Stageland

PRICE 15 CENTS

FEBRUARY 1909

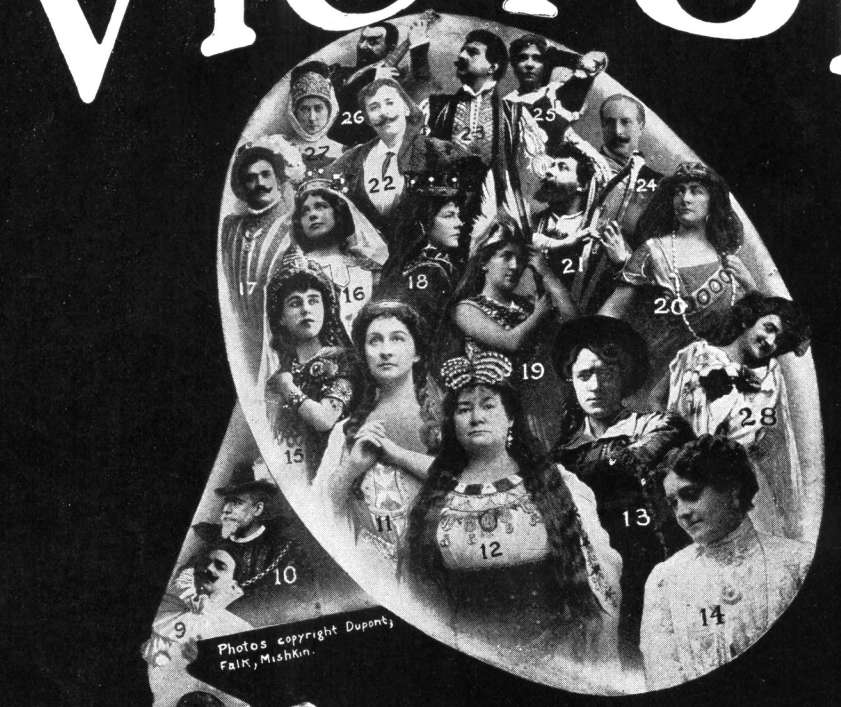
THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

THE STORY-PRESS CORPORATION
NORTH AMERICAN BLDG. CHICAGO

COPYRIGHT 1908 BY THE STORY-PRESS CORPORATION
ENTERED AT STATIONERS HALL LONDON ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

COLOR PHOTO OF MABEL TALIAFERRO IN THIS ISSUE

VICTOR



1 Caruso
2 Sembrich
3 Melba
4 Scotti
5 Gadski
6 Homer
7 Journet
8 Farrar
9 Caruso
10 Plançon
11 Eames
12 Schumann-Heink
13 Dalmores
14 Tetrazzini
15 Abott
16 Farrar
17 Caruso
18 Homer
19 Gadski
20 Eames
21 Ancona
22 Campanari
23 Scotti
24 Battistini
25 Melba
26 Plançon
27 Eames
28 Calvé

The actual living, breathing voices of the world's greatest opera singers in all their power, sweetness and purity.

Hear the Victor—any Victor dealer will gladly play it for you. $10 to $300.

Write for catalogues of the Victor and Victor Records.

Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.

Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal, Canadian Distributors.

"HIS MASTER'S VOICE"
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

To get best results, use only Victor Needles on Victor Records

PHOTOGRAPH BY MOFFETT STUDIO CHICAGO.

MISS MABEL TALIAFERRO

COLOR SUPPLEMENT
FROM THE FEBRUARY 1909 ISSUE OF
THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE
(OVER)

MISS MABEL TALIAFERRO

FROM a child-actress in domestic drama to the star in an important American play under the management of a husband who is himself one of the geniuses of the contemporary stage and all in sixteen years may seem a most extraordinary record, yet it is Miss Mabel Taliaferro's. Born in New York City on the 21st of May, 1887, the little girl began her stage-career with Chauncey Olcott, as so many other little folk have done. Later she appeared with James A. Hearne and Sol Smith Russell, making a most pronounced success with the latter in "A Poor Relation." It was not until 1899, however, that Miss Taliaferro achieved metropolitan distinction from her skillful playing in the rôle of little *Esther* in Israel Zangwill's superb, if popularly unsuccessful play, "Children of the Ghetto." The following season Miss Taliaferro acted the witching elf-child in Yeat's Gaelic fantasy, "The Land of Heart's Desire." In 1902-3 Miss Taliaferro appeared in "An American Invasion" with John E. Dodson and Miss Annie Irish. The following year she was seen in the support of Louis Mann in "The Consul." Miss Taliaferro's greatest opportunity came when she was cast for *Lovey Mary* in "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," a part she played continuously for two and one-half years. In 1905 Miss Taliaferro supported Arnold Daly in "You Never Can Tell" and later went on tour in "The Bishop's Carriage." After a brief season in vaudeville she joined William Collier's company in a tour of Australia. In 1906 Miss Taliaferro married Frederick Thompson, creator of the new Coney Island and the Hippodrome, under whose management she has since starred with great success in "Polly of the Circus," a modern American play of show and village life.

THE BLUE BOOK
MAGAZINE

THE MARCH BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE

THE PAY STREAK

Who has not thought of one day striking it—The Pay Streak. Usually it lies at the end of the rainbow and the weary searcher tires before he comes to that golden spot. It is of a very different Pay Streak, however, of which William Wallace Cook writes in the complete novelette he contributes to THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE for March. Those who remember Mr. Cook's earlier stories—"The Testing of Noyes" and "Montana," both of which appeared complete in the issues of THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE containing them—will hail with delight the present announcement. William Wallace Cook never tries to tell a story when he has no story to tell, and in The Pay Streak it is an especially fascinating yarn that he sets himself to spin. A story of the West that he knows as well, if not better, than any other writer of stories, we prophesy that The Pay Streak will prove one of the most successful novels THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE has ever published. There are thrills in it—and touches of tenderness, too—in a word, its reality will convince the reader that is is true.

CONTENTS FOR FEBRUARY, 1909

Copyright, 1908, by the Story-Press Corporation. Entered at Stationers' Hall, London. All rights reserved.

MISS MABEL TALIAFERRO ..... Portrait frontispiece in colors
For an account of her stage-career, see reverse side of portrait.

THE SOLITAIRE CIPHER ..... Frederic Reddale 705
A COMPLETE NOVEL.

THE KING OF BANGI-TANGI ..... Frederick Walworth Brown. 739
A brilliant head-piece and the spoils of war.

THE BUFFER ..... Johnston McCulley 745
In which the child is father to the man.

THE QUESTS OF YOUTH ..... Philip Rutherford Kellar .. 754
Pete, the Fresh Air Fund, and Cupid.

AN AGENT OF THE GOVERNMENT .. Clarence Herbert New 759
No. I.—THE ANTIRAGUAN AFFAIR.

A FLYER AT REFORM ..... Frank X. Finnegan 772
An alderman, a franchise, and a timely bluff.

THE LABYRINTH OF THE LAW ..... Harvey Denton 779
No. IV.—THE SOUTHBRIDGE CONTRACT.

THE CHAMPION ..... Barratt O'Hara 785
A "meal-ticket," a world-battle, and two born-fighters.

OF THE SPIDER'S SPINNING ..... W. Bert Foster 795
Mirrors, auto-suggestion, and a corn-silk beauty.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE TWINS ... L. M. Montgomery 814
A stern aunt, a heavenly pair, and a Waterloo.

MEUM AND TUUM ..... Edith Fullerton Scott 822
The scarlet devils and a sacrifice.

A ROPE YARN HOLIDAY ..... D. E. Dermody 827
A jolly tar, and the trick of the divided optics.

A SELLER OF MOPS ..... Eleanor Imogen Green 836
The man who usurped the bath-tub.

A CAPTAIN'S LOG ..... Singleton Carew 843
No. VI.—THE CAPTURE OF THE BATTLESHIP.

A JAPANESE ENCHANTMENT ..... Maude Woodruff Newell .. 849
'Rikishas, lotus-pools, and an Oriental father-in-law.

THAT MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND. Oliver Sidney Read 859
A search for perpetual motion.

THE ELUSIVE COUNTERFEITS ..... Elliott Flower 863
The woman who burgled and the man who was afraid.

DISMAL SMITH AND CUPID ..... Frederick Ferdinand Moore. 872

THE PLAID CAP ..... Jules Verne DesVoignes ... 879
A prematurely cranked auto and a disappearance.

STAGELAND ..... Charles Darnton 887
The plays of the proletariat.
CARICATURE ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY HARMONY.

TERMS: $1.50 a year in advance; 15 cents a number. Subscriptions are received by all newsdealers and booksellers, or may be sent direct to the Publishers. Remittances must be made by Postoffice or Express Money Order, by Registered Letter, or by Postage Stamps of 2-cent denomination, and not by check or draft, because of exchange charges against the latter.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Do not subscribe to THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE through agents unknown to you personally, or you may find yourself defrauded. Many complaints are received from people who have paid cash to some swindler, in which event, of course the subscription never reaches this office.

THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE is issued on the first of the month preceding its date, and is for sale by all newsdealers after that time. In the event of failure to obtain copies at newsstands, or on railway trains, a notification to the Publishers will be appreciated.

Advertising forms close three weeks prior to the time of issue. Advertising rates on application.

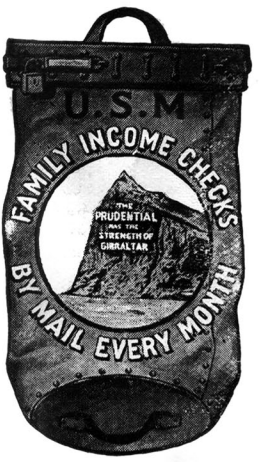
THE STORY-PRESS CORPORATION, Publishers, CHICAGO

LOUIS ECKSTEIN, President CHARLES M. RICHTER, Business Manager
RALPH K. STRASSMAN, Advertising Manager, S. L. SCHMID, Associate Manager, Eastern Office } 6092-3 Metropolitan Building, New York
BOSTON OFFICES, 2 Beacon Street, JULIUS MATHEWS, Manager LONDON OFFICES, 5 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C.
Entered as second-class matter July 24, 1906, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

The Very Newest Idea in

Prudential

LIFE INSURANCE



A STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT:

NO other business is so important to the welfare of the family as Life Insurance. The Prudential's object is to provide the most practical form of Life Insurance—that which will contribute most completely to the welfare of those for whose benefit Life Insurance is taken.

With this purpose in mind, The Prudential is issuing a Policy which meets more closely the necessities of those who are left behind when the breadwinner dies than any other form of Life Insurance.

It is called the **Monthly Income Policy,** from the fact that the proceeds, instead of being payable in one sum, are paid to the family in a **Series of monthly checks.** These payments continue for a period of twenty years, or for the lifetime of the beneficiary, if it has been so selected.

Think of being able to leave your wife a Monthly Income,—a guaranteed sum which nothing can disturb—which cannot be lost or stolen—but which will come to her regularly **Every month for twenty years, or for her lifetime.**

The New Monthly Income Policy pays the rent, the household bills, provides food, clothing, education for the children—perpetuates your salary, in fact—all by a monthly income which cannot fail.

THE COST of this policy is low. For example, if you should be 30 years old you could, by paying The Prudential $167.35 per year (which means a saving of only $13.95 per month, or about $3.50 per week), assure an income of $50 Every Month for 20 years, or $12,000 in all to your family after your death. At slightly higher cost, you could make this Income payable to your wife or daughter for her entire lifetime. This is called the Whole Life Plan.

You can also arrange to complete all your payments to the Company in the first 20 years after taking out the Policy. This is called the 20 Payment Life Plan.

Now suppose you would like to arrange to **Protect your own old age**—to assure yourself of an Income which would start 20 years from to-day, if you are living then, and last for 20 years longer, or—for you, as long as you live, and your wife as long as she lives, if she survives you. This can be done, too,—under the Endowment Plan.

Suppose you and your wife were both 40 years of age: $214.20 per year (a saving of $4.12 weekly) paid to the Company for 20 years would provide a **Guaranteed Income** of $25 per month, beginning at age 60 and continuing **as long** as **either you or your wife should live,**—and in any event for not less than 20 years.

Every rate and value is absolutely guaranteed, in the policy itself, while back of it are the great resources of The Prudential.

The success already attending this new Monthly Income Policy proves that it is striking the keynote of popular demand. We wish to tell you what The Prudential can do for **You** in this matter. Write now while the subject is fresh in your mind. Address Dept. 134. We will furnish you full information — just adapted to your particular case.

John F. Dryden
President

The Prudential Insurance Company of America

Incorporated as a Stock Company by the State of New Jersey.

HOME OFFICE: NEWARK, N. J.

Stageland

MISS ELSIE JANIS
In "THE FAIR CO-ED."
Photograph by Hall, New York.

A group of four pretty girls with MISS ELSIE JANIS (in center)
in "THE FAIR CO-ED
Photograph by Hall, New York.

The Minuet Scene
in MISS ELSIE JANIS' latest success
"THE FAIR CO-ED."
Photograph by Hall, New York.

MISS ELSIE JANIS and ARTHUR STANFORD
in "THE FAIR CO-ED."
Photograph by Hall, New York.

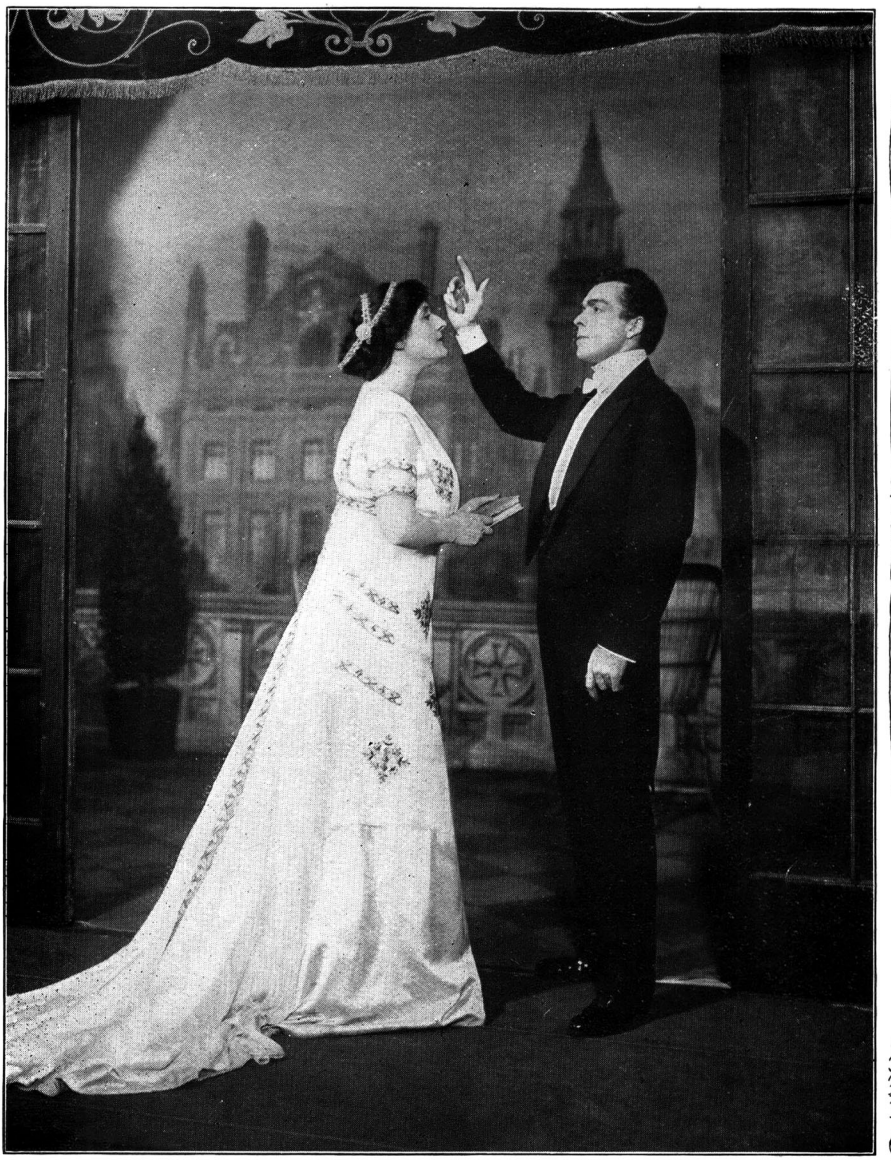
MISS ETHEL BARRYMORE and NORMAN THORP
in "LADY FREDERICK."
Photograph by Sarony, New York.

The entire cast of "LADY FREDERICK,"
in which MISS ETHEL BARRYMORE (center figure)
has scored a tremendous success.
Photograph by Sarony, New York.

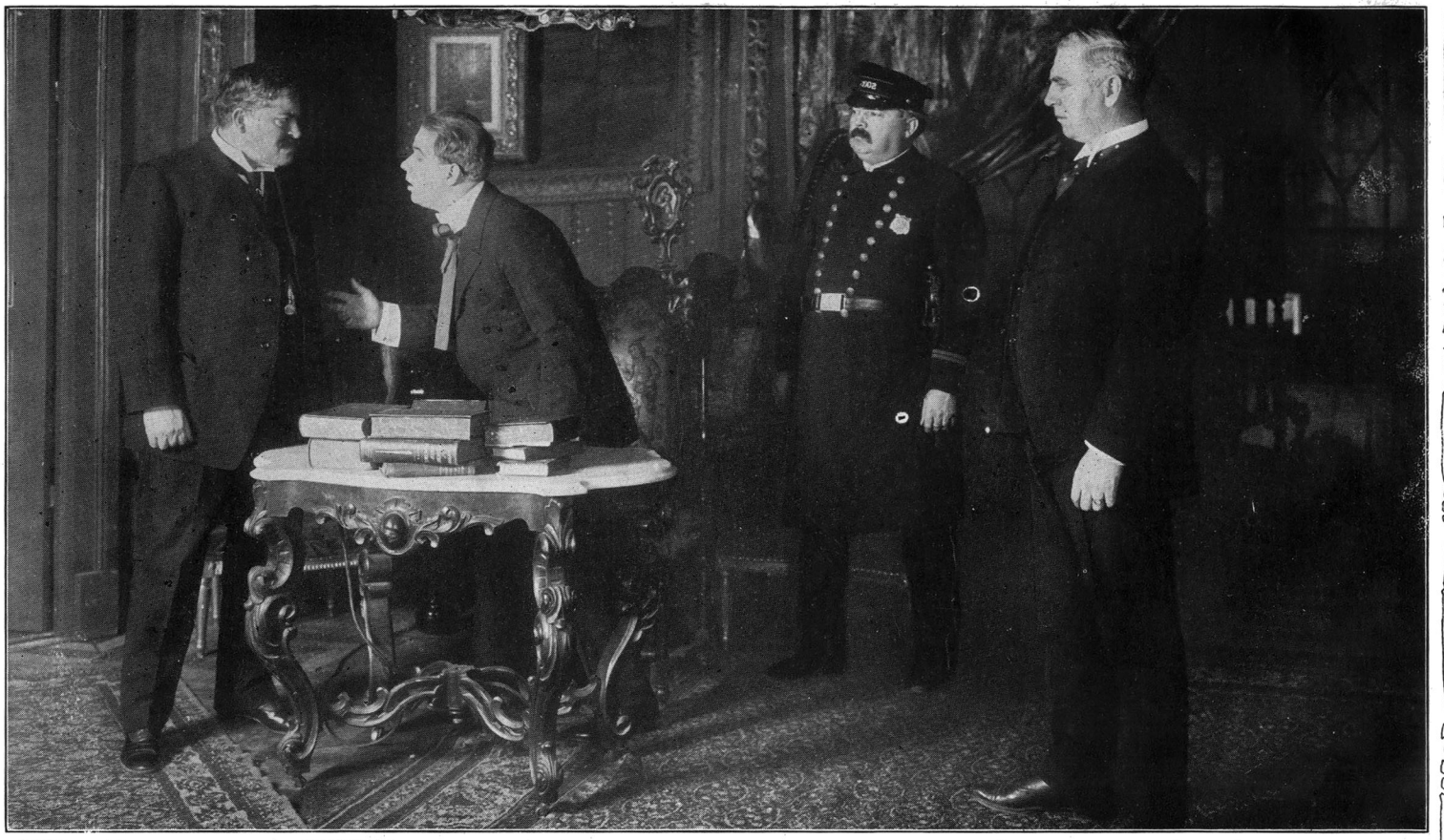
MISS GERTIE VANDERBILT, MISS CARRIE BOWMAN
MISS ROSIE GREEN, MISS EDITH MAC BRIDE,
all playing in "THE AMERICAN IDEA."
Photograph by White, New York.

MISS STELLA HAMMERSTEIN
in "THE AMERICAN IDEA."
Photograph by Otto Sarony Co., New York.

