazzo* the clown looked at the sword and smiled a smile that had naught to do with his jesting.

Reward

By Gordon MacCreagh

Business is not done in the mazes of the Brazilian jungle as it is in the security of a metropolitan skyscraper office. Perhaps the blustering big-business man from the States ought to have known better, but he had gone to South America to get lumber, and, as he told everybody, he was sure going to get it. All of which soon gave his daughter cause for worry, and a brilliant young engineer a welcome job.

Loads

By Fiswoode Tarleton

The Porky Ridge feudists knew the laugh of the *Dodie* clan, the *Dodie* clan that had driven *Ruth's* kin to Misery Mountain. And now *Ames Shakespeere*, returned from the academy with learning to give her folks—his blood enemies—answered the shot through the window of the new little school-house with the *Dodie* laugh. A challenge to his own people.

And—*Other Good Stories*

Conclusion of Wastrel, *Dan McGuire in the South Seas*, by Gordon Young; *Part IV of* A New Found World, *a novel of Old Iceland*, by Roger Pocock; One for the Book, *gratitude and the padded mitt*, by Edward L. McKenna; Deep Waters, *a passage 'round the Horn*, by Bill Adams.

Adventure is out on the 1st and 15th of the month

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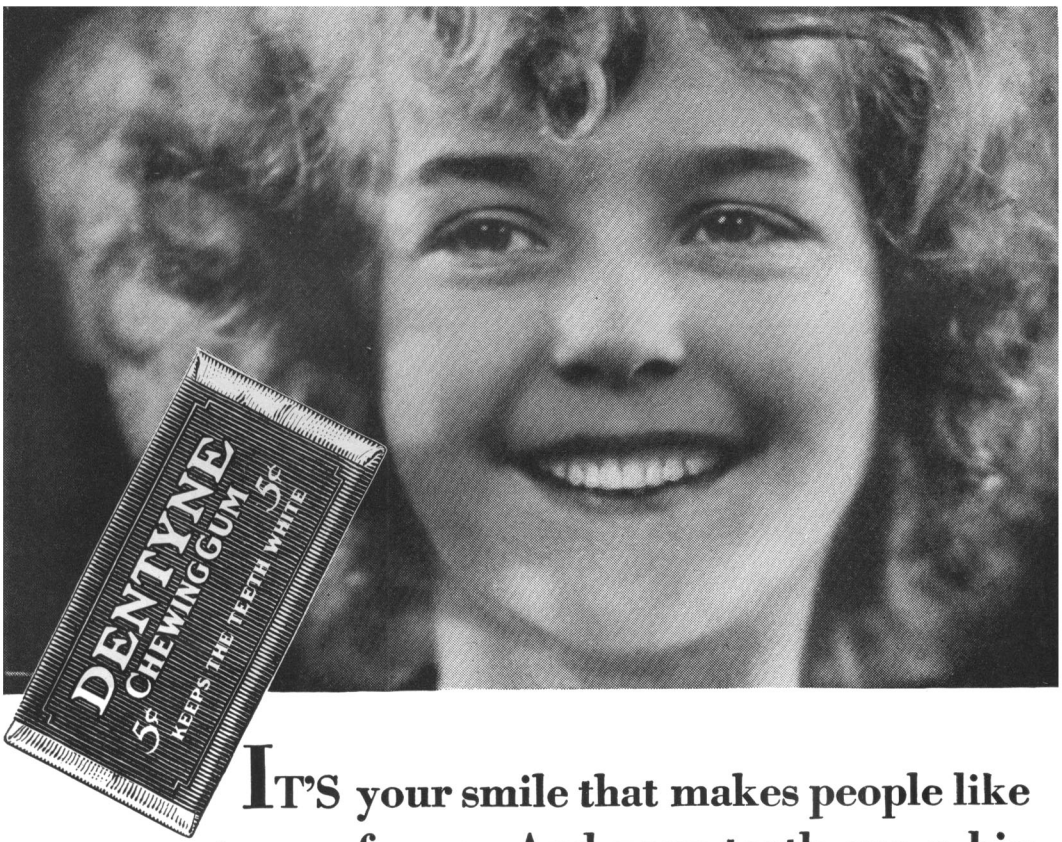

IT'S your smile that makes people like you—not your frown. And your teeth are a big part of your smile. Teeth form the background. Keep your teeth attractive—a flash of snowy white behind your smile. Chew Dentyne, the gum that keeps breath sweet, teeth clean and pearly white.

· KEEPS THE TEETH WHITE ·

What I Think of Aviation

by Lieut. Walter Hinton

AVIATION is here to stay. No one, I think, will question *that!* It has been tested by the peaceful pursuit of commerce as well as the fire of war. It has grown in a few short years from a dare-devil spectacle to a safe and stable *industry.* Its future is assured. With such men as Henry Ford actively interested in *manufacturing* planes and motors as well as using them for transportation—no one can doubt that its progress will be even more rapid in the future than it has been in the past.