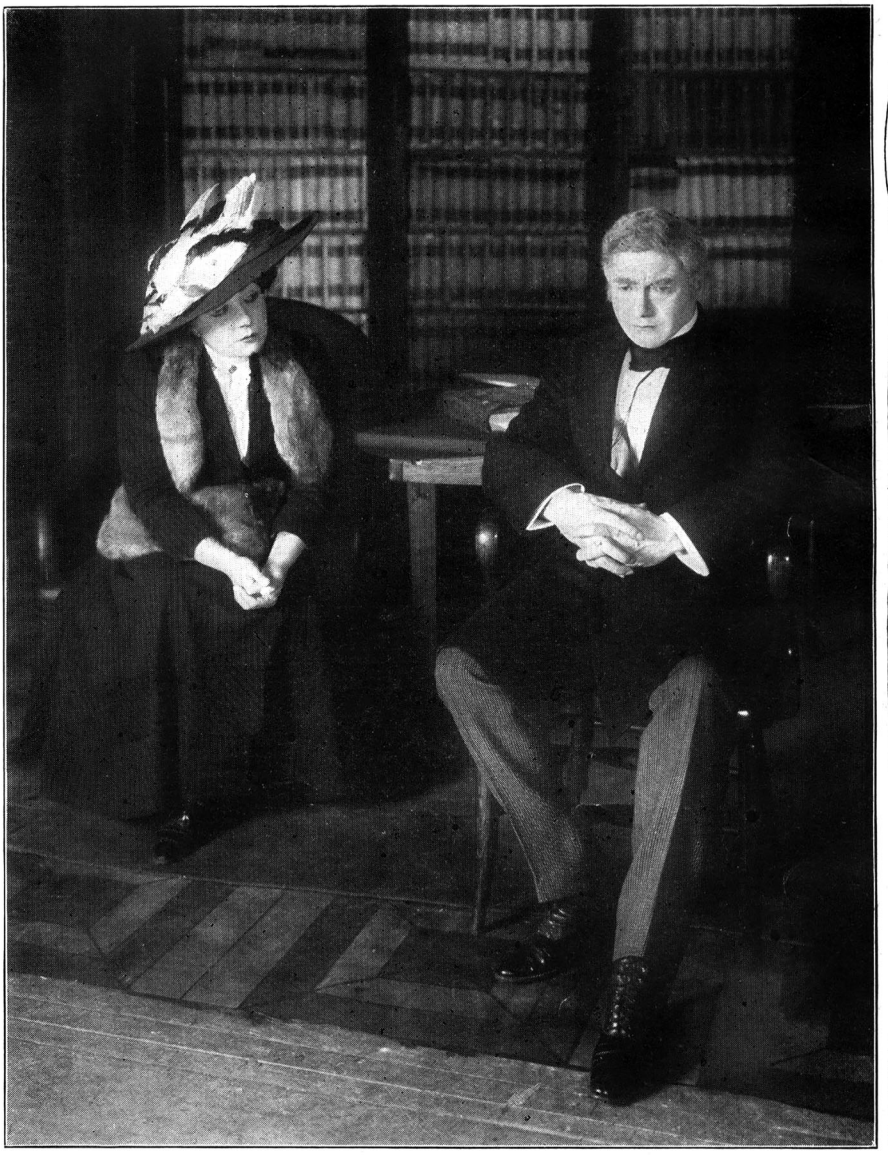
A Powerful Scene in "THE WORLD AND HIS WIFE."
Wm. Faversham's big success.
(Mr. Faversham and his wife, Miss Julie Opp, at extreme right.)
Photograph by Byron, New York.



MISS JULIE OPP and her husband, WILLIAM FAVERSHAM in the latter's great success, "THE WORLD AND HIS WIFE."
Photograph by Byron, New York.



"Hour after Hour! Hour after Hour! My God! Wont you believe me?"
Putting the suspect through the Modern Spanish Inquisition.
A powerful and gripping scene in "THE THIRD DEGREE."
Photograph by White, New York.



MISS HELEN WARE and EDMUND BREESE
in a strong scene from Charles Klein's latest play
"THE THIRD DEGREE."
Photograph by White, New York.

H. B. WARNER and MISS ELEANOR ROBSON
in Miss Robson's latest success
"VERA THE MEDIUM"
Photograph by White, New York.

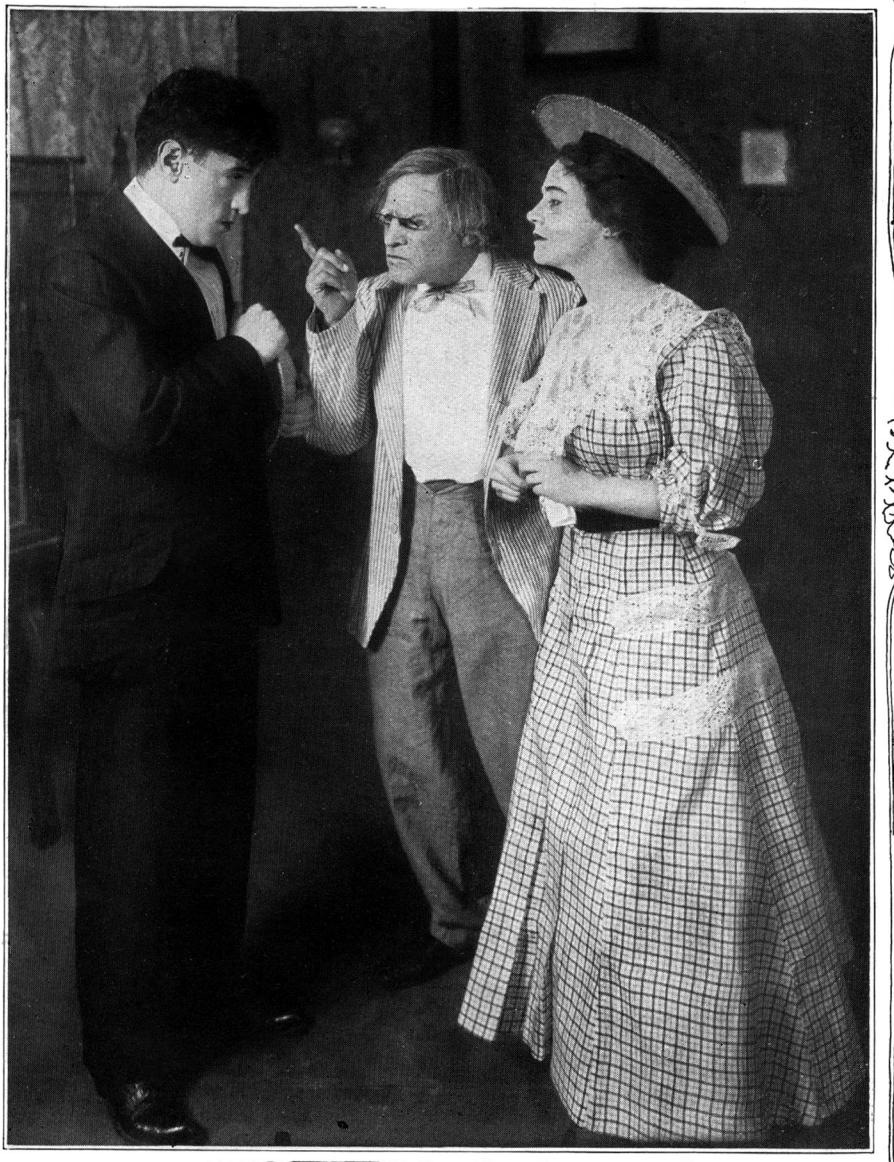
GEORGE LE GUENE, MISS ELEANOR ROBSON
and MISS MINNIE RADCLIFFE
in "VERA THE MEDIUM."
Photograph by White, New York.

Scene showing MISS ELEANOR ROBSON and company in "VERA THE MEDIUM." Photograph by White, New York.

Three interesting pictures of
EDWIN STEVENS
who plays the part of "The Devil in the production of that title.
Photograph by White, New York.

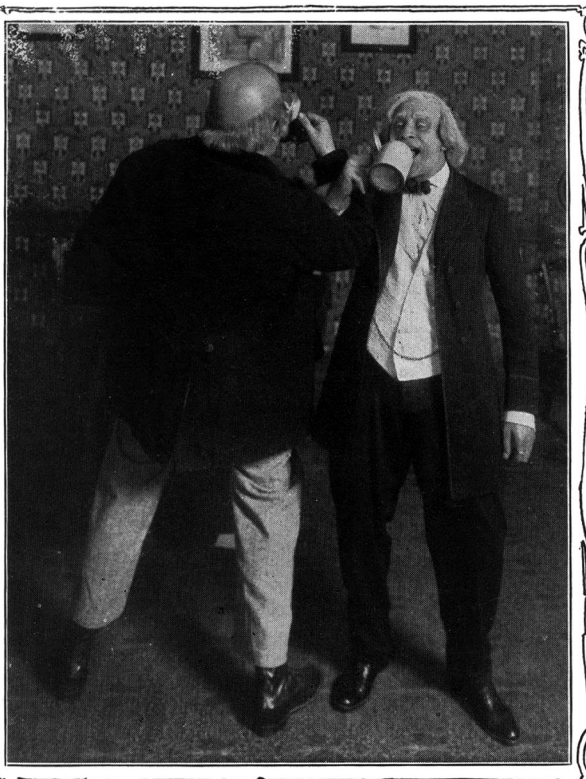
MISS ELSIE FERGUSON
as "Jen," in "PIERRE OF THE PLAINS."
Photograph by Sarony, New York.

MISS TOPSY SEAGRIST
in "THE GIRL BEHIND THE COUNTER."
Photograph by Hall, New York.



GEOFFREY C. STEIN, LOUIS MANN and MISS
EMILY ANN WELLMAN in a scene from
Mr. Mann's latest success
"THE MAN WHO STOOD STILL."
Photograph by White, New York.

LOUIS MANN and MISTRESS CORINNE MALVERN
in a heart-stirring dialogue in
"THE MAN WHO STOOD STILL."
Photograph by White, New York.



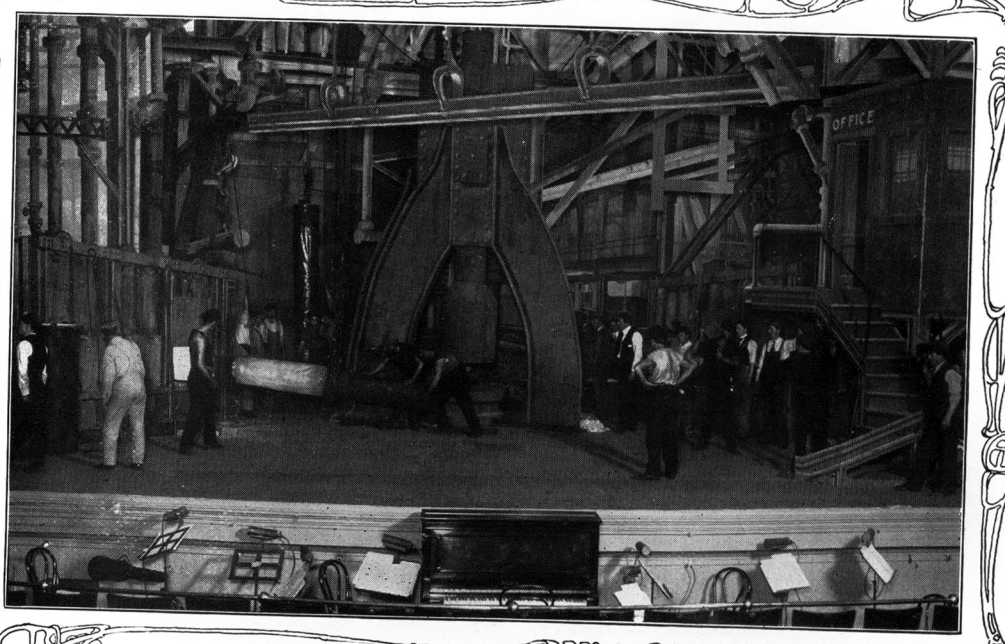
ROBERT FISCHER and LOUIS MANN
in a scene from Act III of
"THE MAN WHO STOOD STILL."
Photograph by White, New York.

LOUIS MANN and MISS MATHILDE COTTRELLY
in a scene from Act of
"THE MAN WHO STOOD STILL."
Photograph by White, New York.

MISS EDITH BROWNING and LOUIS MANN
in an effective scene from
"THE MAN WHO STOOD STILL."
Photograph by White, New York.

MISS VERA McCORD
in "VIA WIRELESS."
Photograph by Davis & Eickemeyer, New York.

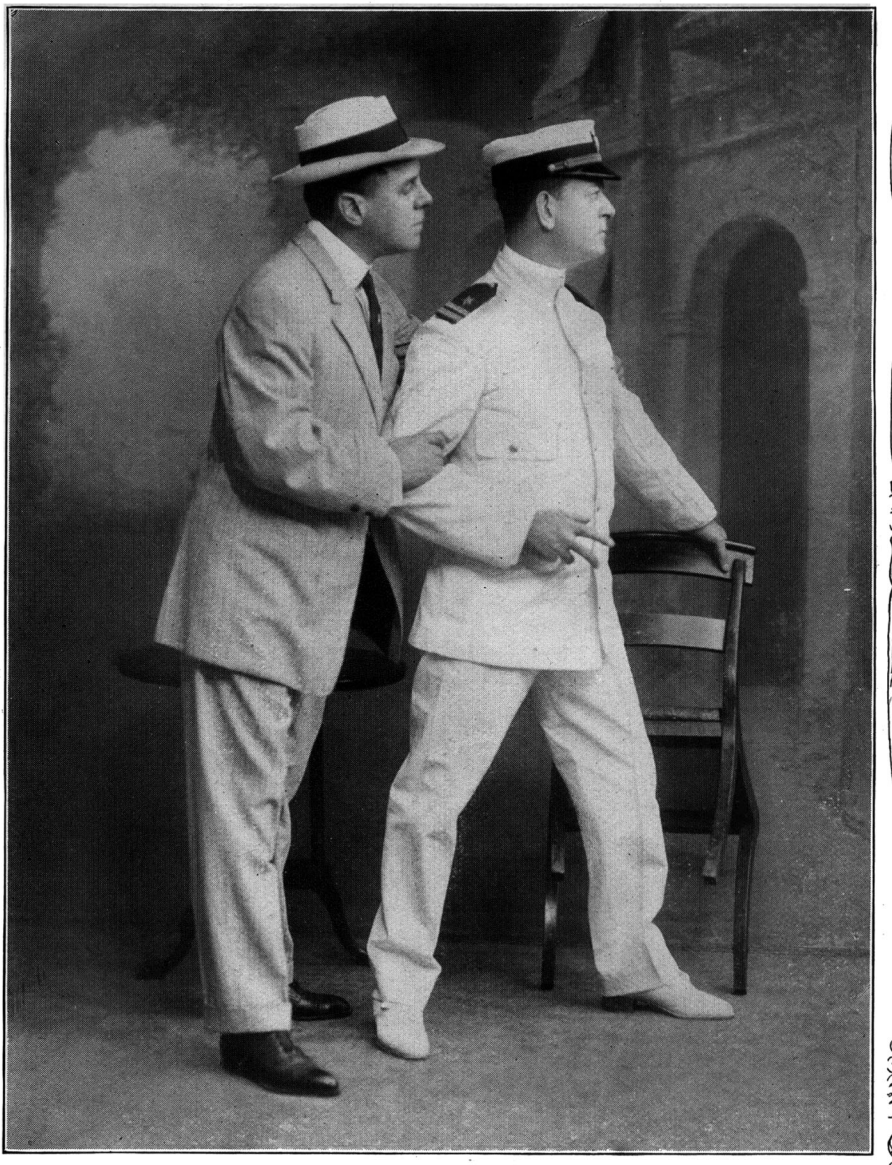
One of the great stage scenes of to-day.
The Wireless Room in the Steamship Mongolian in "VIA WIRELESS"
Showing JOSEPH KAUFMAN as "Harling" the wireless operator.
Photograph by Byron, New York.



Another great picture of stage-craft showing the gun-forging scene
in "VIA WIRELESS."
Photograph by Byron, New York.

MISS GEORGIE DREW MENDUM
in "VIA WIRELESS."
Photograph by Davis & Eickemeyer, New York.

MISS ETHEL WRIGHT and FRANCES D. McGINN
in "VIA WIRELESS"
Photograph by Davis & Eickemeyer, New York.

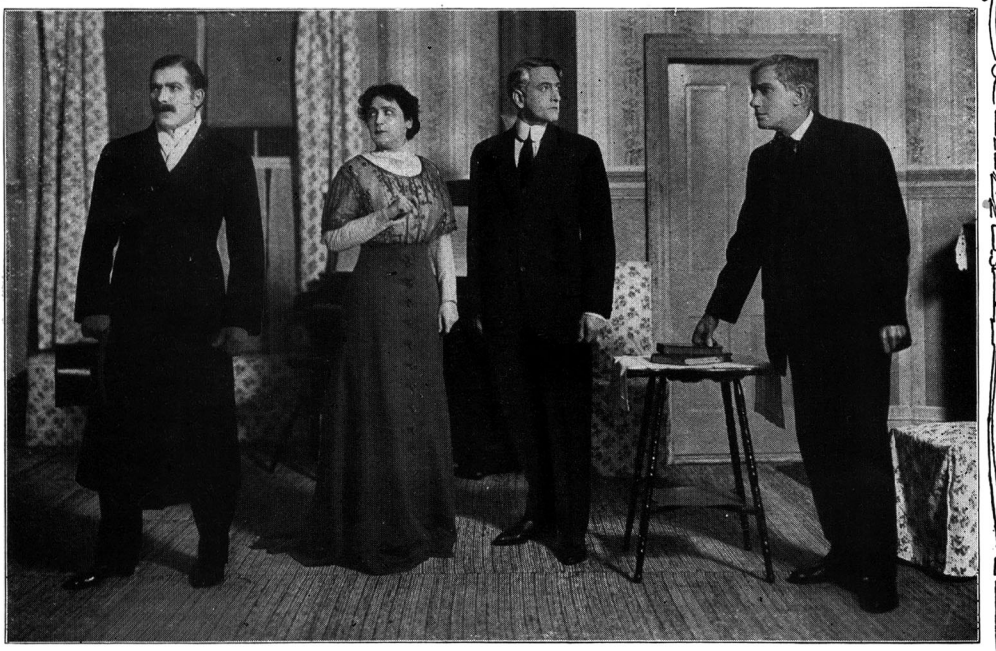


FRANK MONROE and EDWIN ARDEN
in "VIA WIRELESS."
Photograph by Davis & Eickemeyer, New York.

WILLIAM GILLETTE and MISS CONSTANCE COLLIER,
in a scene from Act II, "SAMSON."
Henri Bernstein's latest play.

WILLIAM GILLETTE and MISS PAULINE FREDERICK
in a scene from Act I, "SAMSON."
Henri Bernstein's latest play.

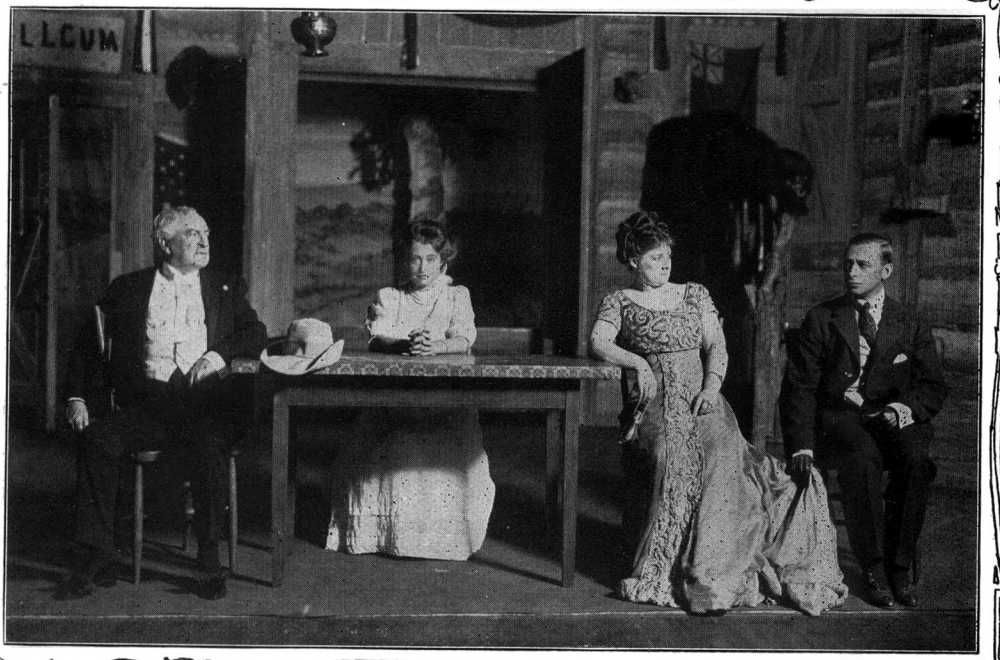
MISS KATHARINE BELL, MISS IRA BROOKS and
NICHOLAS JUDELS supporting MISS BLANCHE WALSH
in "THE TEST."
Photograph by Hall, New York.



ROBERT E. LEE HILL, MISS BLANCHE WALSH,
GEORGE W. HOWARD and SHELDON LEWIS
in "THE TEST."
Photograph by Hall, New York.

MISS BLANCHE WALSH and GEORGE W. HOWARD
in "THE TEST."
Photograph by Hall, New York.

MISS HELEN HALE and WM. COLLIER
in "THE PATRIOT."
Photograph by Hall, New York.



JOHN SAVILLE, MISS HELEN HALE,
MISS HELEN COLLIER GARRICK and WM. COLLIER
in "THE PATRIOT."
Photograph by Hall, New York.

Scene from William Collier's latest success "THE PATRIOT."
Mr. Collier as "Sir Augustus Plantagenet Armitage" is bidding farewell
to "Bijou Strong" (Miss Helen Hale).
Photograph by Hall, New York.

"The Lord of St. Valentine."
the beautiful ballet in "LITTLE NEMO."
MISS ALBERTINE BENSON as the Valentine Fairy in center.
Photograph by White, New York.

THE BLUE BOOK

MAGAZINE

Vol. VIII February, 1909 No. 4

The Solitaire Cipher

By FREDERIC REDDALE

Author of "MAT BARDEEN—MASTER DIVER," etc.

MICHAEL CALLANDAR, when not playing solitaire, used to talk about his fabulous riches. Some believed him; most did not. But because he had spent a number of years in the Orient there was a mystery about him and that fact lent credence to his vagaries and hints. When he died and left a cipher-will, still further curiosity was aroused; and again when a representative of an Oriental principality visited the haunts of Callandar, the excitement became intense. The strange incidents that followed the old man's demise are told in Mr. Reddale's best way and for those who like to verify a Cipher-puzzle, there is an especial feature of interest.—THE EDITORS.

CHAPTER I.

"WHAT do you make of it, Felix?" I inquired.

"Bally rot! The mooniest kind of moonshine, every bit!" was the cocksure reply.

"Looks that way," I admitted dubiously, "and yet—"

"No 'yet' about it," Felix broke in.

"Why, the old buffer—I beg your pardon, Mrs. Ballister—never saw a hundred thousand shillings, let alone guineas!"

"But the thing's so circumstantial on the face of it," I parried.

"I don't see where," retorted Felix.

"Any crazy man may draw a will. The question is, had he anything to leave? If you ask me, I say 'No!'"

"Don't be too sure, lads," said my dear mother gently, at this point. "You know he was always talking and rambling about his vast wealth and hinting at what it would do for the family. I cannot fancy that it was *all* moonshine, as Felix thinks."

"That's exactly my idea," exclaimed Minnie Grahame. "I believe the thing is true—every word!"

I am a firm believer in women's intuition, and the quiet confidence of these two dear ladies helped to confirm my own secret opinions.

"But see here," Felix objected. He called my mother "aunt," though it was only a courtesy title. "If the old man really had a hundred thousand guineas to bequeath to any one, why all this hocus-pocus about the matter? Why

Copyright, 1908, by The Story-Press Corporation. Entered at Stationers' Hall, London. All rights reserved.

didn't he come out flat-footed and tell where the stuff was to be found instead of making a huge mystery and locking up the secret in a bit of blind cipher writing that no one can make heads or tails of! That's what I want to know?"

My mother shook her head and smiled inscrutably, making no other reply to Felix's tirade. Despite his openly avowed disbelief, there was an excited glitter in his eyes—and no wonder, for to have a hundred thousand guineas flaunted in one's face and at the same time tauntingly and bafflingly withheld is enough to excite any poor man. And yet I thought that Felix was talking more to draw out the rest of us than because he actually disbelieved.

"That's exactly what I'm going to find out," said I, answering his last remark. "Sir Francis Bacon says somewhere that no cipher writing can be devised which cannot sooner or later be solved. I'll unlock this one if it takes me ten years!"

"And you'll let me help?" begged Miss Grahame, resting her hand on mine for an instant. "A woman's wit, you know!"

"Oh, we'll all help," affirmed Felix, lighting a fresh cigaret. "What's the first move?"

"Have the will proved," I answered.

"Then I'll tackle the cryptogram."

"All right! But if you want my opinion, you'll find it's all the tommiest kind of tommy-rot," answered Felix, getting up to go home.

He was fond of superlatives and also of volunteering advice where no one cared a jot what he thought.

We four had spent the evening in puzzled confab about the red-covered round table in our little cottage at Leytonstone, a suburban London village fifteen miles from Fenchurch Street Station: My dear mother, Mrs. Edith Ballister; Miss Minnie Grahame, my second cousin and affianced wife; Felix Kenneth, whose relationship was distant and tenuous but quite indisputable and myself, Edward Ballister, at your service, usually called Ted for short and on week-days.

Felix and I were chums, nearly of an age, and were both employed in the city; Minnie Grahame taught art in a nearby finishing-school for young ladies and made her home with us; my mother kept up a modest household with the help of one old maid-servant, for about all we had to depend upon was my clerkly stipend of three pounds a week.

That very afternoon we had laid to rest in Leyton churchyard all that was mortal of my maternal great-grandfather, Michael Callandar, a picturesque ruin of a once vigorous and upstanding man. He had reached the unusual age of ninety-five, and literally died of bodily senility, though his mind was clear and sane to the last.

My mother, Miss Grahame, the maid, and I were with him when he breathed his last in a great wheeled chair. When he realized that his end was near, he motioned for my mother to loosen his dressing-gown at the throat, and draw out a packet which, for as long as we could remember he had worn next to his body attached to a fine steel chain.

"Give it to Ted," he said in the thin, high-pitched voice of the very aged. "He knows!"

"I took the object, which I had seen scores of times in the past twenty years —a thin and oblong leather bill-book, fastened with a snap lock—and put it away in my coat-pocket. What its contents might be I had absolutely no knowledge, for none of us had ever seen what was inside.

Michael Callandar raised his faded eyes to mine with a sudden sparkle of their old-time fire, nodded once or twice, then closed his lids. His chest heaved once or twice; then came a longer sigh, the grizzled head fell forward, and the old man was spent.

After the funeral we four, the only surviving relatives, assembled around the evening-lamp, and I brought out the faded and discolored old bill-book. To tell the truth, I had attached so little importance to the thing that I had not once looked at it since the day of the old man's death.

Now however, I unfastened the rusty clasp, and emptied the contents on the table-cloth. These proved to consist of two papers and nothing more. One was a legal-looking document on blue-cap such as conveyancers use; the other was

thinner, enclosed in a wrapping of oiled silk.

I took up the first named and read on the outside the following words in formal engrossed script:

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
OF
MICHAEL CALLANDAR.

In the upper left hand corner was the office stamp of a firm of lawyers in the Temple. The paper, greasy, discolored, and dog's-eared from long carrying and frequent handling, was nevertheless tough-fibered and well-preserved, so that it crackled pleasantly as I opened it and smoothed out the creases.

I proceeded to read aloud the superscription and the contents, which were as astonishing as they were brief:

> I, Michael Callandar, being sound of mind and body, and in fear of God, do hereby give and bequeath absolutely to my dearly beloved great-grandson, Edward Ballister, all my property whatsoever, amounting to one hundred thousand guineas, be the same more or less, situated and concealed in the place elsewhere mentioned and described, to be by my said grandson devoted to the uses and objects already comprehended and understood by him according to his sole discretion. In token whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal in the presence of competent witnesses this tenth day of October in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and sixty-one.
>
> MICHAEL CALLANDAR.
>
> WITNESSES:
> JOHN MARCH,
> ELLEN MARCH.

The paper dropped from my hands as I drew a long breath of astonishment and looked into the faces of my auditors. My mother's work had fallen beneath her hands into her lap; there was a quiet and peaceful smile on her sweet face. Minnie Grahame, leaning forward with her elbows on her knees and her chin resting on her palms, looked at me with a puzzled frown. Felix's lips were puckered in a silent whistle of amazement.

Kenneth the irrepressible was first to speak.

"What's in the other package, Ted?"

I unfolded several wrappings of oiled silk, finally revealing a single oblong slip of parchment seven inches long by three and a half deep, one side of which was covered with cabalistic characters which I may as well transcribe here:

H10+Q+JC4+9H2+9C4HQCJH4C2HJCJH4+2
+K+QCK+KH2C2HK+9C9H6CJ+AH2C2H10+Q
+Q+QC2H2CA+QH9+6C2HQCJHKC5HJ+6CJ
+4HQ+3C4HJCK+9H2C4+5H6C2+AH2C8
+4H2C2H6+QC2+QH5C4+2H2+3+3+3+Q
+5C4+5+3+2+Q+10+4+JC4H2+4+JC2+A
H2CJH7+JC9+9

There was nothing else in the old bill-book—only these two documents: Michael Callandar's will and this maddeningly mysterious slip of parchment!

As it passed from hand to hand the wonder grew. My mother merely glanced at it and passed it along to Miss Grahame, who in turn pushed it across the table to Kenneth; he examined it fiercely and truculently as if personally affronted by the thing. He turned it this way and that, sidewise and upside down, and finally flung it on the table with an exclamation of disgust. Then followed the rapid fire of question and answer with which this narrative opens.

After Felix had gone, flinging back over his shoulder the parting words: "It's a huge joke!" I lit my pipe and sat down to pore over the parchment. The will did not bother me in the least—apparently it was all shipshape and would hold water provided there was any real legacy behind it. My mother resumed her placid knitting and Miss Grahame her book; the latter, however, occasionally raised her eyes to mine as I puzzled over the cryptic characters.

What could it mean? The letters and numbers and crosses reminded me of a lot of chemical formulas or symbols. Had the old man stumbled upon some gigantic scientific secret? But I speedily dismissed that idea, for during his long life, so far back as I could recollect, his one literary debauch had consisted in a weekly penn'orth of *Lloyd's Sunday Newspaper*, although he had been in his prime a fine conversationalist and must have been somewhat of a voyager and traveler.

This last gave me an idea—the symbols of the cipher bore some resemblance to Marryatt's code, yet my slight familiarity with shipping matters soon

convinced me that there was nothing in this guess either. Then the constant repetitions of Q and K and the numerals suggested a chess-problem, but "Old Solitaire" didn't play chess.

Thus an hour, two hours, wore away and I was no nearer a solution. My mother glanced at the clock, folded up her work and announced in her gentle way that it was time we were all in bed and asleep, else we'd never get up in the morning. Which was so undeniably true that I folded up the will and cipher, restored them to their leather case and resolved to dismiss the whole matter until another day.

Minnie Grahame lingered a moment in our tiny hall as we lit our bedroom candles.

"Do you believe it's a joke, Ted?" she whispered.

"No, I don't," I answered; "at least not yet."

"Neither does your mother," she added, nodding significantly.

"Did you watch her face while Mr. Kenneth was ranting so?"

I nodded.

"Well, she may not be able to read cipher, but she knows or believes that your great-grandfather had *something* to bequeath to you."

"Glad you think so," I answered. "Somehow that expresses my own feeling exactly. But I'll have another go at it in the morning. Good-night!"

Fortunately the next day was Sunday so there was no office-grind to distract my mind. My mother did not care to attend church so soon after the funeral, but remained in her room reading the morning prayers and a chapter in the Bible. Miss Grahame went, however, so I had two or three hours to myself. Over several pipes I puzzled and pored over that magic bit of parchment. If, as seemed to be implied, it contained the clew to a hundred thousand guineas, then the secret must be wrung from it in some way.

I tried to recall everything I had ever read about cryptograms and secret writings—ciphers based on numbers, letters of the alphabet, on a certain book or code, single ciphers, double ciphers, arithmetical ciphers—and applied certain well-known tests, but without avail. For instance, there is Poe's solution, based on the relative frequency with which certain letters recur in the English language, the letter E being the most common.

I found by actual count there were a total of 201 characters of all kinds in the complete cipher, of which the cross + appeared 42 times; but assuming that this "+" represented "E" I could not build up any words in that way. Then H in the cipher occurred no less than 28 times; assuming that H stood for E led to no better results. But there were also 29 Cs, and here the results were still more discouraging. The numerals were even more barren of results.

I counted and tried every other letter in the puzzle—the J, the Q, the A, and the figures, making tables and random shots at a solution, all without avail. Unfortunately I had no books or literature on the subject, and Leytonstone did not boast a public library. So at last I gave it up for the present as a hopeless job, and resolved to think no more about the cryptogram until the morrow.

But I saw this: That I must have help—expert help—and luckily I remembered just the man for the job.

II

Lock, stock, and barrel, the Ballister clan had been a queer lot—they and their offshoots, the Callandars, the Kennethsand even the Grahames. Originally they were North Country freebooters, smugglers, and raiders, but with it all either staunch Presbyterians or good churchmen. Great wealth was theirs, at times, and at others almost abject penury. There was a legend that each succeeding generation contained either a miser or a spendthrift; in other words, that what one Ballister heaped up his immediate successor would dissipate. My own father, after whom I was named, had squandered an immense fortune, selling or pawning every acre, every tree, on the old estate. So that, if the prophecy was to hold true, it was my turn to become the savior and reconstructor of the family fortunes. And I was a city-clerk on a hundred and fifty a year with a widowed mother dependent upon me!

Speaking of my father, it is a curious fact that while I have never set eyes on him, he dying before I was born, my maternal great-grandfather, Michael Callandar, I had always known. He lived with my mother, and though possessing no visible income or means of support, seemed to have some secret source of supply, for he was never without a handful of silver shillings and half crowns and a few gold sovereigns in his capacious breeches pockets. So, while I was a lad at school, we never actually suffered from want. As I became older and wont to reflect on the matter I used to recall the Bible story about the never-failing barrel of meal belonging to the poor widow in famine time.

A very ancient man was Michael Callander. He had been born in the year 1790; he could remember the French Revolution, the career of Bonaparte, the battles of the Nile, of Trafalgar, and of Waterloo, with the succeeding exile and death of the Great Emperor.

Although he never claimed to have borne an actual part in these events, it was always understood that he had led an exceedingly adventurous life by sea and land, finally returning to England in 1858, when he was nearly seventy years of age. Then, my mother shortly being left a widow, he built largely with his own hands the little cottage at Leytonstone where I was born and which I had always called home.

It was a curious choice of a location—and yet perhaps not so strange in view of the *dénoûment*—for less than two miles away stood the fine old mansion and estate known as Leyton Grange, originally carved by a royal grant out of Epping Forest, which had been the seat of the Ballisters for three hundred years until my father's folly sent the place into the hands of aliens and strangers.

A very queer character was Michael Callandar—a mahogany faced, fiery-eyed, iron-framed, rugged man of seventy odd when I first began to remember him. He wore no beard but a grizzled mustache, and his gray hair curled closely and crisply around a big and well-shaped head. His most striking peculiarities were that he never wore a new suit of clothes, possessing an apparently inexhaustible stock of apparel cut in the fashion of the days when Queen Victoria was crowned. Secondly, as I have said, although he never worked and never went to London, he was never without a small stock of ready money.

His pleasures were few—a walk, his long churchwarden clay pipe, a mug of ale at the Leyton Arms every evening, and an inveterate passion for the game of solitaire.

This latter he would play by himself for hours at a stretch, carrying a very old and very dirty deck of cards in the side pocket of his coat. I have come upon him sitting under a grassy hedge by the roadside, a newspaper on his knees for a table and the interminable game going on; he would thus amuse himself in his own apartment, in the inn parlor, or in our sitting-room—always with the most absorbed interest and satisfaction—for the game, whatever it was, usually came out to his serene satisfaction. But I never could discover what particular brand of solitaire he affected, nor would he ever teach it to me, though he once unfolded the mysteries of the clock solitaire. Sometimes, however, his private particular game would go wrong; on these occasions he would snort and swear under his breath, and make a bee-line for his room, whence half an hour later he would emerge with a serene face, having apparently solved the problem. Hence, throughout Leytonstone, Michael Callandar went by the nickname of "Old Solitaire."

Judge then of my surprise, knowing my great-grandfather's antecedents as I thought I did, and his frugal and uneventful way of life, when I found him willing away the stupendous sum of a hundred thousand guineas! Where did he get it? And, if he really possessed that vast amount, why had he kept the matter so secret? On the other hand, if it was all moonshine as Felix Kenneth insisted—a fabric born of a diseased brain—why so much formality and all this mystery about the cipher—for that his will contained a reference to some secret deposit, and that the cryptogram was intimately connected with the wording of the will, I began firmly to believe.

The reference in the will to certain objects comprehended by me was easier to understand. Over and over again had Old Solitaire with sundry and divers mysterious nods and winks affirmed his belief that "Ted" was to restore the family fortunes and recover Leyton Grange.

"Ye'll buy it back, lad, every brick and tree, and the Ballisters will hold up their heads again!"

But to an impecunious clerk on three pounds a week, without influence or any particular money-getting ability of his own, such a prophecy seemed the wildest sort of a chimera. Yet all that Sunday these intermittent words of Old Solitaire would not down, and I caught myself wondering if he had been betting on a sure thing, purposely leaving me to pick up the clew by means of the cipher? Consequently I was in a fever of impatience for Monday to arrive when I might take the first step toward a solution of the mystery. To have a fortune of a hundred thousand pounds dangled before one's eyes was surely enough to set a poor man crazy.

And although I had resolutely put away the oiled silk packet when our Sunday dinner was announced, the burning topic kept uppermost in my mind. I must talk to somebody about the thing.

After the table was cleared and my mother and I were alone—Minnie Grahame having gone to afternoon service—I lit my pipe and opened up:

"You've heard me speak of Bruce Tennion, mother?"

"Yes, dear, that clever man who lectures at the Polytechnic Institute and all that sort of thing?"

"That's the one; my old preceptor at the Birkbeck, you know. Well, I'm going to see him to-morrow. He knows a little about everything, and I should not wonder if he could help me to unravel that beastly cipher."

"Just as you think best, Ted," said the dear old lady. "But I wouldn't worry too much about it."

"I'll never stop worrying until I find out what the cipher's all about and whether your grandfather really had a hundred thousand guineas to leave me!"

"I wish I could help you, Ted," said my mother wistfully, "but you see I really know very little."

"Tell me all you can," I urged. "Even apparently trivial facts or events in a case like this are apt to prove valuable."

She leaned back in her chair, her eyes fixed on the leaping flames in the open grate, and began to speak reminiscently:

"He was really a very wonderful man—a terrible man, I used to think sometimes. There were all sorts of rumors about his early years, and your father always claimed that Michael Callandar could have helped stave off the crash. But he wouldn't—and some very high words passed between them.

"Somehow, but where I got the idea I couldn't tell you now, it was borne in upon me that when Michael Callandar returned to England he was really a very rich man. I know he traveled all over the world, but that was many years ago—before you were born, my dear—and I seem to remember that things were said—well—you know, to the effect that he had made his money in rather mysterious ways. But we mustn't judge, seeing that he's dead and gone now.

"He was very kind to me always; indeed I should have positively been in want after your father died, if Grandfather Callandar hadn't come to my relief. And then he always thought so much of you, Ted, dear. Why I remember when you were born he said something about your being the hope of the family.

"But as to his money, whether he had little or much, I really couldn't tell you, for I was at first a little afraid of him, you know, and he always resented anything that looked like prying into his affairs."

Her voice trailed away into silence as she came to the end of these dim recollections.

"That's all very interesting, mother mine," I said, stooping over to kiss her, "and really has some bearing on the case in hand. One more question and I wont bother you any more: Do you believe that Grandfather Callandar could by any possibility have possessed property to the amount of a hundred thousand guineas, as his will intimates."

The dear soul pondered this question deeply for a few moments.

"My dear boy, I should not be surprised at anything you could tell me about Michael Collandar! But I do so hope you wont be disappointed."

"Thanks, *mater*," I answered with another kiss and a smile. "I wont let it spoil my temper, whatever happens. But I'm going to see the thing through."

Then I went out for a walk before tea-time. I wanted to digest all that I had just learned, and like many another rather big and slow witted man I think best when in motion in the open air. After half an hour of smart heel-and-toe work over the frozen roads I came to one conclusion: That there was nothing inherently improbable in the idea that Old Solitaire might have possessed a very large sum of money on his return from his wanderings, and that this original principal might have increased materially in the past quarter century by the simple accretion of compound interest.

But granting the possession of such a fortune, why was so much mystery necessary? Was it a secret hoard? If so, where was it deposited? Not in our little Leytonstone cottage, one might be sure. That, undoubtedly, was where the cipher writing came in—and so there I was again, like a man in a forest, traveling around in a circle and coming back to the original point of departure—the cryptogram! Well, the attack must begin there

My route led around by Leyton Church, for I had calculated on meeting Miss Grahame coming from vespers. You see I still wanted someone to talk with. We fell into step easily as was our habit; no sooner were we clear of the dispersing groups of worshipers than Minnie murmured:

"Any daylight yet, Ted?"

"Not as to the cipher," I answered. "That's as blind as ever, but mother and I had a little talk after dinner, and from what she tells me I see no reason to doubt that Old Solitaire might have had that much money."

She nodded and took my arm, for it was beginning to snow and the short December twilight was fast darkening into the blackest kind of night.

"Don't laugh at me," she begged, "but really I have sat and watched him by the hour, weaving all sorts of queer romances about his early days. I don't know whether I can quite convey my meaning, but I could believe anything about your great-grandfather; nothing would surprise me!"

"Why those are almost the very words the *mater* used! I think you're both witches! But I can't get over the roundabout hole-in-the-corner way he went about this thing. If the money was his—no matter how he came by it—why couldn't he dispose of it openly?"

"We-e-ll," said Minnie, judicially, "there may have been several reasons why. Perhaps he didn't dare. Perhaps he was afraid. He may have been watched?"

"Dare? Afraid?" I echoed. "What could he have been afraid of? Why should he be watched?"

"I'm sure I don't know," the girl replied, "they're merely fancies of mine, you know. But, really, I have sometimes thought that some sort of guard was kept over your great-grandfather. Several times lately I've noticed strange men in the village, and I am confident that two of them were in the churchyard yesterday at the funeral."

"Are you sure," I inquired.

"We-e-ll, I might have been mistaken, but I don't think so," was her reply. Then, with seeming irrelevance she went on: "I want you to promise me something, Ted."

"Anything—what is it?" I made answer.

"Do—*do*—be very careful of yourself in the next few days and weeks. Don't run any foolish risks, please!"

"Why, of course not. I probably wouldn't anyway, but since you make a point of it I'll be extra careful."

This brought us to our family doorstep and the conversation stopped there. But I had occasion to remember Minnie Grahame's words before long.

Telling the *mater* not to expect me home to tea that night and not to sit up for me, I took the usual 8:20 train for the city on Monday morning, rosy visions of great wealth and all that it implied giving a warm and sanguine tinge to my thoughts.

For if the thing were true—nay only partly true—I would be able to marry Minnie Grahame out of hand, cutting off many years of waiting and longing for us both.

But all that day, I fear, I was a very unprofitable servant or idle apprentice, whichever you please. For as I bent over my ledger, instead of the usual columns of pounds, shillings, and pence there danced before my eyes rows of

H10 + Q + JC4 + 9H2 + 5C4

in maddening succession.

III

Bruce Tennion was a bachelor of fifty summers or winters; bearded, already gray and grizzled about the temples; a savant, a writer, and a walking encyclopedia concerning out-of-the-way facts and figures. He had studied for the bar, had been called, but had never practiced. Possessed of some independent means, he was able to live his life pretty much as he chose: reading, lecturing, traveling, delving into those curious by-ways of life and literature which are none the less fascinating because they are absolutely profitless in a pecuniary sense. He was known to have been occasionally retained in certain legal matters where his curious knowledge was of expert service; could I interest him in my case I should indeed count myself in clover. In his earlier years, before he came into his patrimony, he had made his living by teaching. I had been lucky enough to attract his notice at the Birkbeck, an acquaintance which subsequently developed into friendship.

Fortunately I found him at home in his rookery in Arundel Street—a river thoroughfare between the Strand and the Embankment—enveloped in a cloud of tobacco, the remains of his sent-in dinner on a tray at his elbow.

"Come in—take a chair if you can find one vacant—have you dined?—yes—light up—there's the Scotch-and-soda—what's on your mind?"

This was his queer disjointed greeting.

I obeyed each of his injunctions, including a mild libation, got my own pipe well going, and in response to his monosyllable "Well?" plunged into my story, acquainting him with all the facts which you have read thus far.

Tennion listened attentively, punctuating my pauses with puffs of blue Mankia mixture, and without a word of comment held out his hand for the documents in the case—the leather bill-book and its contents as I passed them across the table.

He skimmed through my great-grandfather's will and tossed it aside with a grunt, then turned to the cryptogram, which he studied with growing interest, finally laying down his pipe, which was with him a sign of mental absorption.

"What do you make of this?" he growled.

"Nothing—absolutely nothing," I replied.

"Sort of blind turning!" he commented grimly.

"That's about it," I grinned.

"What does your mother say?" was his next question; rather an unexpected one, by the way.

"She—ah, I'll give you her exact words: 'My dear boy, I should not be surprised at anything you could tell me about Michael Callandar.'"