Aviation's greatest difficulty is finding *trained men* to build and fly the planes that are needed in ever increasing numbers *daily!*

This difficulty is enormous. Probably no other industry requires *every man* who comes in contact with the design, construction and operation of its product to be a thoroughly trained man. In aviation this is of first importance. No pilot or passenger would care to fly in a plane that has been designed, built or conditioned by mechanics or riggers who did not know their business. The United States Government has recognized the importance of this feature of aviation and *now every pilot, engine and plane mechanic, every rigger and inspector must pass a government test before he is allowed to work on an airplane, much less* FLY *one.* It is absolutely necessary for every man who wants to enter aviation—commercially or for the purpose of flying his own plane—to fit himself by learning the fundamentals of flight.

We have become so accustomed to steam-ships, trains and automobiles that the most nervous among us enter them and travel without a thought about safety. But before these means of transportation were common, and even today, perfected as they are, they have claimed and are still claiming many lives. Aviation today, with the exception of "stunt" flying which is both foolish and useless, has reached a degree of safety which statistics prove to be equal if not greater than that attained by marine transportation in all the years of its existence.

Lieut. Walter Hinton

First man to *fly* across the Atlantic Ocean; pilot of the N.C.-4; pilot of famous "New York—Rio de Janeiro Amity" flight; pilot of the "Rice Expedition" which mapped the jungle of the Amazon from the air, and scores of other historic flights.

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(*Signed*)

Walter Hinton

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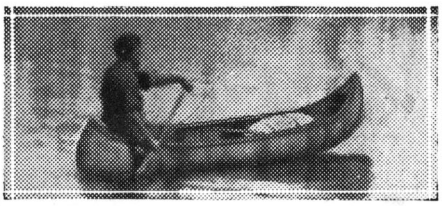

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HIS mind is a hodge-podge of half-baked ideas.

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Thoughts flash into and out of his brain with the speed of lightning. New ideas rush in pell-mell, crowding out old ones before they have taken form or shape.

He is **SCATTER-BRAINED.**

His mind is like a powerful automobile running **wild—destroying** his hopes, his dreams, his **POSSIBILITIES!**

He wonders why he does not get ahead. He cannot understand why others, with less ability, pass him in the prosperity parade.

He pities himself, excuses himself, sympathizes with himself.

And the great tragedy is that he has every quality that leads to success—intelligence, originality, imagination, ambition.

His trouble is that he does not know how to **USE** his brain.

His mental make-up needs an overhauling.

There are millions like him—failures, half-successes—slaves to those with **BALANCED, ORDERED MINDS.**

It is a known fact that most of us use only one-tenth of our brain power. The other nine-tenths is dissipated into thousands of fragmentary thoughts, in day dreaming, in wishing

We are paid for **ONE-TENTH** of what we possess because that is all we **USE.** We are hundred horse-power motors delivering only **TEN** horse power

What can be done about it?

The reason most people fall miserably below what they dream of attaining in life is that certain mental faculties in them **BECOME ABSOLUTELY ATROPHIED THROUGH DISUSE,** just as a muscle often does.

If, for instance, you lay for a year in bed, you would sink to the ground when you arose; your leg muscles, **UNUSED FOR SO LONG,** could not support you.

It is no different with those rare mental faculties which you envy others for possessing. You actually **DO** possess them, but they are **ALMOST ATROPHIED,** like unused muscles, simply because they are faculties you seldom, if ever, **USE**

Be honest with yourself. You know in your heart that you have failed, failed miserably, to attain what you once dreamed of.

Was that fine ambition unattainable? **OR WAS THERE JUST SOMETHING WRONG WITH YOU?** Analyze yourself, and you will see that at bottom **THERE WAS A WEAKNESS SOMEWHERE IN YOU.**

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Find out by means of Pelmanism; then develop the particular mental faculty that you lack. You **CAN** develop it easily; Pelmanism will show you just how; 550,000 Pelmanists, **MANY OF WHOM WERE HELD BACK BY YOUR VERY PROBLEM,** will tell you that this is true.

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A remarkable book called "Scientific Mind Training" has been written about Pelmanism. **IT CAN BE OBTAINED FREE.** Yet thousands of people who read this announcement and who **NEED** this book will not send for it. "It's no use," they will say. "It will do me no good," they will tell themselves. "It's all tommyrot," others will say.

But if they use their **HEADS** they will realize that people cannot be **HELPED** by tommyrot and that there **MUST** be something in Pelmanism, when it has such a record behind it, and when it is endorsed by the kind of people listed here.

If you are made of the stuff that isn't content to remain a slave—if you have taken your last whipping from life,—if you have a spark of **INDEPENDENCE** left in your soul, write for this free book. It tells you what Pelmanism is, **WHAT IT HAS DONE FOR OTHERS,** and what it can do for you.