Trennion grunted again and kept his eyes glued to the cryptogram, while I waited for the oracle to speak. At length the great man vouchsafed:

"I'll tell you one thing, young man, The fellow who devised this thing was either very clever or a very great rogue; probably both. But you needn't feel ashamed. Your respected relative, while he undoubtedly had a secret to hide, did not originate this cipher. He probably learned it at second hand. It is what we call an arbitrary crypt, and only those knowing or stumbling on the key can decipher it."

"Then you think—" I was beginning, my spirits at zero, when Tennion interrupted:

"What I *think* doesn't matter now. What I *know* is that any cipher or secret writing devised by mortal man can be unlocked by any other competent mind—in time, mind you, in time. All we have to do is to discover the formula."

"Then you think—" I stammered again.

"I don't *think*—I know!" thundered Tennion, tossing the parchment on the table. Leave this thing with me for a day or two."

"But the money—the hundred thousand guineas!" I blurted out. "Do you realize what it means to us all!"

He waved his hand reassuringly. "The money's there—or thereabouts—I fancy, and the cipher will give us the clew. Don't worry about that part. Come in Wednesday night."

With that I was forced to be content, and after a little desultory talk reached for my hat. With fingers on the knob of the door I was halted by these words from Tennion:

"The old man played solitaire a good deal, you say?"

"Morning, noon, and night," I answered truthfully.

He nodded a curt dismissal and I went away, upon the whole somewhat encouraged. It did me good to hear Bruce Tennion express himself so confidently as to the actual existence of the great legacy.

So I went home to Leytonstone on light-shod feet, and recounted to my mother and Minnie Grahame the results of the interview. The former smiled her quiet smile and nodded approval, but otherwise preserved that sweet and unruffled calm which I had come to know and to love.

Not so with Miss Grahame. She was positively electric with delightful anticipations. I may as well confess that she and I were tacitly engaged, and it was understood that we would be married the instant my means would permit. But so long as my salary remained at "three quid" per week and I had the dear old *mater* to support, it was agreed that there could be no thought of wedlock. But we were both young and full of hope for what the future might bring forth.

Next afternoon at the office—the Tuesday—just before closing time, I was astonished at receiving the following wire from Bruce Tennion:

"Bring me the identical pack of cards used by Callandar."

This put me in a flutter. Not only did it prove that the great expert was interested, but it seemed to indicate that he was on the track of the mystery. "The identical pack of cards," mind you. Why would not any old pack of cards serve his purpose? All playing-cards are alike! Strangely enough, I had never given the matter a single thought since the death and funeral of my ancient relative. Where were they kept? I could not recall seeing them or hearing of them; in fact, during the last few days of his life he himself seemed to have forgotten their existence. Probably his poor palsied hands and his failing sight had prevented indulgence in his favorite pastime.

You may imagine I was avid to get home to Leytonstone. But, once arrived there the sight of my mother's peaceful face beaming behind the tea-urn, a delicate flush on her still pretty features and her shapely hands flitting here and there among the tea-cups, effectually side tracked any overt inquiries on the subject uppermost in my thoughts. Luckily the dear heart decided to retire early that night of all nights, and when she was safely ensconced in her chamber I ventured to show Minnie the insistent telegram from Bruce Tennion.

"They must be in his room," said she, "probably in the side-pocket of his old brown coat where he always kept them. Let's go up and see!"

So together we tiptoed up the narrow stairs and along the equally narrow upper hall. There were only four chambers on the second story, for our cottage was a tiny affair, and Old Solitaire's room had been in the rear, next to mine. Minnie's room adjoined my mother's.

Well, we crept in—the first time I believe, that anyone had visited the dead man's chamber in life or death—for up to his last illness he always insisted on being his own chambermaid. There was his leather trunk, his narrow cot, and his spare clothes hanging in rows on hooks against the wall. He had been both sailor and soldier, and accustomed to accomodate his traps and belongings in narrow confines.

"I'll swear that's the coat he wore last!" I whispered, waving the candle before a row of big-buttoned bulky looking coats and trousers.

"Feel in the pockets," whispered Minnie Grahame, all a-quiver with ex-

citement, and I promise you I was none too cool myself. It seemed a species of sacrilege to touch the old man's things. However, I pulled the old brown coat toward me and plunged my hand into the wrong pocket, as it turned out—the left-hand one. It was empty.

But I swung the garment around, and tried the right-hand side. Something hard and flat met my touch, and I drew forth that of which we were in search; a dark and greasy and much-soiled pack of cards, which instantly I remembered as those from which I had learned the fascinating Clock Solitaire.

Our object accomplished, neither of us had any desire to linger; we blew out our candles and tiptoed down-stairs, glad once more to reach the homely glow and warmth of the sitting-room.

I tossed the pack on the table, and immediately began to shuffle the devil's picture-books. Miss Grahame resolutely refused to touch them, I remember, though I laughed at her superstitious scruples. But women are queer creatures, as you may have noticed.

Beyond the fact that it was a very ancient pack of cards, thick and durable, of some foreign make, the backs covered with a kind of flowery design in the classic style, there was nothing particularly noticeable about these old playing-cards. We both had seen them hundreds of times. But they were almost black with age and use; the white ground had long since given place to a chocolate brown tint due to much thumbing. Yet the four suits were distinctly legible and the brilliant colors on the "court cards" yet vivid.

I counted them, and made the usual fifty-two. I separated them into suits, and made the correct number of each, thirteen, in proper sequence from ace to ten and from knave to king. I examined every card for any tell-tale gambler's marks—a nick—a pin-prick, a nail-print—all without avail. Only one peculiarity did I notice, and not that until I had the four suits spread out on the table before us: The suits of diamonds and spades seemed—only seemed, mind you—to be a little less dirty than the clubs and hearts. But that striking fact impressed me not at all. Why should it?

"What do you make of them?" I queried.

Minnie Grahame shook her head dumbly.

"So far as I can see, it's just a common dirty pack of cards," said I.

"Wait until you hear from Mr. Tennion," she counseled. "There may be something here which only his trained mind can see."

"For instance?"

"We-e-ll," she drawled, in that inimitable monosyllable of hers which to the initiated meant so much—or so little, "he has the cipher, you know."

"You mean—" I broke in.

"That the two go together," she said, finishing my sentence for me. "Just how I don't see—being only a woman—but the connection's there somehow!"

"You and Tennion are too much for me," I laughed, sliding the pack together and slipping a rubber band around it. We'll see what he has to say for himself to-morrow night."

As it happened, however, Bruce Tennion was almost as dumb as an oyster when I arrived in Arundel Street on the Wednesday.

"Sure this is the old man's pack?" he queried, as I laid the cards down beside him.

"I could swear to them a dozen times over!" I asseverated. "I've seen him thumbing them a hundred times, get mad, go out of the room, and come back all smiles and graces like a chessy-cat."

"That's all I want," said Tennion curtly.

"Have you—er—are you—er—on the track?" I stammered in my eagerness for definite news.

"Oh, a glimmering of daylight," he growled. "It may be a mare's nest. You might look in on Saturday—that is, if you've nothing else on hand."

You may be sure I promised to be there.

IV

That night I found Felix Kenneth when I arrived home in Leytonstone. We had not met since the preceding Saturday. He lived in town, usually running out to see us and spend the night once or twice a month. I knew he

liked and admired Minnie Grahame; but as she utterly abhorred him, the matter gave me no uneasiness. Besides, Felix and I had been chums from boyhood, and I feared no treachery of that sort on his part—and certainly not on hers.

"Well, what's the news from the seat of war?" began Felix, airily and abruptly, when we were alone with our pipes, my dear mother having retired early as was her wont, Miss Grahame shortly following her, though for very diverse reasons.

I recounted in sequence my two interviews with Bruce Tennion.

"That's all very well," agreed Felix. "What does he think?"

"He's as dumb as an oyster and as noncommittal so far," I answered.

"But look here, old man," he spluttered, "surely you can tell from his manner what he thinks."

"*You* might—I can't," was my response. "You don't know Tennion. Until he's sure, he wont open his head, one way or the other."

"But he seems to be certain about the money, you say?"

"That Old Solitaire had something to bequeath—yes," I admitted. "But that's only a small part of the journey. Unless the cryptogram contains directions as to where the money is, how much better are we off? In fact, we're up a blind alley."

"Queer his asking for the pack of cards," mused Felix aloud.

"That's the most encouraging sign, as I look at it," was my response.

"Look here, Ted, have you proved the will?" inquired Felix suddenly.

"No, as a matter of fact, I haven't given it much thought. You see, Tennion seemed to think that was a mere detail. Who cares about the will unless we can say definitely where the money is located, or whether there's any property back of it?"

"That's right," assented Felix, "the whole thing turns on that blessed cipher. Once that is cleared up anyone might get the loot."

I nodded, for that was a self-evident proposition.

"What was the name of the lawyer-firm who drew the will," queried Felix after a period of moody smoking.

"Hatch & Hawkins, Pump Court, Inner Temple," I answered.

"Well, don't you suppose they could tell you something about the property?"

"Perhaps—then, again, they might know no more than we do."

"Then there were the witnesses: John March and Ellen March. Who might they be?"

"My dear fellow," I made answer, "I'm just as much in the dark as you are. There's ample time to prove the will, it seems to me, when we know that there's something behind it all. As you yourself said a few nights ago, it may be all the mooniest sort of moonshine."

I spoke rather testily, for it occurred to me that for one who could not possibly expect to benefit by Michael Callandar's bequest—unless by reflected grandeur—Felix Kenneth was taking upon himself a good deal of rather unnecessary interest. However, I did him an injustice, as you shall see.

"Look here, Ted," he said, lowering his voice, "I've changed my opinion since Saturday, and I'll tell you why. I believe your Old Solitaire had a mighty good reason for secrecy. This evening as I was coming here from the station I was followed by three men. At one point on the road I thought they were going to 'rush' me. But I stepped out into the middle of the main drive, and waited for them to come up. They accepted the initiative all right, took a good look at yours truly, muttered some apology, and went off with their tails between their legs. You may depend there's something in it, for Minnie—Miss Grahame—tells me she believes your great-grandfather was watched up to the day of his burial."

This was news indeed, yet I affected to make light of it. For what, I asked myself and Felix, could any watchers want with me?

"Give it up!" exclaimed Kenneth. "Only there's this: Old Solitaire would seem to have been a marked man. Whatever the source or the nature of his wealth, others may have been in the secret, and his death would naturally bring to a crisis any lurking plot."

"Well, I'll promise to be careful," I remarked, "though what there is to be careful of beats my time of day."

Felix stayed overnight, and we journeyed up to town together the next morning, I promising to let him know as soon as there were any further developments.

That day I secured leave of absence for an additional hour at noon, and made my way to the Inner Temple. There, in Pump Court, I found the firm name of "Hatch & Hawkins, Solicitors," but on inquiring at their chambers found an entirely new generation in possession, sons of the former partners. Their obliging managing-clerk hunted up for me the record of drawing my great-grandfather's will, but nothing else was forthcoming; he had not been a regular client, you see.

"What about the witnesses?" I inquired—"John and Ellen March?"

"Couldn't say, Mr. Ballister, I'm sure," said the old retainer, rubbing his hands with invisible soap and water. "Perhaps they were brought in for the mere purpose of witnessing; perhaps they were called on specially—the janitor and his wife, may be. We often do. But I can inquire for you, if it's a matter of any importance, Mr. Ballister."

"If it becomes necessary, I'll let you know," was my farewell remark.

Without the will itself, which was in possession of Bruce Tennion, it was useless to go to Doctors' Commons. Besides a legal firm could attend to the proving business better than any mere layman, and I decided to forego the necessary expense until I learned whether it was worth while to pay the fees. Everything depended upon that blessed cryptogram, and I half regretted that I had not retained a copy of the thing so that I might pore over it in my spare moments.

The Thursday passed uneventfully at the office, and I caught my usual train at Fenchurch Street, the 5:40. Arriving at Leyton Station I found it was raining hard, the black frost having broken, so in place of tramping the mile or so of unlit country road to the cottage, I piled into the rickety old 'bus with a dozen other regular passengers, arriving home in time for tea.

"Oh, my dear boy! Such a fright we've had!" was my mother's first salutation when she met me in our little passage, having heard my key in the latch.

"What's up, now, *mater?*" I asked, kissing her and leading her gently into the cozy sitting-room, where the urn was bubbling and a plate of muffins was gently sizzling before the fire.

"After you've had your tea, dear boy."

"No, no; tell me now."

"Well, this afternoon," she began reluctantly and rather tremulously, "I was all alone in the house about four o'clock. Jenny was gone to the grocer's and I sat at the window watching for her. It was 'blindman's holiday,' you see, too dark for reading and sewing and yet light enough to do without lamps."

I nodded, watching the dear old lady's pretty hands moving caressingly among the tea-things.

"While I sat there, a man came through the gate and knocked. He had a big bag over his shoulder, and I took him to be an old-clo'man. So I went to the door, and he inquired if we had any cast-off garments to sell or exchange; you know their talk.

"At first I shook my head, and made to close the door, but the impudent fellow stuck his foot part way in and refused to budge. Then I remembered that there were your great-grandfather's things up-stairs, but said I couldn't think of disposing of any of them without my son's consent.

"Well, the fellow kept up a constant stream of talk in a loud and rather overbearing voice, wanting to know what kind of garments they were and who they belonged to? Then he began to inquire about the neighbors—who was likely to have anything in his line?

"Two or three times I tried to close the door, but he clung there like a limpet on a rock. Suddenly I thought I heard a sound as of some one coming down the back-stairs, and turned my head to see, for the man kept up such a booming with his big voice that I could hardly trust my ears.

"Well, Ted, would you believe it! I distinctly saw a man run out of the back door; which was immediately slammed to by the draught through the hall! I screamed of course, and instantly the old-clo' man said 'Good-night, mum—call again!' and made off. I felt so weak I had to sit down on the stairs,

where Jenny found me. She had passed two men on the high-road on her way home; one of them was the man with the bag!

"As soon as we could light the lamps we both went up-stairs to grandfather's room, and such a scene of confusion you never saw! The clothes hanging up were flung from one end to the other, pockets turned inside out and linings ripped up. The chest of drawers had been ransacked and his trunk turned topsy-turvy!"

"I'll have a look around," said I, taking up one of the lamps. "Stay you here, *mater*."

It was even as she said; the room looked just as if a maniac had gone throughit. The floor and cot were littered with hastily-flung-down articles of clothing, the trunk and chest-of-drawers ransacked, mattress ripped up, while as if to prove that no mere cheap thievery was the object of the raid a number of shillings and half-crowns lay on the carpet where they had been spilled out of sundry pockets. So far as I could see nothing had been taken, but evidently a very thorough search had been made for some particular object. Whether successful or unsuccessful I could not say, but rather inclined to the latter, for I was convinced that the thief had been after the treasure itself, hoping to find it cached in Old Solitaire's room, or some clew to it, such as the will. It could scarcely be possible that the old pack of cards held out any temptations; and yet amid so much mystery who could tell?

Matters began to look rather serious, but I didn't want to alarm the *mater* unnecessarily, so dismissed the occurrence as being merely a case of attempted sneak-thieving. But before leaving for the office next morning I cautioned the three women to keep all doors and windows locked, and on no account to open for strangers. It was useless to call on the police, for Leytonstone being outside the twelve-mile radius was without protection save a village watchman.

The next move of the mysterious watchers or prowlers was more serious. On the Friday night, the weather having cleared, I set out to walk the mile-and-a-half between station and cottage. I was about half way home, swinging along at a good stride in the middle of the hard white country road, when suddenly from the hedgerow on either hand a couple of dark figures sprang out, moving noiselessly on rubber-soled feet. At the same instant I felt rather than heard or saw a third figure running up behind me. As I half turned to see who or what it was, I received a soft but crushing blow across the temple. I dropped to the road like a log, and my senses left me.

When I awoke it was still dark and I was horribly stiff and cold. My hat was jammed over my eyes and my head ached fiercely. Struggling to a sitting posture, by the light of a wasted candle-end of an old moon low in the east I discovered that I had been lying in one of the furrows of a plowed field, my ankles being bound together with what I afterward found was my own handkerchief.

Where I was or how I got there I had at first no recollection. Then came the memory of the evening attack. I struggled to my knees and then to my feet, shivering with cold and nausea. Luckily no bones were broken, but my shins and knuckles were barked where the rascals had dragged me over the flinty highway.

Searching my pockets I found money and watch intact; the latter had stopped at half-past four, so I guessed it must be near morning. But everyone of my pockets had been turned inside out, and all the papers and letters in my breast coat-pocket were missing! Evidently another desperate attempt had been made to get some documentary evidence concerning Old Solitaire's bequest.

Where was I? In the dim and uncertain light it was impossible to make out, though probably I could have oriented myself at once by day. There were patches of woodland all around me, and afar off I could hear the roar and rumble of a goods' train. I did not believe the villains had dragged or carried me very far, for I turn the scales at twelve stone and a half.

More to restore circulation than from any definite sense of direction I began to stumble along the furrow where I

had lain. Just then came the sound of a distant church-clock striking five. I recognized the chime as that of Leyton Church, and shaping my course by it soon came out on the highroad after floundering through the spinney. By this time I was feeling better and not so muddled, though my head still buzzed and I could feel a great welt or bruise under my hatband.

However, I made pretty good time when once I fetched the highway. Luckily the marauders had left or overlooked my key chain, so I was able to let myself quietly in with my latch-key and get up to my room without alarming the household. A good wash and a drink of Scotch-and-soda helped to set me to rights, and as by this time dawn was breaking I decided to sit up till daylight.

At breakfast, of course, some excuse had to be made to the *mater* and Minnie for my lateness the night before, so I plead business and kept back the truth, not wishing to set them worrying. The bruise on the temple had gone down and I managed to hide the slight discoloration by combing my hair low.

Promising to be home as early as possible I set out for the station, halting curiously on the scene of my nocturnal adventure. But all signs of any struggle had been obliterated by a slight sprinkle of snow.

It was Saturday morning, you will remember, and I had an appointment with Bruce Tennion for that afternoon. By two o'clock I was in Arundel Street, bursting with my news and wondering whether he or I would be more surprised at our mutual revelations.

V

"Do you know a place called Leyton Grange?" abruptly inquired Bruce Tennion when I had barely shed my hat and coat.

"Why certainly; known it all my life," I answered. "It's not two miles from where we live. In fact, the property is the old family seat of the Ballisters."

"Fine old place, I suppose?" he queried.

"One of the noblest properties in Essex," was my answer.

"Familiar with it?" was the next curt question, crisp as a cross-examining lawyer's.

"With the house itself from hearsay only," I made answer. "My mother lived there in her young married days, you know, before my respected father made ducks and drakes of his patrimony. The place went under the hammer while I was crawling around in petticoats."

"But the grounds, man—the park—I suppose there's a park?"

"About a thousand acres," I replied. "The domain was originally part of Epping Forest, and the whole was granted to one of my ancestors by Henry Eighth The Grange itself was once a priory attached to the abbey of Walthamstow, but was filched from the monks by bluff King Hal when he picked his famous bone with the pope."

"Well, go on!" ordered Tennion, as I paused.

"The mansion was remodeled by that Edward De Ballister who was the original grantee. The old monks built a solid wall around the home park—for security, I suppose; in those days the forest came right up to the walls, and was full of wild boar and wolves and, some say, bears."

"Wall still standing?" asked Tennion.

"Solid as a rock," I answered. "Then they dug a moat or ditch all round on the outside, fed by a branch of the river Lea which kept the water fresh and sweet. Why I've fished for roach and perch in that moat many and many a time."

"How did the monks go in and out?" was the next query.

"Oh, there were great gates on the forest side, strangely enough, away from the high road. But one of the early De Ballisters cut a smaller entrance nearer the main thoroughfare, for mere convenience, I suppose. Later, a good road was made through the forest itself right up to the ancient bailey, and that's the one mostly used nowadays."

"Who owns the Grange at present?"

"Why Buxton, the great brewer, bought it at the time of the sale. But we never saw the color of his money, for it all went to satisfy the creditors."

"And what had Michael Callandar to do with all this?"

"Well, you see, he was the *mater's* only living relative. After the smash he came home from foreign parts. Some said he was very rich, but as to that I can't say. He never seemed particularly flush, although we always had enough to live on."

"Any hints?" said Bruce.

"As to what?" I parried.

"Why, about his money, his sources of income, any hidden wealth, for instance?"

"Oh, I see. Well, there were plenty of hints if you choose to interpret them that way, especially toward the last. The old dotard would wag his head and grin, and prophecy that some of these days Ted—that's me, you know—would reëstablish the Ballisters in their old place. But he never indicated how or by what means, and neither the *mater* nor I ever attached any importance to his mouthings. Yet, perhaps I oughtn't to say that—I think my mother entertained an idea that the old fellow had something up his sleeve."

Tennion nodded, and there was a queer gleam in his heavily thatched eyes.

"How wide is that moat?"

"About twelve feet."

"Deep?"

"Deep enough to drown a man. I fell in once, so I ought to know."

"And the wall itself—how is it built?"

"Of rough rubble, mortar hard as cement, height about ten feet, buttressed every few rods."

"I suppose the water in the moat washes the walls?"

"No; and that's a rather peculiar feature: At the foot of the wall nearly all the way around there's a narrow foot-path just wide enough for a single person to walk except where it has dropped into the water for lack of keeping up."

"How far is this newer and smaller gate from the high road?" was, as it proved, Tennion's final question.

I considered a moment.

"Not over an eighth of a mile, I should say. That gate's never used nowadays. I believe it opens into the flower-garden of the Grange."

"But what has all this to do with old Michael Callandar's cipher?" I ventured.

"Everything!" was the curt reply, as the great man got up to fill and light his meerschaum-pipe.

"Everything," he repeated between puffs. "Unless your respected relative wished to perpetuate a huge joke I fancy there are some surprises in store for you and your mother."

"That reminds me," I broke in. "We've had one or two adventures out our way since I last saw you. I begin to think they may have some bearing on the matter."

Tennion stood balancing himself on the hearthrug, his back to the blaze, his leonine head enveloped in a cloudy haze of blue smoke out of which his voice came as from a distance.

"Fire away!" he commanded.

So I told him everything that had happened since the Wednesday—Minnie's warning, the curious encounter of Felix with the men on the station-road, my mother's fright with the 'old-clo' man' the ransacking of my great-grandfather's room, and finally the asault on my own humble person the night before.

Tennion's eyes gleamed from behind his glasses as I waded through the narrative.

"It gets better and better!" he exclaimed as I ended. "As we used to say when we played 'hot-boiled-beans-and very-good-butter,' we are distinctly getting warmer. The scent gets hotter every moment! I repeat that, unless Michael Callandar was himself a great fraud, you may be a rich man yet!"

"Then you think—" I was beginning when:

"I don't *think*, I *know!*" Tennion broke in, "though I am aware that the two terms are sometimes erroneously used synonymously."

He laid aside his pipe, resumed his straight-backed chair by the square baize-covered table, and took up a small sheaf of papers.

"Do you know anything about cipher writing?" he queried in a tone which implied he already guessed the answer.

"Not a thing," I confessed, "beyond what the man on the street may have

picked up in some desultory reading."

"And that's a negligible quantity," was the quietly contemptuous answer.

I waited for him to resume. There are times when silence is golden, whatever your wife, if you have one, may assert to the contrary.

Bruce Tennion leaned back in his chair and toyed with his glasses, while he began to speak as if he were addressing a class at the Polytechnic or the Birkbeck, an attitude which I well remembered.

"The art of cipher or secret-writing is as old as chirography itself," he announced didactically, "and has been practiced from the very earliest times. Some of the very greatest minds, from various motives, were compelled to disguise their thoughts in this manner. It is perhaps necessary to refer to the Sybilline Oracles and to the 'dark sayings' of the old soothsayers. Later we find the art made use of by mediæval statesmen; a practice copied in these modern days by the chancelleries of every European government, and developed to a fine art by our so-called commercial codes. Sir Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, summed up the whole subject in his celebrated essay, so far as it had gone in his day, and he knew what he was about, for there is undoubtedly a Shakespeare cipher extant.

"But this is a mere sketchy introduction to a great subject. There are ciphers innumerable—love ciphers, political ciphers, arithmetical ciphers, even religious ciphers. But they all resolve themselves into two categories; simple and arbitrary. The first consist merely of a certain rearrangement of words or symbols, the key to which is held by each of two persons—the sender and the recipient; a given book or a dictionary in any known language, or an arithmetical formula, may be the basis. Once the original medium is discovered the clew is easy. The second group is more difficult of access, consisting as it does of a totally arbitrary basis, known perhaps to but one person. It then becomes necessary to discover or to divine by extraneous means the particular medium of communication which has been used in order to unlock the crypt. But whatever the underlying system, bear in mind the everlasting axiom that whatever the brain of man has been able to devise the art of another man may penetrate—with time and patience and ingenuity. This particular cryptogram of your great-grandfather, Mr. Michael Callandar, is a pretty good example of the second class—the arbitrary secret writing. It has also the additional interest of being a double cipher."

Tennion paused and relighted his pipe, from which I judged that, like the chorus in the Greek play, I was expected to make some more or less intelligent remark at this juncture.

"Then you solved it?" I dutifully put in.

He waved his hand as if the question were premature.

"When we find an ancient adventurer of suspected freebooting tendencies constantly poring over a greasy and much-soiled pack of cards in a never-ending game of solitaire, the said venerable gentleman leaving behind him a curious and rather puzzling bit of cryptic writing, we should be more than usually obtuse if we failed to see the obvious connection. But draw closer. I will proceed to the demonstration, for I have solved what I call 'The Solitaire Cipher,' and I am bound to admit that it is very ingenious and interesting."

Accordingly I drew up to the green-baize table. Tennion handed me the greasy pack of cards which I had so often seen in the hands of Old Solitaire.

"Oblige me by separating the pack into suits," said Tennion, "hearts, diamonds, spades, and clubs. Observe, as you do so, that the diamonds and spades are comparitively clean; the hearts and clubs are correspondingly dirty."

I did as he directed; this was a feature I had noticed, but to which I had attached no importance.

"Now lay aside the spades and diamonds; they do not interest us. Arrange the hearts and clubs in two parallel rows, Jack, Queen, King, Ace, one, two three, four, and so on up to the ten. Thank you. You have now two suits, twenty-six cards in all, corresponding to the letters of the alphabet. Is not that correct?"

I nodded.

"Quite so," Tennion resumed, like a professor in chemistry demonstrating a problem before his class.

"Now please take your two suits, hearts and clubs, and arrange them alternately, thus:

"Hearts–Jack; Clubs–Queen; Hearts–King; Clubs–Ace; Hearts–Deuce; Clubs–Trey; Hearts–Four; Clubs–Five; Hearts–Six; Clubs–Seven; Hearts–Eight Clubs–Nine; Hearts–Ten; Clubs–Jack; Hearts–Queen; Clubs–King; Hearts–Ace; Clubs–Deuce; Hearts–Trey; Clubs–Four; Hearts–Five; Clubs–Six; Hearts–Seven; Clubs–Eight; Hearts–Nine; Clubs–Ten.

"Thank you. We now still have our twenty-six cards, red and black which may stand for the twenty-six letters or the alphabet. Is that right?"

I nodded acquiescence and waited for the next move.

"Now we will suppose some ingenious delver in cryptic writing to make out a table, something in this form, which I term the key to your great-grandfather's cipher."

From the little sheaf of papers before him my old preceptor drew forth a slip on which he had traced the following simple diagram of a cipher alphabet which in his own words I will call the

KEY TO THE SOLITAIRE CIPHER ALPHABET.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
HJ	CQ	HK	CA	H2	C3	H4	C5
I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
H6	C7	H8	C9	H10	CJ	HQ	CK	HA
R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
C2	H3	C4	H5	C6	H7	C8	H9	C10

I studied it attentively.

"Of course it all works out—so far," I remarked.

"And very much farther," retorted Tennion. "That is merely our first step—our *vade mecum?* I want you to follow me understandingly every foot of the way.

"Very well. We have our cipher alphabet to start with. But keep in mind that a cipher must not be too easy of solution; there should be difficulties or lions in the way. Oblige me by glancing over our alphabet. What strikes you most? Why, if you will permit me, the use of a dual symbol for each letter of the alphabet, adding to the confusion, and the frequent iteration of the characters 'H' and 'C,' denominating the two suits of cards, hearts and clubs, on which the cipher is based.

"Now what would any sensible or clever man do? Why, he would endeavor to cover his tracks! He'd say: 'That's too obvious—anyone could see that my pet cipher was based on a common everyday pack of playing cards! I must mystify 'em a bit.' Which he proceeds to carry out by a very simple device.

"He finds that in the actual use of his cipher, as applied to the English alphabet, the letters 'H' and 'C' are not only constantly recurring, but that they sometimes follow each other several times in succession. So what does he do? Why he simply adopts an arbitrary sign of repetition—in the case before us a cross—thereby adding a new element, difficult to understand, puzzling to the expert, and absolutely baffling to the amateur! If your honored relative invented this cipher, which I very much doubt, I take off my hat to him, for it is by such simple devices that the best of us are occasionally fooled. The Solitaire Cipher is unequivocally one of the most ingenious I have ever seen."

Tennion's demonstration thus far was as logically perfect as a problem in Euclid, and I followed him without trouble. The cipher of "Old Solitaire" *was* ingenious, to say the least, whether behind it there was a fortune or merely a madman's chimera.

"Now," said the savant, "here is your great-grandfather's cipher message which I understand you to say was attached to his will!"

I nodded assent.

"See, then, how my theory works out. Observe the many crosses. They denote merely the repetition of previously called for 'Hs' or 'Cs,' it being taken for granted that a cross stands for H or C, whichever was last used. Is that clear to you?"

"Perfectly," I answered.

"Now study 'the Solitaire Cipher' anew, in the light of what I have been saying, before I go further and unlock the tremendous secret."

Bruce Tennion leaned back in his chair and relighted his pipe while I

glued my gaze to the magic bit of parchment. I reproduce it here for the convenience of the reader, although you have seen it once before:

H10+Q+JC4+9H2+9C4HQCJH4C2HJCJH4+2
+K+QCK+KH2C2HK+9C9H6CJ+AH2C2H10+Q
+Q+QC2H2CA+QH9+6C2HQCJHKC5HJ+6CJ
+4HQ+3C4HJCK+9H2C4+5H6C2+AH2C8
+4H2C2H6+QC2+QH5C4+2H2+3+3+3+Q
+5C4+5+3+2+Q+10+4+JC4H2+4+JC2+A
H2CJH7+JC9+9

I dropped the yellowed slip of parchment on the table, and, like Oliver Twist, waited for more.

Tennion was ready for me.

"Here," he said, "is my working out of the cipher according to the alphabet I showed you first. Note that this is what might be called the first draft—the Hs and Cs are all I left intact. In the final form of the cipher, remember the crosses stand for repeated letters."

So saying he handed me a sheet of paper covered with the same curious characters, but with the translation appended, which I may call

THE SOLITAIRE CIPHER.

H10HQHJC4 C9H2H9C4HQCJ H4C2HJCJH4H2
M O A T L E Y T O N G R A N G E
HKHQCKCKH2C2 HKH9C9H6CJCAH2C2
C O P P E R C Y L I N D E R
H10HQHQC2H2CA CQH9 H6C2HQCJ
M O O R E D B Y I R O N
HKC5HJH6CJ C4HQ H3C4HJCKC9H2
C H A I N T O S T A P L E
C4C5H6C2CA H2C8C4H2C2H6HQC2
T H I R D E X T E R I O R
CQH5C4C4C2H2H3H3 H3HQH5C4C5 C3C2HQH10
B U T T R E S S S O U T H F R O M
H4HJC4H2 H4HJC2CAH2CJ H7HJC9C9
G A T E G A R D E N W A L L

As I read the words and digested its meaningful purport my eyes bulged.

Here is the thing boiled down to a nutshell:

MESSAGE

MOAT LEYTON GRANGE COPPER CYLINDER MOORED BY IRON CHAIN TO STAPLE THIRD EXTERIOR BUTTRESS SOUTH FROM GATE GARDEN WALL.

I drew a long breath, while Bruce Tennion eyed me quizzically.

"All clear?" he queried.

"Perfectly," I answered.

"Notice one thing," he explained. "My translation is what might be termed the 'cryptic longhand;' all the Hs and Cs are repeated. In the cipher itself their places are taken by crosses. Some of the letters, such as V, Q, Z, were not called for by the wording of the message."

"But what does it signify?" I stammered, unable to grasp the full purport of the message revealed.

"Well," he answered, "unless your uncle—with all respect, you understand—was a monumental old liar, there's where the hundred thousand guineas are—in that copper cylinder—provided it's there!"

"So that's the meaning of those interminable games of solitaire?" said I.

Tennion laughed.

"There was no real game at all; your great-grandfather was simply repeating and testing his memory of the cipher in case he lost the paper, or had it stolen from him, and gloating over his secret!"

"Stolen!"

"Why, what else? You say he was watched! We know that some one wants that treasure very badly, else why the attempted burglary and the assault upon yourself? Depend upon it, others know of the existence of this hoard; the old man's death was merely the signal for a determined attempt to learn of its location."

"You really believe there's a hundred thousand guineas' worth of loot sunk at the end of a chain in the Grange moat?" I inquired incredulously.

"I believe in the fact of the treasure—yes; also that it was probably deposited in the place named—and a very unlikely spot, you will admit, but one probably chosen by your eccentric relative from sentimental motives—under the very walls of the old estate which he was anxious to see restored to the family. But, there's no telling how many years ago the cylinder was placed there, nor whether someone else has already found it."

"I'm inclined to think it's there yet," I remarked, "for the very reason that certain persons seem to want it pretty badly."

"My view exactly," assented Tennion.

"Well, it should be easy to find out," I exclaimed.

"Yes, very easy," drawled Tennion, "and get yourself knocked in the head or shot or stabbed in the very act! If you take my advice you'll lay low for awhile; make no move of any sort."

"But here's what I can't understand," I broke in. "If Michael Callandar really possessed this property, or knew where he could put his hand on it, why didn't he do so at any time during the last thirty years? Answer me that, please!"

Tennion smiled indulgently and quizzically.

"The answer is easy," he said, leaning forward. "Simply because he didn't dare! In other words, he was afraid of something or somebody!"

"Do you mean that—that—he had stolen the stuff?" I queried.

"Not necessarily. He may have come by it honestly enough according to certain conditions at the time. But I fancy—it's only a conjecture, mind you—that there were others who had an interest in the loot, or whatever it is, and that being the case, your great-grandfather had to lie low, perhaps in the belief that if he died an apparently poor man the hue and cry would vanish and not trouble his descendants. That's my idea, and for a working theory it's as good as anything else."

"What about the will?" I inquired. "Ought not that to be proved?"

"No hurry," was the answer. "The instant you offer that document for probate you 'blow the gaff.' Anyone can then go to Doctors' Commons, pay the shilling and read the will. By that means the fact that a certain Michael Callandar left his great-grandson a mysterious property worth a hundred thousand guineas becomes known. As the matter stands now, these interested persons, whoever they may be, are all in the dark. Your relative passed for a poor man, lived as a poor man, died a poor man, for all they can tell. Take my advice, do nothing at present; keep your mouth shut even to your mother and your bethrothed, and wait for the enemy's next move. Meantime, with your permission, I shall seal up the will and the cipher and deposit them at my banker's."

This was such eminently sage counsel that I resolved on the spot to be guided thereby, and said so, not forgetting to thank Bruce Tennion for all his generous interests in my affairs.

He laughed.

"The problem appeals to me, my boy," he said, putting his hand on my shoulder, "and I intend to see you through to the end. But put the thing out of your mind, if possible. Or, better, I'll give you a commission to execute that will keep you busy."

I looked at him inquiringly.

"What is it? Anything you say goes with me."

"Well," he said, "it's just this: Find out during the next week everything you can about Old Solitaire's early life—and particularly where he spent the years immediately preceding his return to England. Report to me one week from to-day or sooner if you have any news. Further: Should curiosity tempt you to go prowling round Leyton Grange, remember the advice of *Punch* to those contemplating matrimony: *Don't!* And—er—don't walk from the station to-night or any other night. Take the 'bus!"

VI.

The situation was most aggravatingly peculiar, I told myself all the way home that dull and stormy Saturday afternoon. The metropolis was draped in fog of the true "London Particular" variety; the Lea marshes through which the train coughed its way were shrouded in mist; the stations at Stepney, at Bow, and at Stratford were mere blots of buildings outlined in a yellow haze.

Here was I, a poor devil of a clerk, well-educated, with gentlemanly tastes and desirous for the amenities of life, apparently heir to a potential fortune, which, if not large as those things go nowadays, was ample to put me and mine on Easy Street for life! And yet, through some hidden and horrid agencies, my hands were tied. I could neither put my fate to the test nor find out whether Old Solitaire was a colossal fraud or a genial and somewhat eccen-

tric benefactor. Arriving safely at the cottage I found Felix Kenneth had preceded me. To his interested inquiries and to those of the *mater* and Minnie Grahame as to the outcome of my interview with Bruce Tennion I answered simply that there were some rather interesting developments, but that I was pledged to secrecy for a few days. This I regarded as the safest line, for once I got to talking, one thing would have led to another and the whole story pop out. Besides, I honestly desired to raise no false hopes that night, lest they, as Felix had said in that very room, prove to be the mooniest kind of moonshine.

All night I wrestled with the problem, despite Tennion's behest to forget it for a time. But mainly I tried to recall and piece together whatever scraps of information I had ever heard about Michael Callandar. Yet the result was practically *nil*. What he had been, what he had done, where he had passed his year abroad when in the heyday of his prime, was all a sealed book outside of what the *mater* had been able to tell me—and that was very little, as you will remember. He was such an old man when he died that in all probability none of his former companions or comrades would be in the land of the living or capable of being questioned.

Toward morning I fell asleep with only two conclusions clear in my mind: One, the chance that Old Solitaire had sometime been in the Queen's service, either as a soldier, a sailor, or a civil servant: This I could find out by inquiries at the Government offices. The second was that on the morrow I would have another quiet talk with the *mater* and pump dry her well of recollection about Michael Callandar.

But as it fell out, I was to be saved all this trouble, and in a startlingly unexpected way.

Sunday dawned clear and cold after the fog, so my mother thought she would venture out to church with Minnie. I wasn't feeling very fit after my strenuous week, so dawdled over a late breakfast, the morning paper, and my pipe, lazily attired in dressing-gown and slippers.

I must have fallen into a doze before the fire, for I was suddenly aroused to consciousness by the opening of the sitting-room door and the voice of Jennie, our servant, saying:

"A gentleman to see you, Master Ted!"

I jumped up, and she held out to me between a moist thumb and forefinger —she had been peeling potatoes, I fancied—a visiting-card on which was engraved in irreproachable copper-plate script:

Mr. Hamet Sassoon.

Underneath the name was written in pencil in a very fine hand "On important business."

It was a queer time for a business-call, and Leytonstone on a quiet Sunday morning certainly a queerer place. However, I hurriedly straightened my necktie, drew taut the cords of my dressing-gown, and said:

"Show the gentleman in here, Jennie."

She went out and along the passage, where I heard her take down the chain and thereafter say:

"Master says please to walk in."

I laughed to myself, for with true country caution, after the terror left by Thursday's raid, Jennie had allowed the gentleman to cool his heels on the doorstep!

And a gentleman, so far as outward seeming went, Mr. Hamet Sassoon certainly was, I decided, as soon as he entered the room—tall, thin to the point of emaciation, olive complexioned, dark of hair and mustache, irreproachably dressed in correct morning costume—frock-coat, gray trousers, immaculate silk hat, gloves, and varnished boots.

"Evidently a foreigner," I mentally noted, "and by his name probably an East Indian."

"Pray pardon the maid's apparent discourtesy in keeping you waiting outside," I said. "But the fact is we've had one or two rather unpleasant alarms lately, and as my mother is generally alone the orders are to admit no strangers."

"So I have heard," quietly said Mr. Sassoon in the most melodious speaking voice I ever heard from a man. "Indeed, it is in connection with those—er—little alarms that I ventured to trouble you on this peculiarly religious day."

He spoke perfect English, with only the faintest of foreign accents, coupled with a slight clipping of the syllable as if desiring to be careful of his enunciation.

"Indeed?" I remarked, waving my caller to a seat. "I was not aware that the matter had gone beyond this house."

"Your discretion—I had almost said caution—is most admirable, Mr. Ballister," he answered with a bow and a most engaging smile. "And yet the—er—unpleasant occurrences to which you refer are known—to me."

"And one or two others, I fancy," I remarked dryly. If, as I began to suspect, this oily East Indian was in some way concerned in the recent outrages, there could be but one explanation: He represented those mysterious rascals who were interested in recovering Michael Callandar's treasure! Perhaps he was one of the sandbaggers, though I scarcely thought he would soil his fingers with such dirty work. If my suppositions were correct, then it behooved me to go slow, talk little, and play the cards close to my chest, as the Americans say. Accordingly I waited for my gentleman to show his hand.

"You are alone, Mr. Ballister?" he inquired.

"As you see," I replied tersely.

"May I ask you to regard what I shall say as in the strictest confidence, between man and man?" said my caller insinuatingly.

"Why, as to that, Mr. Sassoon, and 'between man and man,' I cannot promise until I hear what you have to communicate," was my noncommittal answer.

He sighed and made a deprecatory motion with his shapely hand, on one finger of which there blazed a pigeon-blood ruby as big as a hazel-nut.

"I expected to encounter hostility and suspicion, Mr. Ballister," he resumed, speaking gently, "and those quite justifiable feelings of yours I must endeavor to overcome. But believe me I am here as a mediator, as the friend of all concerned."

"You are talking in riddles, Mr. Sassoon," I rejoined brusquely. "Suppose you come to the point. In two words, what is your business with me?"

"Two words!" he rejoined smilingly. "Nay—a thousand at least will be necessary."

I shrugged my shoulders and took up a pipe, at the same time pushing toward him my cigar-case.

He selected one and lit it with care, then sat smoking calmly for the space of twenty or thirty clock-ticks.

I waited.

At length, laying down the half-smoked weed he drew his chair closer to mine, and began to talk.

"With your permission, Mr. Ballister, I will recapitulate certain recent events which will pave the way to what I shall say further."

I nodded, and kept my gaze on his mobile face and expressive eyes.

"Less than two weeks ago an aged relative of yours died in this very house and was buried yonder. Although he had always passed for a poor man, you were surprised to learn that he was really quite wealthy. In fact, you became his heir to a very large amount. This—er—fortune was not immediately available, but your relative left special instructions telling where the property could be found. Am I correct thus far?"

"You go too fast, Mr. Sassoon," I replied. "My great-grandfather, as you say, died ten or twelve days ago, and the funeral was held from my house here. The parish records will show you all that. It is also true that he lived frugally, like a poor man, indeed. Beyond those facts I am not prepared to follow you."

"There was a will?" he purred persistently.

"If you'll pardon me, Mr. Sassoon," I rejoined, "it seems to me that you, a perfect stranger, are trespassing unwarrantedly on private concerns. Unless you have something of real importance to communicate, need we prolong this interview—which was not of my seeking, remember."

I rose and stood looking at him questioningly.

"You are right and wise, to be cautious," he replied, "and I respect your attitude, Mr. Ballister. But—"

"I have an unquestioned right to mind my own business," I broke in. "In England we do not trumpet our affairs from the housetops, whatsoever may be the custom in your country."

You see, I was simply holding the oily Oriental in leash, resolved to give him no word of advantage, feeling sure that in the end I should force him to talk—to "give himself away," as the slang phrase goes. In this surmise I was correct, as Sassoon's next remark proved. Ye gods, how I wished for Bruce Tennion at that minute. He would have been in his element.

"Pray resume your seat, Mr. Ballister," said the Hindoo. "I perceive I shall have to throw myself upon your mercy. Yet pardon one more question; it is not wholly irrelevant or merely curious."

I nodded assent.

"It is this," he went on: "How much do you know of the early life of Michael Callandar, he whom they called 'Old Solitaire?'"

I'm afraid that I betrayed by a change of look or of gesture how near that query went home. It was the very point upon which I was ignorant, and concerning which Bruce Tennion desired to be informed.

There is an axiom in diplomacy to the effect that one should never tell a lie when the plain truth will serve as well. I reflected rapidly that in this case the unvarnished truth could probably do no harm, and that my real and unassumed ignorance might be a source of strength. Nevertheless, I resolved to make my answer as noncommittal as ight be.

"Very little, beyond the fact that I judge he had been something of an adventurer," I replied. "Travelers' tales, you know."

Sassoon seemed relieved at this avowal on my part, which he apparently accepted in perfect good faith. You can make a lie sound like the truth, but you cannot make the truth sound like a lie, I've noticed in my short and innocent career.

"Then, if you will permit me, I think I can supply some missing links—and perhaps surprise you, Mr. Ballister."