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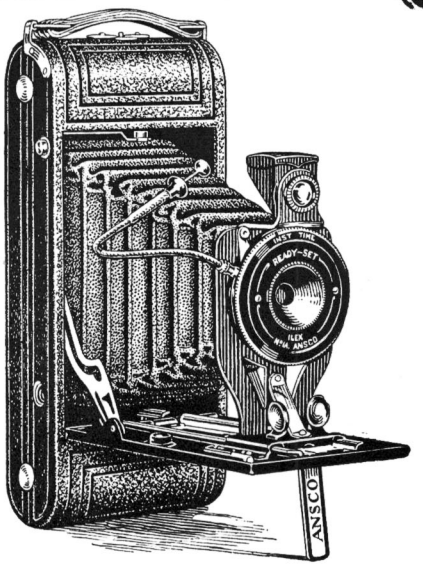

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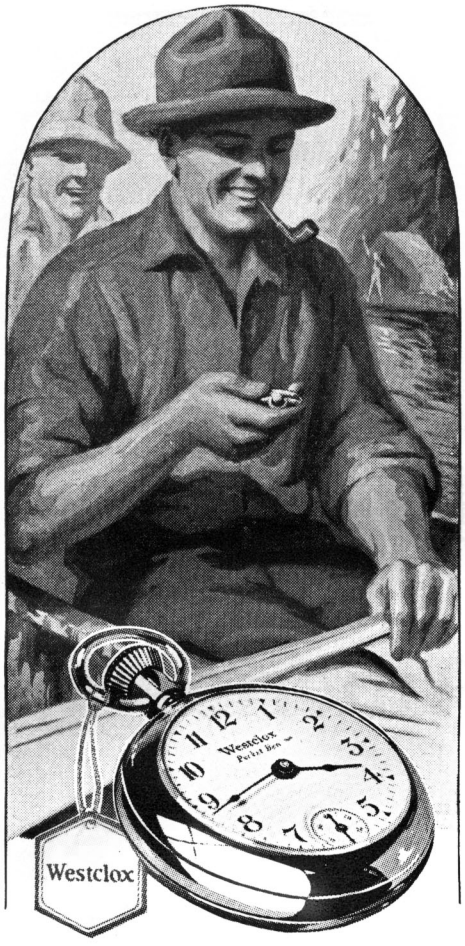

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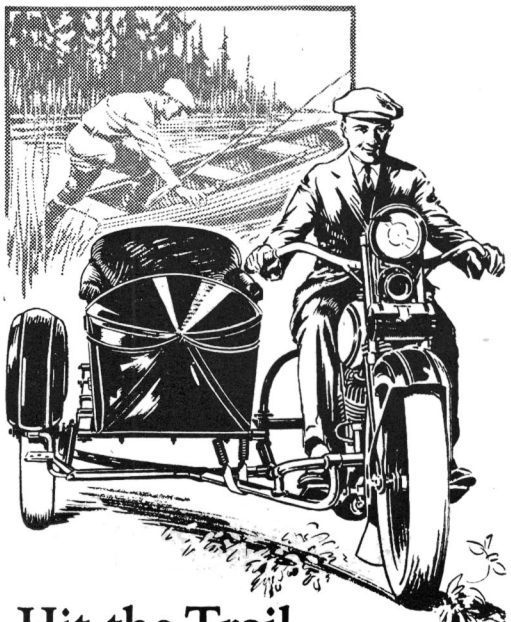

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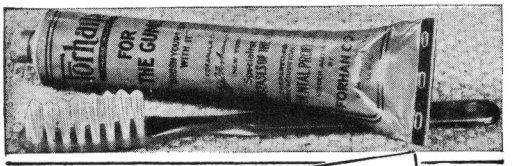

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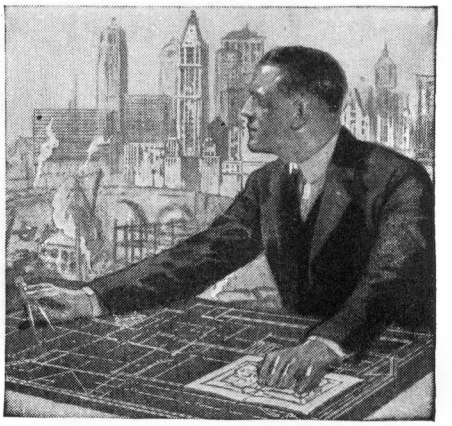

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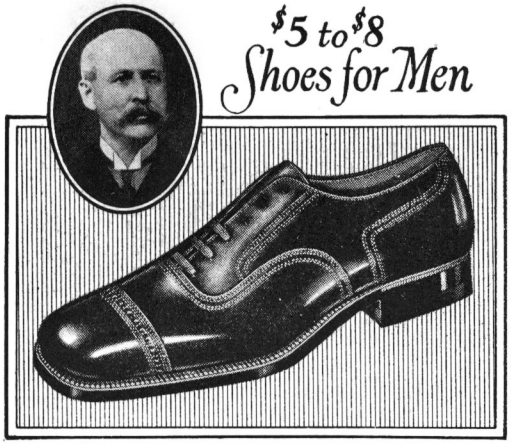

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