"I'm all attention," I answered.

So he began as follows:

"Your great-grandfather was a very venerable man, and really had a remarkably exciting career almost up to the time when he returned to England—which was about the year you were born. When quite a young man he went out to India as a clerk for the East India Company, but his active spirit drove him from the desk, and he became one of John Company's fighting men. His valor, his great strength, and a fondness for desperate deeds singled him out whenever there was gallant work to be done, and although Michael Callandar never won an officer's epaulets, he rose to the rank of sergeant, was implicitly trusted by his superiors, and saw service all over India. He went through that unfortunate episode called the Mutiny, and was at Meerut, Delhi, Agra, and Lucknow."

"Your story does not surprise me," I remarked nonchalantly, as Hamet Sassoon paused. "Of thousands of Englishmen as much could be told. Much more of others."

He waved his hand in assent, and continued:

"Granted. But there were unbounded opportunities for amassing wealth in those times, Mr. Ballister."

"I see what you're driving at," I replied, "but those cases were the exception, not the rule. If Clive and Hastings feathered their nests, Lawrence and Havelock and a thousand others died poor men. Besides, a soldier in the ranks, or little better, could meet with no such luck as that."

I spoke quietly and rather contemptuously, as if the supposition in Sergeant Callandar's case were absurd, yet I was on fire within, for perhaps Old Solitaire *had* stumbled on something fat and got away with the real goods.

"Your great-grandfather was one of the exceptions, Mr. Ballister; indeed I may say a very notable exception!"

I laughed carelessly.

"Perhaps you are right," I admitted, "but we have an English proverb, 'Lightly come, lightly go.' Apparently he was a poor old soldier, living on a

beggarly pension, as long as I can remember. Whatever pickings he gathered in India he must have either spent or left there."

Sassoon watched me with the most anxious scrutiny while I was speaking. Apparently the actual truth behind my words—for which I thanked my stars—convinced him that I was honest in my opinion and candid in expressing it.

But his next words took me by surprise, although I had myself well in hand.

"Mr. Ballister," he said earnestly, "I am going to tell you something that is known to but one other living person beside myself: Your great-grandfather, Michael Callandar, while in India, amassed a treasure in money and jewels—mostly the latter—valued at several *lacs* of rupees, more than one hundred thousand pounds of English money! Furthermore, he succeeded in carrying the spoil out of the country, and landing it safely somewhere in England!"

"You seem to be pretty sure of your facts," I remarked easily. "What you tell me is interesting—if true."

Sassoon sighed.

"I see you are determined to admit nothing," he remarked reproachfully.

"Why should I?" was my retort. "What is there to admit, Mr. Sassoon? You call on me voluntarily and tell me a cock-and-bull story about an old man dead and gone which sounds—pardon me—very much like some of your Oriental fairy tales. Since you know so much about Michael Callandar and this reputed treasure of his—much more than his relatives ever knew or suspected—I am warranted in asking you 'Where is it?'"

"You do not know?" he murmured, watching me through narrow-slitted eyes.

I laughed again as at a very good joke.

"If I knew should I be likely to tell you? Put yourself in my place, Mr. Sassoon!"

He sighed again with Oriental resignation. A thought occurred to me.

"You have done me the honor to put certain questions, Mr. Sassoon. Permit me to ask one in return: Where do you appear in this business—supposing it to be true? In other words, what is your interest in myself, or my mother, or in old Michael Callandar? You're not supposed to be working for your health, you know, as we say on 'Change!"

I leaned back in my chair to watch and enjoy his agitation. So far, I thought, the honors of the interview had been mine, and with something like a glow of pride I reflected that Bruce Tennion might be proud of his pupil.

With a gesture of impotence Hamet Sassoon metaphorically threw up the sponge.

"You force my hand, Mr. Ballister. I will tell you the rest of the story and why I am here. I shall ask no pledges; merely throw myself upon your consideration."

The moment had come, and I had won out! But I felt that I could afford to be fair—perhaps generous.

"Before you unburden your mind, my dear sir, pray understand one thing: I reserve the right to make use of whatever information you may divulge."

"That is understood, Mr. Ballister," he answered. "Unless my mission is to be a complete failure we must work together."

I nodded assent, wondering what was coming next. Sassoon took up his tale:

"At the memorable siege of Lucknow, when the city was finally recaptured by the British, your great-grandfather was one of the storming party and one of the first to enter the place. There was much looting, for the English were mad for revenge and reprisal. Lucknow was and is a very rich place, especially in its native temples. Foreseeing the ultimate triumph of their former masters, the priests of a certain holy shrine had collected all the temple treasures, including large quantities of almost priceless gems, and, as they supposed, deposited them in a safe and secret place. But the raiders turned the temple inside out and captured the treasure—or rather Sergeant Callandar did. He secreted the spoils about his person in some way—jewels do not take up much space, you understand—and managed to get away with it single-handed. To the bulk of the loot he

would have been welcome; it was the legitimate spoil of the conqueror. But it so happened that among the jewels was an enormous emerald which had for centuries adorned the forehead of the great statue of Buddha in this very temple of which I speak.

"Without this stone the shrine was dishonored and the deity disgraced. Its recovery became a sacred duty, and the priests of the temple leagued themselves together for this purpose, vowing for themselves and their successors never to rest until the great emerald once more blazed on the Buddha's brow.

"The man who had stolen the treasure was known and marked down for destruction, but in those troublous times he was lost sight of and escaped, shortly after returning to England. For many years he was sought, and it is only with the past few months that his identity and place of abode were discovered.

"Mr. Ballister, I am a holy man in my own land; I am a priest of that temple in Lucknow; my life is vowed to the recovery of that emerald—all the rest is as dross. As I say, Michael Callandar was finally traced to this out-of-the-way village. Had he not been an old man, decrepit and confined to the house in those last days, it might have gone hard with him. If you knew India you would not wonder at this relentless pursuit. We shall never rest until the emerald is restored to its rightful place!

"Now, we are convinced that Michael Calandar did not dissipate his wealth; that he knew where the treasure was deposited; we do not believe that he carried the secret of its hiding-place to the grave; we believe that he left behind him some writing, some tangible directions for its recovery by his heirs. It was deemed barely possible that the jewels themselves might be concealed on these premises—unknown to his relatives, of course. That accounts for the search of his room here and for the attack upon yourself. We thought you might have the will or some other tell-tale document on your person. The methods were clumsy, but what can one do in England? In India we should use more effective means."

"They do these things differently in France," I murmured.

"Precisely," admitted Sassoon with his Oriental smile. "I see you are a man of the world. Consequently, as a last resort, I make my personal appeal to you, Mr. Ballister, as one honorable man to another. Help me to recover the Buddha emerald, and you are welcome to all the rest! But get it we shall and must!"

There was a covert threat in his concluding words, which nettled me.

"Do you think your actions have been exactly 'honorable,' Mr. Sassoon?" I queried sarcastically. "I am using your own term, you know. First you institute a system of spying on my house; next, you scare my dear mother out of her wits with an attempted burglary; and finally you instigate a murderous assault upon an innocent man who never did you or your precious Buddha an atom of harm! I think I'd change the word, if I were you!"

"I have admitted, my dear sir," he said soothingly, "that the *modus vivendi* was crude and barbarous, but what would you? I can but make you my apologies."

Yet in the act of his using these humble words I caught an envenomed glance out of his snaky black eyes which told me that, were our positions reversed, an Indian dagger would have found its way to my vitals.

I felt that I was in the saddle. I had admitted nothing; I had gained the identical information of which I was in search. Old Solitaire's cipher was no madman's dream, and the Indian loot was doubtless at that moment reposing at the bottom of the moat around Leyton Grange! But I kept my eyes veiled while I propounded certain questions by way of probe, lest Hamet Sassoon should see the triumph lurking there.

"You've constructed a very pretty romance," I remarked casually, "but there's just one fatal flaw which you seem to have overlooked. It's this: If Sergeant Callandar really owned this vast fortune all these years, how is it that he never tried to realize on it?"

Sassoon came back at me quick as a rapier thrust.

"Because he was afraid to!"

Almost Tennion's words, you see. I raised my eyebrows skeptically.

"Afraid—here—safe in England?"

"Exactly. Your great-grandfather knew India. He feared our priestly vengeance. In his own lifetime he did not dare to make a move, even here in England, for fear of our retribution. And, more than that, if you require any other reasons, Mr. Ballister, he feared the comment that would have been caused by a common soldier seeking to dispose of such enormous wealth."

"And yet, do you know," I drawled, "I think it might have been managed by an adroit and determined man."

Sassoon merely shrugged his shoulders at this. It occurred to me that I would venture another random shot.

"By the way," I remarked casually, "I notice you refer to Michael Callandar as 'Old Solitaire.' Is it permitted to inquire if the sobriquet carries with it any special significance to you?"

"Merely village gossip," replied Sassoon with an airy wave of his hand. "Everybody in Leytonstone knew the old man's fondness for toying with a pack of cards."

I had drawn a blank, but told myself it did not matter, since I held all the trumps, whether Sassoon was lying or whether he suspected that in a pack of cards was to be found the clew to the treasure looted from Lucknow.

I rose, pretending to stifle a yawn, andglancing at the mantel clock as if to close the interview. The *mater* and Minnie would be coming home from church, and I did not choose that they should meet Mr. Sassoon just yet, if ever. The Hindoo got on his feet likewise.

"May I inquire your decision, Mr. Ballister?" he asked solicitously. "I have beggared my case, I have given you my confidence, I have thrown myself and my cause on your mercy. Will you assist me to recover the Buddha emerald?"

"I fear you greatly overrate my powers," I deprecated. "Even supposing your marvelous story to be true, you must remember that I am still somewhat of a skeptic. Further, Mr. Sassoon, I may tell you that after the treatment I have received at your hands I do not see how you can expect very much consideration from me. I will think over what you have said and let you know my decision, should it be in my power to serve you as you desire. Have I your address?"

He penciled a few words on one of his cards, laid it on the table, and took up his hat and gloves.

"Is that your last word, Mr. Ballister?" he inquired.

"For to-day," I answered smilingly. "I shall be guided by—er—developments and the advice of my solicitor."

He searched me through and through with those narrow lidded Oriental eyes of his, bowed his acquiescence, and said simply:

"I shall hope to hear from you—soon Mr. Ballister."

And with that last shot he was gone.

VII.

That man was not meant to live upon bread alone, was spoken by the greatest Teacher the world has ever known, although perhaps in a different sense than that in which I use the illustration. But my meaning is this: After the strenuous happenings of the past few days I felt sick unto death of excitement and intrigue. I wanted a breath of fresh air, spiritual and mental. I needed a touch of sentiment, and so I begged Miss Grahame to "cut" Sunday-school and vespers and go for a long walk with me after dinner. The dear girl acceded without a moment's demur.

Remembering Bruce Tennion's adjuration to keep away from Leyton Grange I led the way in a totally opposite direction, toward another road, past Cardinal Wiseman's stately old mansion, and by a narrow country lane toward the flat marshes of the Lea, now all brown and sere, though in Summertime they would be high as a man's head in sweet-scented hay. It had long been a favorite walk of ours, the path across the meadow terminating at the "deep pool" where as a lad I had learned to swim. I felt that I must talk to somebody who loved and understood me, even though I spoke in parables and dark sayings.

"You're tired and worried, Ted," said Minnie when we were clear of the cheap row of "villas" run up by jerry builders which were beginning to disfigure the otherwise pretty old village of Leytonstone.

"A little of both," I answered, pressing her arm. "You shall effect a cure."

"But I don't play the harp," she objected whimsically.

I understood her meaning at once; she was thinking of King Saul and David, you see, and one of the happiest things about our intimacy consisted in the fact that these hidden illusions met with instant response from both.

"Neither is my mind diseased!" I retorted. "Although as you know I have long suffered from an affection of the heart."

"Silly Ted!" she giggled—positively giggled; "any mere medical student could diagnose your case."

"I'm in earnest," I protested.

"So am I," she retorted.

"About the medical student?" I asked slyly. That was another old joke between us, ever since, a year agone, a young sawbones from Gray's had made desperate love to her at a Christmas-party.

"What do you think?" she parried.

"I don't *think*, I *know*, as Bruce Tennion would say," I replied.

"Oh, your everlasting Bruce Tennion," she retorted. "If he told you the moon was made of green cheese I suppose you'd believe it?"

"No; but if he told me I was shortly to come into a great fortune and marry the dearest girl in the world—what then?"

"Ted Ballister, you're joking!" she protested.

"It's on the cards," I answered.

"Old Solitaire's, I suppose," with a contemptuous sniff.

"Even so," I made reply. "That's what I brought you out here to talk about."

"Really, Ted?" she inquired with wide-open eyes, palpitating bosom, and tremulous lips.

I had gone farther than I intended—as a man is apt to do in talking to "the only woman,"—but it didn't matter now, after my victory over Hamet Sassoon, and with Minnie Grahame. She'd have to know sooner or later—probably sooner.

"Really and truly," I assured her, rather proud of my superior and secret assurance.

"Then the will—" she was beginning, leaping to conclusions with a woman's sixth sense.

"Was not a joke, after all," I said with all the seriousness at my command.

"Go on," she commanded. "I know you couldn't jest on such a theme. Tell me everything."

"I'll tell you what I may," I assured her, "but understand it's all in the air as yet. But I must talk to some one or blow up."

Minnie pressed my arm in token of complete accord and feminine understanding.

"I had a caller this morning while you and the *mater* were at church," I began.

"A tall sallow rat of a man with beady black eyes," she interposed.

"That fits him to a T," I admitted. "How did you know?"

"We met him coming from church. Nasty creature!" was Minnie's response. "What has he to do with it?"

"Everything," I declared. "At least that's what I believe."

"Tell me," she urged.

So I gave her succinctly enough the gist of Hamet Sassoon's revelations, by and large.

"What does your woman's wit suggest?" I ended.

"We-e-ell, that depends," was the deliberate answer. "If we could trust a shifty beggar like that I should say—"

"Hush, my dear girl," I corrected. "Sassoon is probably a prince in his own country."

"Yes, and a chimney-sweep in London!" she retorted.

"But even a sweep may tell the truth sometimes," I continued.

"For his own ends," she admitted.

"Well, then, granted that his motives are obviously interested, does that invalidate the main question?"

"No-o-o, I don't suppose it does," she grudgingly granted. "But it's my opinion that this Mr. Sassoon will bear watching."

"I'm with you there, heart and soul," I conceded. "Yet we may agree to give the devil his due."

"And not a bit more," she flashed back. "He's perfectly able to take care of himself, by all accounts."

I laughed at her intensity, which I well knew was prompted by no mere selfishness.

"But I didn't come out to talk altogether of Sassoon," I said.

"I should hope not," was the girl's laughing retort.

"Here's really what I wanted to ask you. Until this thing's settled, one way or the other, I'm not fit for business. I'll have to see Tennion to-morrow, and we may have to get busy. It's just as he decides. But here's my point: Would you advise me to get leave of absence from the office for a couple of weeks—'it may be for years, it may be forever,' you know," I quoted.

"But for not a moment longer than a week or two, Ted!" she commanded. "Suppose the whole thing's a myth? Don't give up your position until you are certain sure."

"I wont," I promised.

"I'd love to know what Mr. Tennion will say," she mused.

"That's what I'm on fire to learn myself," I assured her. "But by to-morrow night I'll know."

"And you'll do nothing rash," she urged.

"Honor bright—cross my heart!" I vowed. Then, more seriously: "But you know what this legacy means, Minnie—if the stuff's really there, you know?"

A slow flush mantled her cheeks, and she dropped her eyes.

"It means," I said, taking her dear hand, "a speedy wedding for you and me. That first. Then it means that I shall buy back Leyton Grange, and you will be its mistress!"

"Oh, Ted!" was all she could say as her head sunk on my shoulder and I drew her to me in a lover's rapturous embrace. For we had already waited too long, we twain.

VIII.

Bruce Tennion was naturally surprised to see me so soon when I entered his rooms early on Monday afternoon. My "governor" had readily given me ten days' leave of absence on the plea of urgent family affairs to settle consequent upon the death of Michael Callandar, so I was free to enter the final battle of the campaign for his wonderful legacy.

"Well?" was Tennion's monosyllabic greeting.

"I've secured all the information you wanted—and from the enemy himself," I announced exultingly.

Tennion raised his bushy eyebrows and became at once all attention.

"Give me the facts," he ordered, "in as few words as possible. I'm busy."

So in logical order I recounted almost verbatim what had transpired at my interview with Hamet Sassoon.

Tennion listened gravely, only an occasional gleam from his dark eyes behind their glasses betraying his intense interest.

For some minutes after I had ceased speaking he remained lost in thought.

"You think Sassoon was telling the truth?" he inquired at length.

"Absolutely—but mainly because he couldn't help himself," I replied. "It's my impression he'd sell his soul to recover the Buddha's emerald!"

Tennion nodded. "I think you certainly came off best in your tussle of wits with friend Hamet." This was "praise from Sir Hubert" indeed.

"The story hangs well together," he went on, "piecing out the known facts and the unknown, and keeping in mind that such adventures were not uncommon in India in the old wild days when John Company ruled and misruled. Yes; the whole tale looks highly probable, and I am almost ready to congratulate you on your good fortune."

Although these words merely voiced my own private belief, such confirmation from Bruce Tennion set my pulses beating.

"Then you believe the treasure is not a myth?" I inquired still anxiously.

"Only an actual test will settle that question," he affirmed judicially. "There can be no doubt that your Old Solitaire got safely out of India with the loot and brought it to England. Doubtless, also, he cached it according to the

cryptogram. But whether it's there now is a different proposition. Someone else may have stumbled on the cylinder by accident, or—that reminds me—has the moat ever been drained or cleaned out in your time?"

"I don't think so," was my answer. "You see, the water is always fresh—never stagnant—owing to the fact that the river maintains a constant current from end to end. I should have heard about it had such a thing ever been undertaken. Why, it would have caused village talk for years on account of the fish."

"Well, that's one dangerous factor eliminated," said Tennion with evident satisfaction. "But don't be too sanguine even yet."

"There's only one way to set our doubts at rest," I remarked tentatively.

"Yes, I foresee you and I will have to do some fishing in the Grange moat at an early day—or rather night."

"But what about Hamet Sassoon? Do you suppose we can make a move of that sort without his being aware of it?" was my anxious question.

"No, emphatically no!" granted Tennion. "We shall have to reckon with your Hindoo friend first."

"We might defy him or treat him with contempt!" I flashed out, for the memory of that unprovoked assault and battery on my sacred person still rankled.

"There's a better way than either," said Tennion quietly. "We'll make a bargain with the gentleman and use him!"

"Well, if you say so," I was beginning, when he interrupted me.

"Look here, Master Ted, are you willing to commit this matter to me absolutely from this time on and let me manage it?"

"Absolutely and unreservedly!" I exclaimed with gratitude. "I could ask nothing better."

"Then fetch Hamet Sassoon here as quick as a hansom will let you!"

I chuckled with delight. I had complete confidence in Tennion's powers of finesse in any delicate negotiations, and looked forward with glee to seeing the two men face to face, both past masters in intrigue.

I drove immediately to the address the Hindoo had given me in Pont Street. Perhaps it was only my fancy, but I thought I detected a note of surprise in his carefully studied manner when we shook hands. It was my cue to lay low like Brer Rabbit, and neither antagonize the man nor betray any inkling of what Bruce Tennion might do or say.

I at once stated the reason for my call.

"You will remember, Mr. Sassoon, that I told you I should take your statements into consideration and also consult with my solicitor. The latter I have done, and he requests you to meet him in consultation at the earliest possible moment. There's a hansom at the door. Can you accompany me now?"

"Most certainly, Mr. Ballister. I am altogether at your service. In fact, the sooner this matter can be settled the better I shall be pleased."

In fifteen minutes we drove into Arundel Street, and I was introducing Bruce Tennion and Hamet Sassoon, two of the most acute minds it has ever been my good fortune to meet.

As good fencers, they feinted for awhile, testing each other's caliber and strength, talking in touch-and-go fashion about irrelevant things, while I retired into the background. Like the traditional good child, I was to be seen and not heard for the next half hour.

Tennion it was who opened the real attack, the Hindoo watching and listening with snaky attention.

Said he, speaking in cool and level lawyer-like tones:

"I have the honor to be the legal adviser and also the friend of Mr. Ballister, and I may add that I have known of his family for many years. Consequently, I was immediately made aware of the death of his great-grandfather, Mr. Michael Callandar, and my advice was asked concerning certain matters growing out of that event. I am also familiar with the rather surprising and high-handed outrages to which my client and his immediate family have been subjected."

He paused and glanced at Sassoon, who bowed to signify that he was following every word.

Tennion went on:

"My client has detailed to me the essential points brought to his attention by you yesterday, Mr. Sassoon, including some rather curious admissions on your part—not to say confessions—as to your complicity in sundry illegal acts of which the law of England might very rightly take sharp cognizance. With some of the historical points brought out by you we were already familiar; concerning others I am perfectly frank to confess we were not so well informed. However, I fancy you and we possess a certain community of interest. It remains to be seen whether we are to join hands or whether we are to be—shall we say—antagonists?"

"It will give me the greatest pleasure to work with you, or to assist you in anyway, Mr. Tennion," said Sassoon suavely.

"We may be glad of your coöperation, Mr. Sassoon," Tennion retorted blandly, "but I scarcely think we need call upon you for assistance. Our position is unassailable. We may, however, be able to help *you!*"

This amounted to flat defiance, and was carrying the war into Africa with a vengeance!

Sassoon was plainly discomfited, but he held his peace, while Tennion went on to flourish the whip.

"Mr. Ballister informs me that your sole desire is to recover a certain priceless emerald alleged to be part of a valuable collection of gems said to have been brought to this country by Sergeant Callandar. Am I correct?"

"Perfectly," murmured the Hindoo, moistening his lips.

"Very well," commented Tennion. "Now, for the purpose of argument, let us suppose that my client is in possession of certain secret information, legitimately obtained—and when I say legitimately, I mean legally—indicating the actual place of deposit of those Indian jewels—including presumably the emerald of which you are in quest. In the event of their recovery, and should this emerald be found among them, what price are you prepared to offer for its purchase?"

Sassoon started to his feet at this cool facer, quivering with indignation.

"Purchase! Why should we dicker for what is our own! The emerald and the other gems were stolen, basely stolen, by a—"

Tennion held up his hand.

"Softly, softly, Mr. Sassoon. There is no legal proof of your assertion, and even if there were I doubt whether any English court of law would give you redress. We in England have not quite forgotten the Mutiny of '57. Granting that the stones were abstracted during the sack of Lucknow, I am inclined to the opinion that no court would interfere. The treasure constituted the usual spoils of war. But why should you object to paying a fair price if we put you in the way of recovering your sacred emerald?"

"Because we were robbed in the first place! A thief cannot haggle over the terms on which he shall restore his ill-gotten booty! If we allow you to retain the rest of the jewels, 'and no questions asked,' it is as much as you can expect!" exclaimed Sassoon excitedly, on his feet once more.

Tennion never turned a hair over this outburst.

"Mr. Sassoon," he remarked quietly when the other had subsided, "before we go any further I must ask you to withdraw your very offensive expression. Otherwise this interview ends here and now. We know exactly where we stand."

"I apologize—I withdraw the word," said Sassoon abjectly. "What do you propose, Mr. Tennion?"

"That's better," said the latter. "Now I guess we may proceed. Understand clearly, Mr. Sassoon, we consider that we owe you nothing. Neither do I intend to discuss with you, at this late day, the equity of the methods by which Sergeant Callandar became possessed of this treasure, if he ever did. On the contrary, you have laid yourself open to serious charges—housebreaking and assault with attempted robbery. You do not know where this treasure is, and you cannot hope to recover the emerald, even supposing it exists, without our help. We happen to possess the requisite information—or think we do—and therefore propose to dictate the terms. So again I ask you: What price

are you prepared to offer for the Buddha Emerald?"

Hindoos do not perspire, I am told, yet, judging by his looks, Sassoon must have been sweating inwardly over Tennion's relentless gruelling. Twice he attempted to speak, but his tongue refused its office.

At length he blurted out hoarsely:

"Three *lacs* of rupees—in round figures, twenty-five thousand pounds!"

"Very well, Mr. Sassoon, I accept your offer. I presume you are able to identify the jewel to your complete satisfaction?"

"There is no other like it in the world! But I have a paste duplicate in my dispatch-box."

"The terms will be cash upon delivery, Mr. Sassoon, and we prefer Bank of England notes. If you will call here on Wednesday at two o'clock we may—understand, I only say *we may*—have some news for you."

"Then the jewel is not now in your possession?" faltered Sassoon in some disappointment.

"Not yet, but I expect it soon will be," answered Tennion with a bland smile.

Then, more sternly:

"But understand clearly, Mr. Sassoon, there is to be no more spying on the part of yourself and your minions, no more burglaries, and no more slugging of unarmed men! A single false move of that sort will cost you the emerald! We shall expect you with the money on Wednesday at two—and alone, Mr. Sassoon. Good-afternoon!"

I came out of my corner and could have hugged Tennion in my glee.

"You managed it splendidly!" I exclaimed. "I never saw a fish better played in my life! I congratulate you on your masterly campaign!"

"Oh, we're not out of the woods yet, Master Ted," said Tennion gloomily. "Pray heaven we don't have to crawfish on Wednesday!"

So saying he disappeared in his bedroom, where I heard him rummaging around. In five minutes he reappeared, kit-bag in hand, turned down the lights, and struggled into his great-coat. I viewed these preparations with interest.

"What's the next move?" I queried.

"Can you put me up over-night?" was the rather surprising query.

"Certainly, but—"

"There's no time to be lost now," he answered. "We're going fishing!"

Although this decisive declaration almost took my breath away, my next sensation was one of elation that we were so soon to put the question to the test. In less than twenty-four hours, probably, we would know the truth, and I'd still be a pauper—or—a very rich man!

Naturally our dual arrival at the cottage occasioned some surprise to the *mater* and Minnie Grahame.

On the way out I asked Tennion if he thought we would require any additional assistance in the adventure, meaning to summon Felix Kenneth if the answer was affirmative. But no; two should be plenty, and one of them a stranger to the place at that, he said. The less attention we attracted the better.

"Not a syllable to the ladies," he had cautioned as I put the latch-key into operation, so while I could see that Minnie was all on fire with suppressed excitement, the evening passed quietly. I contented myself with a nod and a smile to my sweetheart as she left us for the night, and a whispered "It's all right!"

Next morning Tennion announced his intention of seeing something of the country, and asked casually if he could borrow my wheel.

"Going to do a little reconnoitering on my own account," he said as he mounted at the gate.

"Which way lies Leyton Grange?"

I gave him minute directions, but indeed he could hardly miss the place.

"Stay you at home, "were his final instructions, "and get together whatever tools or implements you think we may need to-night. You know the moat. I'll be back in time for luncheon. Tell your mother not to make any fuss."

With that he was gone.

Miss Grahame's duties, of course, took her to the seminary, so there was I condemned to spend the morning like a caged tiger, although I got out a suit of old clothes, a flask of brandy, a revolver, a coil of clothes-line, a long garden-rake, a stout ax-headed hammer, and a

pair of thigh-high rubber fishing-boots. These were all the things I could think of as likely to be useful.

You see, I figured that I might have to do some wading in the moat; hence the old clothes, the boots, and the brandy, for the water in winter would be freezing cold.

Well, in two hours more or less Bruce Tennion came pedaling back. All through luncheon he expatiated on the beauties of our Essex country-side, for apparently he had ridden half over Epping Forest. But never a word said he about Leyton Grange, except to mention casually that he had passed it, and that the place was evidently shut up.

"Oh, yes," said the *mater*, "it has been for sale these many months. The Buxtons never live there now."

And the dear lady sighed at certain fond recollections thus conjured up concerning happier and richer days, yet never a word of repining or of complaint. Well, I thought, if all goes right, mother dear, you'll spend your declining days in the home where you first went as a happy bride.

Over our pipes that afternoon Bruce Tennion outlined our simple plan of campaign for that evening.

"Luckily there'll be no moon, and it looks like rain or fog," he remarked, "so we'll tackle the job right after tea. Should we be noticed or spied on, our movements will occasion less surprise in the early evening than if we made a nocturnal or midnight affair of it."

"Did you see the moat?" I asked.

"Yes, and made out the door in the wall, but purposely kept away. I hope the water wont be very cold," he remarked grimly.

I hoped so, too.

"You've got the directions in the Solitaire Cipher?" he inquired.

"By heart," I assured him. "I could box 'em backward, and take you to the spot blindfold!"

Well, we did not sneak out of the cottage, but merely announced that we were going for a little walk, and sauntered through the single village street in that guise.

Already lights were displayed in the upper windows, though barely eight o'clock, and when we had passed the grocer's, the butcher's, and the Leyton Arms, we had the road to ourselves and quickened our pace. I was clad in my old clothes and heavy boots, with a serviceable cloth cap. The various articles I had prepared were stored about our persons, even to the iron head of the rake which I had disconnected from its long handle. So that altogether there was nothing strange or suspicious about us to attract attention. Nor did we meet a single solitary soul.

A mile and a half out of Leytonstone village the Grange road branched off to the left, leading right through the old forest. The weather happily was dark and drizzily, with not a star-gleam overhead, fit natural conditions for stratagems and spoils.

The Grange road led right up to the main gate, as I have previously described, the moat here being spanned by a rustic bridge From immediately at the right of the great stone gate-posts there began a narrow earth-dike, forming a fairly good path, and skirting the base of the wall. In places this path was worn away or sunk almost to the level of the water, and here and there, around the exposed front of the buttresses it had disappeared altogether, having been washed out by the current or by high water in the Spring of the year. No attempt had been made in recent years to keep this inner bank in repair.

Nevertheless we made good progress, leaping over the bad spots or swashing through them, in the ardor of our quest disregarding utterly wet feet. I spared Tennion all I could, and once or twice almost lifted him over a particularly bad place.

Twenty minutes of this sort of going brought us to the garden door. Here we paused to listen, unlimber our single piece of artillery, screw on the head of the rake—which implement we were not to need as it happened. Then we went on, until we had counted the third buttress. The waters of the moat washed its base, for the path here, too, had dropped out of sight

You will remember how the cipher read:

> Moat Leyton grange copper cylinder moored by iron chain to staple third exterior buttress south from gate garden wall.

We halted, and I placed my hand on the lichen-covered rough stones.

"Here is the third buttress," I whispered.

Then a sudden thought flashed into mind. Like a fool I had forgotten to bring a lantern, and I cursed my stupidity under my breath.

"It's as well you didn't," whispered Tennion. "We don't want anybody hunting will-o'-the-wisps. You must feel around."

Down on my knees I went, and passed my fingers over every inch of the stone I could reach from our side. Then I stepped into the water, which came up to my thighs, and did the same by the other side. There was no sign of either chain or staple.

"I don't seem to find it," I whispered.

"Didn't expect you would," Tennion growled back. "The staple will be under water. Go fishing, Ted, go fishing!" and he smothered a rumbling laugh.

So I waded in again, my boots sinking deeply into the mud and ooze at the bottom of the moat. Gingerly I plunged both hands into the icy water, and repeated the process of patting every inch of that slimy bulk of masonry.

Deeper and deeper I went; I was compelled to stoop lower and lower until that confounded water began to pour over the tops of my boots, so that in a few seconds I was waterlogged! The Lea was in flood and the water in the moat higher than usual by a couple of feet. Deeper and ever deeper I lowered my body until my shoulders were awash and my hands numb with the cruel cold. Surely I must have missed the staple higher up, if there ever had been a staple!

I was about to give in with a grunt of disgust when the fingers of my right hand touched something which gave toward me. I pulled a little more, and made out by what scant sense of feeling was left in my digits something hard and cold and very slippery. But at that, cold and chilled as I was, the hot blood glowed from head to toes. I plunged deeper, so as to bring my other hand to bear, and following the lead carefully back toward the wall, encountered a great iron ring or staple fixed in the masonry.

"I've got something!" I grunted.

"Good boy, Ted!" responded Tennion. "Can I help you?"

"In a minute," I gasped.

With both hands brought to bear, I carefully felt my way along the chain—for such of course it proved to be—link by link, for perhaps a couple of feet under water. But budge it I could not; it seemed anchored immovably in the sticky mud and slime at the bottom of the moat, which must have been as tenacious as glue.

"Hand me that clothes-line," I whispered, "but first make a knot in one end, and you keep hold of the other."

Tennion did as directed, and I passed the knotted end under water, making a rude slip-knot around the chain, telling him to haul taut. Having thus secured the thing I straightened up, squeezed the water out of my sleeves, waded and squelched ashore, and took a good pull at the brandy. Strangely enough I found myself in a profuse perspiration.

"Well, here goes," I announced, stepping into the water again. "Now we'll see what's on the other end of that confounded chain!"

By heaving and pulling and twisting sideways, by degrees I managed to work the links clear from their muddy bed, Tennion keeping a purchase and taking in the slack by means of the clothes-line. Inch by inch I could feel the thing "coming home" as sailors say of an anchor. But the end came suddenly and ludicrously. I had given an extra vicious tug with both hands when something uprooted with a squelch, and I soused flat on my back in the deep water of the moat, going under completely!

I came up spluttering and gasping for breath, owing to the abominable coldness of the plunge, but found I still had the fingers of one hand gripped to the chain. Tennion I could hear shaking and rumbling with laughter, but I was madder than a wet hen.

Slowly I made my way to the path, dragging my chain behind me like a convict, and together we hauled the end ashore, a more or less unshapely object, covered with mud, weeds, and encrusted with fresh-water mussels.

While I stamped the water out of my

boots, squeezed my clothes, cleaned the grass and slime out of my hair, and took another nip at the flask, Tennion was busily engaged in chipping the object at the end of the chain clear of encrustations with the ax. One heavy stroke knocked off the chain, which he promptly threw into the moat. Then, placing the cylinder inside his coat—it was about a foot long and five or six inches thick, not unlike a big fat Roman candle—and picking up the rope and tools, he exclaimed:

"Now then, Master Ted, let's see you sprint two miles as if you were on the cinder-path! For your life, man! Run for your life!"

And that's how we tested the truth of the Solitaire Cipher, for as we puffed and panted our way home we chortled in our glee, having no manner of doubt that the contents of the cylinder would prove according to schedule.

IX

And so it proved, although we did not discover the fact until next day. For the instant we got indoors—we had been absent exactly an hour and three quarters—Tennion made me strip, drink about a gallon of hot lemonade with a good-sized "stick" in it, rubbed me down with alcohol, and put me to bed with a hot-water bag at my feet and extra heavy blankets atop of me.

Probably it was well he took those precautions, otherwise I might have had a nasty attack of pneumonia. As it was I fell into a dreamless sleep, awaking in the morning with a clear head and a most voracious appetite.

Tennion came into my room while I was shaving.

"Is it all right?" I inquired.

"The cylinder is intact, and heavy, if that's what you mean," he smiled. "I sat up with the confounded thing all night if you want to know! But I have not opened it. That's your prerogative, you see. And if you heed my advice you'll wait until we arrive in town. Take no unnecessary risks, Ted, my boy, for I tell you frankly, I mistrust Sassoon!"

Tennion had engineered the thing so cleverly thus far that I could not quarrel with his precautions. We caught the 8:20 train, arriving at Fenchurch Street soon after nine, the precious cylinder packed in Tennion's kit-bag. For all outward evidence to the contrary, he might merely have been paying us a social call overnight.

At the terminus we took a hansom, my friend telling the man to drive to the London and Counties Bank in Fleet Street.

"Why there?" I queried.

"It's the safest way," he rejoined. "We'll secure a private room near the safe-deposit boxes, open the cylinder there, inventory the contents, then lock them up. It will puzzle Sassoon to get at them then!"

Well, the program was carried out, except that we had to send for an expert to open the cylinder, which seemed to have been soldered solid in some mysterious way. The man had actually to saw it in two. So excessive was Tennion's caution that he would not let the man cut all the way around, but ordered him to leave about a half inch of metal intact; this we could easily break apart with our unaided hands. When so much was done, we paid the mechanic, dismissed him, and locked the door.

Each looked at the other quizzically when we were alone.

"Oh, what's the use!" I exclaimed. "Either we've been done, or we haven't! Let's find out!"

We placed the cylinder on the edge of the heavy oak table and literally broke it in two at the incision made by the fine saw teeth. Removing the two ends like the halves of an egg, we found a tightly packed mass of some stuff, not unlike cocoa fiber, but much finer and silkier. This mass was wadded to the shape of the cylinder like a silkworm's cocoon.

We ripped it apart, and there poured out a veritable cascade of many-hued gems—white, red, green, opalescent, yellow, and violet—diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls, opals, topazes, and amethysts! There must have been a quart measure full all told. And gleaming effulgent amid all the riot of color, darting brilliant and flashing rays under the electric light overhead, was a great

emerald, big as the end of my thumb, exquisitely cut and polished!

"The Buddha Emerald!" we both exclaimed gaspingly.

Its effulgence paled all the other stones. No wonder Hamet Sassoon and his fellow-priests had been willing to proceed to any lengths for its recovery. Instead of twenty-five thousand pounds it was probably worth twice that; but such colosal and beautiful gems are impossible of ownership by any but governments and Indian idols, I reflected.

"Pretty good night's work, eh, Master Ted?" remarked Tennion when we had gloated our eyes on the jewels and let them run streaming through our fingers again and again.

"Without your help," I was beginning, when he stopped me by a gesture.

"Yes, yes, we'll take your gratitude for granted. I'm amply repaid by getting the victory over our friend Sassoon."

"Remember he is to meet us at two o'clock. How are you going to carry the emerald?"

"In my waistcoat-pocket," he quietly announced. "Go out and buy a couple of jeweler's boxes—a small one for the Buddha and a large one for Old Solitaire's magnificent bequest. I'll wait here."

Just a few doors away I found what I wanted, and hastened back. We shoveled the miscellaneous gems into a heavy morocco case, locked it, and deposited the receptacle in our safety-deposit box. The "Buddha Emerald" Tennion placed in the smaller case, nonchalantly stuffed it into his waistcoat-pocket, buttoned his coat over it, and announced that he was now ready to tackle Sassoon.

"Of course you realize that it will take time to market all those stones," he remarked. "You don't want to excite comment. Some of them you can borrow on; no doubt the future Mrs. Ted Ballister will want a few made into appropriate settings."

I may as well say here that I had one of the finest diamonds put up as a ring for Tennion, and it was the only payment for his services he would ever accept.

"Well, my story draws to a close, as you may guess. Hamet Sassoon was on time to the minute. Tennion produced "Buddha's Emerald," which the Hindoo carefully compared with a paste imitation. The test was satisfactory, for without a word he handed over a roll of thousand-pound Bank of England notes—twenty-five of them—made us each a profound *salaam*, and went his way. I suppose the emerald eventually found its way back to the forehead of the god in Lucknow, but as to that I never heard a word. They keep their secrets well in India.

When he was gone Tennion pushed the notes toward me, saying:

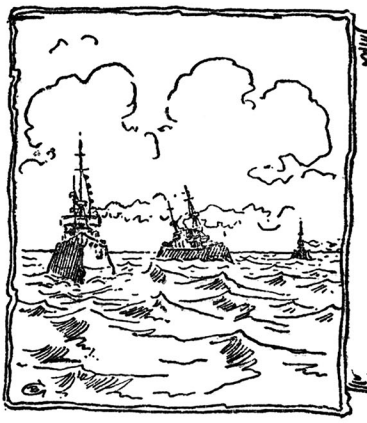
"You wont want for ready cash now, Master Ted," and then I saw what he had been playing for all along in his contest of wits with Sassoon. For it really took upward of a year to dispose of Michael Callandar's treasure, planting them in small lots here and there.

Omitting the value of a pearl collar, a diamond sunburst for my bride, and sundry settings of trinkets for the *mater*, the total value totaled up some eighty-five thousand pounds, aside from the twenty-five thousand Sassoon paid for the "Buddha Emerald," so the value of the loot had been rather underestimated by its captor.

Long before our entire fortune came in, however, Minnie and I were married in Old Leyton Church. We ate our wedding-breakfast in Leyton Grange, which I had arranged to lease and ultimately purchase.

There, while we went on our bridal tour, I left the dear old *mater*, happy in being restored to the place endeared to her by that earlier dream of love with my father when he was at his best. Here, too, our babies are growing up to manhood and womanhood—a sturdy young Ted and a fairy-like little Minnie.

Our one regret has been that Old Solitaire could not enjoy with us the happiness for which he planned and plotted so cleverly through the medium of his queerly devised Solitaire Cipher.



The King of Bangi-Tangi

By
FREDERICK WALWORTH BROWN

KELLY was his name. His hair was a blend of vermilion and orange, his eyes were blue and open, and his upper lip unnecessarily and somewhat ludicrously long. Why he landed suddenly on the island of Bangi-Tangi, clad in the uniform of a private in the U. S. marine corps has to do with certain matters on board the U. S. S. *Alaska*, then passing the said island on her way from Singapore to Manila.

Having brought with him an excellent rifle of the latest service-pattern and a full belt of ammunition, Kelly's first business upon gaining shore and the shelter of the jungle was to sit down and thoroughly clean and grease the weapon. When he finally filled the magazine and snapped a cartridge into the chamber, there could be no question about the rifle's availability for instant and accurate service.

Then he started out after his breakfast.

He had no definite plan. The need for departure from the jurisdiction of the *Alaska's* commander had been urgent, and having been a New York wharf-rat before he enlisted, Kelly naturally took to the water. Bangi-Tangi happened to be his landfall and he accepted it with entire satisfaction.

He knew nothing about it, and the fact that its inhabitants were treacherous, suspicious, and murderously armed and had never been thoroughly subjected by the Power that claimed dominion over them, would not have deterred him even had he known. Kelly was one of those rare individuals with a self-confidence so sublimely magnificent as to command respect even in its follies.

He put on his shoes, which hitherto had hung about his neck, and with his rifle resting in the crook of his left elbow, his right hand gripping the lock, he started along the beach. He had lost his cap, and his shock of gorgeous hair, bristling with its salt water wetting, flamed like a bird of paradise against the black background of the matted jungle. Presently, being unsuspicious and unafraid, he began a lively whistling and the tune was "The Bowery Grenadiers."

It was thus that he burst upon the view of the affrighted Bangi-Tangians, coming like a flame-crowned god through the dewy morning, tramping in time to his own brisk music, and—what did not escape them—with a very efficient looking rifle in the best possible position for immediate action.

The inhabitants gave way before him. They could not understand this solitary bold intruder. If he had come with a file of soldiers they would have taken to the bush instanter and pot-shotted him with poisoned arrows. If he had come alone, but without the brazen effrontery of his present aspect, they would doubtless have overpowered him by some subtle treachery and presently accomplished his decease by ingenious processes of considerable duration.

But when he marched into their

midst with the bearing of their lawful lord, they found no category in their experience wherein to place him, and with the wisdom of the weak, took counsel of descretion.

For his part, Kelly regarded this village as merely a providential means to the desired end—breakfast. He left off "The Bowery Grenadiers" and advanced into the straggling circle of huts, his blue eyes searching right and left for signs of the inhabitants. A cur or two circled about him and snapped at his heels, and a fire before one of the bamboo dwellings declared the recent presence of mankind, but from grayhaired headman to the youngest toddler the inhabitants had absconded. Had his eyes been able to penetrate the darkness of the surrounding bush he might have seen them, it is true, watching, whispering, fingering bows and spears, trying in their sneaky Malay fashion to classify this flame-topped apparition which had descended upon their village.

A pot above the fire attracted Kelly, and when examination disclosed a mixture of rice and fish, he left off the search for the owners for the more pressing business of satisfying his hunger. The dish proved appetizing, and so intent was the late marine that he did not hear the faint rustling of the brush on all sides as the half-wild little brown men pressed in to watch him eat.

Suddenly there came a flash of yellow, a snap, and Kelly sat open-mouthed watching a bit of fish which had been in transit toward his molars departing in the jaws of a lean, long-legged dog.

"Domn!" said Kelly. "Ye will, will ye?"

The dog was thirty yards away and still going when the rifle bullet overtook him and he pitched three somersaults and lay quiet. It was a good clean shot, taken without rising, and a sigh ran round the edge of the encircling jungle. Kelly snapped another cartridge into the chamber and resumed his breakfast, quite unconscious that his position on Bangi-Tangi had been materially strengthened by the prompt execution of a thieving dog.

When he had nearly emptied the pot he rose, and walking over to the shady space in front of the hut, sat down and drew out his pipe and tobacco. The latter was wringing wet and he observed it ruefully. Evidently there was no smoke to be had at once, and thrusting the pipe between his teeth to get what comfort he could from the feel of it, he spread the tobacco out in the sun to dry and sat down to wait.

A large contentment seized upon him. Freedom from restraint and discipline, a full belly, the warm sunshine, and the fresh sea-breeze combined to produce a lazy satisfaction amounting to indifference. At least, while his tobacco was drying, he was well content to lie here and dream and whistle.

He thought of his late comrades and a grin spread over his broad, good natured face. They would be in the midst of their morning duties. He pictured the commotion at roll-call when he was not found and his grin broadened. In fancy he saw the apoplectic countenance of his late commander and heard his acid language at the news that Private Kelly had vanished. At that he burst into open laughter there in the deserted village.

He was glad to be where he was. He was neither lonesome nor afraid, but greatly contented, and with the utter optimism of perfect self-reliance, he took no thought for the morrow. His tobacco steamed in the sunshine and finally dried sufficiently for use. He filled his pipe, lighted it with a brand from the fire, and resumed his place in the shade.

Through all this time a hundred pairs of eyes never left him but followed every movement with an interest amounting to awe.

"Certainly it is a god," said one. "Saw we ever a man with such a crown of fire?"

"Do the gods eat rice and fish and smoke tobacco?" whispered a sceptic. "Let be. We will observe him further."

"But the dog?" said a third, in awestruck tones. "Saw ye not how it died? It was well shot through and through. I say—"

"And I say ye be but children," spoke a graybeard. "Have I not been to Batavia and come again whole. I have seen his like by hundreds, all standing in straight lines. And all carried these

mooskits which throw fire and kill—all. *I* know."

"Is he then but a man and no god?"

At that moment Kelly rose to his full tiptoe height and stretched his arms. The sun struck full on his head and surely veritable flames shot upward from his crown. The eager watchers shrank a bit and the ancient Ulysses who had been to Batavia and seen Dutch soldiers drill, shrank with the rest.

"How should I know?" he muttered. "He is like, save only his flaming crown. Such I have never seen. It may be a god. How should I know?"

At that instant there came a sharp diversion. A sudden howl uprose in the jungle silence, followed by a chorus of brisk yells and a stampede of feet. A woman shrieked shrilly and somewhere a forsaken toddler set up a frightened screaming.

Kelly, seeing nothing and hearing much, knocked out his pipe and gripped his rifle, peering into the dark screen of jungle where presently he began to make out small brown shapes that flitted and vanished and reappeared again. Directly a blow-pipe dart fell at his feet. It looked like a toy arrow, and ignorant of the deadly venom on its tiny barbed point, he regarded it with good-natured contempt.

Women began to appear, dragging children and casting affrighted glances over their shoulders even as they halted in terror before the god who had taken possession of their village. Just what was happening Kelly could not imagine. The jungle that had been silent and forsaken now seemed to swarm with yelling units. But that a fight was in progress was clear enough and Kelly was not of the temperament to sit by while heads were being broken. The one-time leader of as tough a gang of wharf-rats as ever infested a water-front rose now to join the fray. Shouting the battle-cry of the old East River gang, "Bust their heads, b'ys. Bust their heads!" he hastened toward the sound of battle.

The course of events had been as follows:

Small as Bangi-Tangi really was, yet like every Malay district, it boasted two fiercely hostile factions, feudists of the most envenomed sort. Each end of the island had its own headman, and periodically one or the other of these marshaled his glitter-eyed followers and fell upon the hereditary enemy beyond the dividing ridge.

By a fortunate chance the headman of the eastern end had selected this particular morning for an attack, and advancing stealthily toward the village which Kelly had already emptied of its population, the invaders stumbled suddenly upon their foes in a state of sad unpreparedness.

Taken unawares, embarrassed by the presence of women and children, troubled by the advent of a flame-crowned demi-god whose intentions might be friendly and might be the reverse, the defenders fought at a decided disadvantage.

On the other hand, enthused by the success of their surprise-party, inflamed by the drawing of first blood, and quite unconscious of the near presence of any god, the invaders pushed their initial advantage vigorously, and drove the defenders back upon the village.

Suddenly, then, upon the dazzled eyes of the combatants, burst a form magnificent. As afterward described, this terrifying apparition stood some nine feet high. His voice was like that of the waves on the fore-shore. His eye struck death at a glance, and leaping flames played lambently about his god-like brow. His approach was swift beyond the possibility of mortals. He descended upon the field of battle and terror froze the hearts of all who beheld him. Should mere men be asked to fight against the gods?

As a matter of sober fact Kelly considered that he was about to have a most enjoyable time. It was like the days of old before the gang was dispersed and he enlisted to escape the Island. It was a "ruction" such as his spirit loved. For the moment his rifle was forgotten. He had no desire to deal out death.

"Bust their heads, b'ys!" he yelled with joyous enthusiasm and hastened on where half a regiment might have

feared to tread. The possibilities of ambush were perfect, the deadly poisoned arrows whined on all sides, crinkly knives flashed in the obscurity, and passion distorted faces appeared momentarily and vanished again before him.

But he knew no fear, and the joy of a head-breaking 'scrap' was in his blood. Straight on he plunged, till suddenly there was silence before him and try as he would he could see or hear no sign of friend or foe.

The thing struck him as strange and even ominous. Why wouldn't they come to blows with him? He felt suddenly very much alone, there in the blind jungle. He could not know, of course, that half a mile away a company of wild little brown men were scuttling hurriedly toward home with chills running up and down their spines and the certainty in their hearts that they had seen and fought with something far from human.

Ultimately he returned to the village, not knowing what else to do. As he went the thought occurred to him that the village owed him something. Had he not single handed repelled attack? The instinct of the wharf-rat demanded substantial return for services rendered.

"Domn if I don't bleed 'em," he cried and laughed aloud, a laugh that sent a shiver down many a sensitive brown back.

In this frame of mind he stalked into the village like a conquering hero, with a swagger in his shoulders and a supercilious mien. It was the way a demigod should come and the villagers, headed by the gray Ulysses, met him with their faces in the dust, and soft stammering words of welcome on their lips. Their words were Greek but their manner and gestures were eloquent, so that he gathered that they and all that they had were his, to use or to trample under foot as seemed him good.

Rather overwhelmed and for the first time doubtful of himself, Kelly strode up to the veranda of a hut and sat down. The population of the village assembled about him, the boldest to the fore with one foot turned to flee, the timid hovering in the rear, and Kelly, King of Bangi-Tangi, faced his people.

He discovered that they were bringing offerings, mainly of food, and with the discovery the lust for power which is in all Irishmen, welled strong within him. In a way his quick, impulsive, Celtic nature was in accord with theirs. Something in him grasped the essence of their feeling toward him. It was not gratitude so much as awe that bade them come and lay their gifts at his feet. With the instinct of leadership his mind grasped the possibilities of the situation and he gathered himself to meet it. Without moving from his place, as he sat, he began to speak. It is of no consequence what he said. He hardly knew himself and his people understood no single word. But his voice and manner were lordly and impressive and his hearers hung breathless on his sentences and saw with relief that the face of their god was kind.

At the end he rose and pushing aside the mat at the entrance of the hut, entered and took possession. Ten minutes later, the mat was again raised and hands thrust in a most unwilling girl, who promptly fell at his feet. He recognized her as a propitiating sacrifice and after a moment raised her gently and lifting her face with one big hand, looked into her terrified eyes. At the end of his scrutiny he winked slyly and smiled his ample smile.

"Now don't you be 'fraid o' me, Maggie," he said. "We'll get along fine. You just pitch in an' cook up a dinner. I'm that hungry I could eat the butt o' me rifle," and he pantomimed by rubbing his stomach and showing her how loose his belt was.

She grasped his meaning, and perhaps reassured by his indication of human weakness, perhaps merely glad of something to do, began at once the preparation of a meal.

With the wisdom of a Tammany ward-leader Kelly dealt with his problem.

No god can live in daily, hourly contact with men and in their eyes retain his godship. Kelly was no exception, but with the passing of the deity emerged the born leader. He was careful of every act. The gray Ulysses, one

time headman of the village, he made his first lieutenant, and thus authority flowed through accustomed channels and no violence was done to local prejudice.

With Celtic intuition he made friends of the babies, in this way won the mothers and so tightened his grip on the men. Beyond food and shelter he exacted no taxes at first, and the food was brought voluntarily in quantities that embarrassed him.

At the very outset he began drilling the young men of the village and in a month had a body of between thirty and forty who marched and wheeled and halted at command. They were armed with bows and arrows and against anything but their own less advanced brethern would have proved nothing but a broken reed to lean upon; but when finally he led them across the island and invaded the territory of their hereditary foes the issue was never for an instant doubtful. They took the village in a bloodless contest, received the unqualified submission of the head man, and in half an hour Kelly was actively engaged recruiting his forces among the late hostiles. The entire male population hastened to enlist and it was a proud Irishman who marched homeward with his nondescript army.

With the feeling that his increased authority demanded a greater show of pomp, he ordered the building of a larger house, and began to rule his kingdom with a more regal hand.

He had been ten months on Bangi-Tangi and had firmly set his heel upon the neck of its people before news of the fact filtered out and came to the ear of the governor of the archipelago. Bangi-Tangi, outlying and valueless, had never been held worth the bother and expense of conquest and civilized administration. But even the most enervated tropical government cannot sit passive while its possessions are filched from under its nose by red-headed adventurers, and the fat governor in pajamas was ultimately stirred to action.

He reported at length to the home government and sent a little toy gunboat, commanded by an emaciated lieutenant with fever in his bones, around to Bangi-Tangi to assert the authority of the Empire. With the lieutenant went a file of ten dark complexioned soldiers armed with muskets of an obsolete pattern.

The approach of the gunboat was announced to King Kelly as he sat at meat in the new palace.

"A warship!" he cried at the news. "What's her flag like?"

The messenger described it.

The king sighed with relief.

It was not the flag of the *Alaska*.

After some further thought he decided to meet the enemy, if enemy it proved to be, with his army at his back. Accordingly, a little later he moved in state to the sea beach, with the army some seventy strong marching very creditably at his back.

In the offing the gunboat steamed slowly, and the size of her filled Kelly with disgust. A single shot from one of the *Alaska's* turret guns and she would go up like a puff of powder. He doubted her ability to coerce him and with his inherent love of anything in the nature of a 'ruction,' he prepared to do battle for his kingdom, if the event should prove it necessary.

His first step was strategic. The gunboat was still well off-shore, and Kelly proceeded to march his men in Indian file along a strip of the beach. Each man carried a bamboo spear over his right shoulder and their marching would have done credit to a gang of lock-stepped convicts. He had only some seventy of them, but taking a leaf from the book of East Side melodrama, he used the seventy over and over again, till the lieutenant on the gunboat had watched some three hundred and fifty men file past his astonished eyes. At a little distance and backed by a dark green jungle, shouldered spears look very much like shouldered muskets, and the lieutenant thought of his own file of ten and wondered if Bangi-Tangi were really worth it.

However, his orders were imperative and eventually he had out a boat and with his valiant ten approached the shore.

While he was still some distance away a rifle cracked behind the screen-

ing jungle-front with a long-drawn "ca-ping," and the bullet continued the last syllable as it passed overhead. The lieutenant's courageous ten ceased rowing without being ordered, and the lieutenant hastily improvised a white flag and waved it above his head.

Assured that the visitors were in the nature of an embassy and not a hostile array, Kelly appeared alone on the beach and signaled them to approach. The boat came gingerly in and he welcomed the emaciated lieutenant with a cheerful grin. It would appear that he had already formulated a plan for this identical emergency.

"You'll be from the governor now?" he said as he shook hands with the lieutenant.

Luckily that officer understood English. He admitted the correctness of Kelly's surmise and was immediately clapped on the back most cordially by the man he had come to depose.

"Come up to the house an' we'll talk it over," said Kelly. "I'm thinkin' we can fix it agreeable to all parties."

They accordingly ascended to the palace, the lieutenant somewhat doubtful lest he was being led into a trap, but on the whole rather taken with the personality of this singular adventurer.

Seated on the veranda Kelly handed the officer a cigar.

"They grow the stuff here, an' it aint half bad," he said. "I was thinkin' we might export some of it."

"But—but tell me," said the lieutenant, "how did you come here?"

Kelly's explanation of his presence was a very creditable performance but there was no reference in it either to the *Alaska* or her commander.

"An' it looks to me," he finished, "like you people owed me somethin'. I've come in here at the risk o' me life, mind, an' pacified the island, an' made myself ki—governor. The people all love me an' there's nothin' I need now but for you to say it's all right, an'—an' fix it up with the boss, see?

"An' suppose you say 'No.' What you goin' to do about it? I've got an army an' it's a pretty good one. It'll take a good many such as them," he jerked his thumb toward the tan-colored ten squatting before the veranda, "to put me down an' out. You'd lick me in the end, but what good'll it do you. Bangi-Tangi don't pay any taxes. Leave me here 'n charge an' it wont be long before it will. Kick me out an' you're back where you started, see?"

Through three days he plied the lieutenant with argument of this nature and ultimately the lieutenant "saw." He traveled over the island and interviewed the two deposed but contented head men, Kelly acting as interpreter. The interviews were eminently satisfactory. They desired no lord but Kelly and after him assuredly they would obey him for was not he crowned with fire?

In his verbal report to the governor the lieutenant's remarks ran thus:

"He has taken possession and established a dynasty. It will take a regiment a month to depose him. I myself counted near four hundred armed men who obey him without question. It is therefore my judgment that he be allowed to remain."

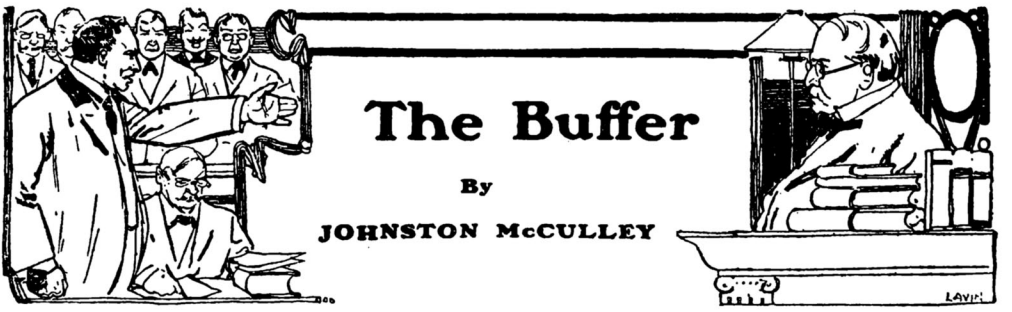
"Will he pay taxes?" asked the fat governor.

"He agrees to everything if we recognize him as governor of Bangi-Tangi."

"And he's in possession and we can't oust him."

"Exactly."

"Then we had better recognize him," said the governor, and the fiat went forth.



The Buffer

By

JOHNSTON McCULLEY

I

JOHN WELLINGTON HARMS crashed his great fist down upon the desk. Freely, the little district attorney, flinched. In the outer office, Bobbie Harms, aged six, tried in vain to reach the knob of the door that would admit him to his father's presence. A private secretary and a half-dozen clerical men watched him in amusement, but neglected to tender aid.

"I tell you," John Wellington Harms was saying, "that you're going to the penitentiary! You're going to be a crushed idol! You're going to have the dear people you say you serve rise up and curse you!"

"If you will be calm and allow me to explain," said the little district attorney.

"No explanation is necessary; I know the facts, and so do you. The district attorney has aided a forger, instead of prosecuting him. That's all!"

"It is not all—" began Freely.

"You're right! It isn't all! I'll tell you the rest! When you came out for office, and made a run on the plea that you would treat every law-breaker alike, you mentioned names. You mentioned our corporation, and our ring, in particular. You were elected, of course, and from the time you stepped into office until the present you've done nothing but hound us."

"I did nothing except to enforce the law."

"Bah! You had every one of us indicted—some of us half a dozen times. You made us spend money. There are two indictments hanging over my head now. Can't a man be successful in money-getting without having a cur like you snapping at his heels?"

"Not when he makes money as you do," said Freely.

"That's enough of that sort of talk! I've got you where I want you! You've helped a forger instead of prosecuting him! That will be the end of you! You're going to lose your office, and you're going to jail—and you'll have your senatorial ambition knocked in the head. You're a dead one, Freely! You've bucked against us, and you've lost!"

"You know the forger you say I helped?" Freely asked.

"I do! I know he's your half brother! That makes the case the more aggravated. Sell out the people to protect members of your own family! You—*reformer!*"

When Freely answered there was a new quality in his voice.

"You are right—he is my half-brother," he said. "He was my mother's baby. As she was dying she asked me to look out for him. I sent him to college with money I earned by working like a dog. I educated him. He mixed with a fast set at college, and he came out into the world penniless and foolish. I had given him his education and it was up to him to do the rest."

"This doesn't interest me," said Harms.

"Just a moment, please! He was unable to make money, and he wanted it—needed it. He was ashamed to come to me for it, because he knew I didn't have any to spare. He forged a check for one hundred dollars. Then

he grew frightened and came to me—confessed. I saw my duty in a new light. Perhaps I hadn't cared for him as I promised my mother I would. If I prosecuted him, his life would be ruined. If I let him off, he'd turn out a man of the better sort, because of the lesson. I paid the check, made arrangements with the man whose name he had forged. And so I let him off!"

"And so you let him off," said Harms in echo. "You let off a forger, who may forge my name to-morrow, or the name of someone else. And you're going to jail. It was a friend of mine whose name he forged."

"I know," said Freely.

"And so I got hold of the facts in the case, and I'm going to use them to squeeze you with! You've hindered me and my associates. You've kept our attorneys busy keeping us out of jail. You've forced us to put up heavy cash bail instead of taking bonds. You have hounded us, I say. And now you're going to pay for it!"

Freely arose, and so did Harms.

"I am in your power," said the district attorney. "You refuse to look at the other side of the matter—refuse to see how a promise to a dying mother, or love for a foolish, weak boy can enter into the case. You say I am guilty—and technically I am. You are going to ruin my career and try to send me to prison. And I tell you, in the face of your threats, that it is just like you—you, robber of ignorant workingmen, robber of widows, swindler of orphans, boodler—you, who owns judges and senators and a governor—you, a man without a thought except of making money, without a scruple as to how you get it—"

Suddenly Harms towered above him, his fist raised to strike. The financier's face was purple with rage. Freely, the little district attorney, bent beneath him, waiting for the blow he thought would come.

At that moment Bobbie Harms, stepping on a convenient box, turned the knob of the door and stumbled into the inner office. He looked in amazement at his father, and at the man who seemed so afraid of him. He wasn't sure he had arrived at an opportune moment.

"I come for candy," he said.

Harms looked past Freely at the boy. Gradually the anger left his face, gradually the fist dropped at his side. The little district attorney straightened himself again.

"I come for candy," Bobbie repeated

Freely looked at Harms, then slipped through the door and into the hall.

II

John Wellington Harms sighed, then picked Bobbie up in his arms and carried him to the desk.

"You little buffer," he said, opening a drawer to get the candy he always kept there.

"What a buffer?" Bobbie demanded.

"A buffer," said John Wellington Harms, handing Bobbie some of the candy, "is anything that neutralizes the shock of two opposing forces. If you don't believe it, you can look in the dictionary."

Bobbie sank his teeth into a piece of candy and looked at his father blankly.

"How did you get down to the office?" John Wellington Harms demanded.

"I wunned away. Lizzie gone—Sam gone—"

"I'll discharge Lizzie and I'll break Sam's neck!"

"Lizzie in back of house," Bobbie explained, in extenuation of his nurse. "I wunned *twick*."

"And Sam?"

"I don't know," said Bobbie.

In fact, he never did know about Sam. Sam was his big brother, a young man of twenty-three who did pretty much as he pleased. John Wellington Harms had been anxious about Sam for some time. The young man was one of a fast set, he knew, and threw money about recklessly. Not that Harms cared for the money—because he didn't when one of his own family had the spending of it—but he loved both of his boys—Sam, the young club man, and Bobbie, whose coming had meant his mother's departure from the world.

"We'll have to talk to Sam," he said, stroking Bobbie's hair. "Yes, son, we'll have to talk to Sam."

"What we tell him?" Bobbie asked.

"We'll tell him things, all right!" answered his father, growing stern.

He looked at his watch; it was 4:30. He left Bobbie seated upon the desk, and stepped to the door.

"Williams," he said, to the secretary, "I'm going home with the baby. Order my car, will you? And if anyone is in, make appointments for to-morrow at the usual hours."

He closed the door again, and went back to the desk.

"We'll go home now, baby," he said. "Want to go home?"

"No," said Bobbie.

"What? Why?"

"Don't like it at home," said Bobbie, frankly. "Sam gone, an' he wont ever play when he's *not* gone. An' Lizzie work. 'Nen I don't got nuthin' to do nor anyone to play wif."

"By George!" said John Wellington Harms. He looked at his younger son in amazement. "By George!" he said again. "We'll have to fix things! I shouldn't wonder if you get lonesome sometimes."

He carried Bobbie to the elevator, they descended to the street, and got into the car.

"Home," said Harms, and his tone caused the chauffeur to make as much speed as possible.

When home was reached, John Wellington Harms took Bobbie into the library after scolding a very excited and anxious nurse, and there sat him down upon a divan. For several minutes Harms did not speak a word; he was thinking about Sam. Bobbie did the talking, and though Harms answered now and then with a peculiar grunt, he paid no attention to the words of his younger son. It was only when he heard someone whistling up-stairs that he awoke from his semi-reverie. The whistler was Sam.

"Bobbie," said his father, "you go up and tell Sammie to come down here. And then you go and make Lizzie dress you for dinner."

Bobbie jumped down from the divan and obeyed eagerly. He liked dressing for dinner—it made one seem grown-up.

Harms turned up and down the room. The telephone-bell rang—his private 'phone. He threw himself in a chair before the table, and answered:

"That you, Harms?" asked a voice. "This is Beardsley, of the Third National. Yes—Beardsley. Say, we got a check on you to-day that's a rank forgery. Thought I'd let you know right away. For two hundred. Yes."

"Payable to whom?" thundered Harms.

"Walter Newton."

"Ah!" exclaimed Harms. "I'll see you about it to-morrow. Do nothing until then."

He snapped the switch and got up again. There was a deep smile of victory on his face. Walter Newton was the half-brother of the district attorney. Evidently that young man had not stopped at a single crime. Now he had dared to forge the name of John Wellington Harms, and Harms would use the forgery to break Freely and to jail his half-brother also.

He was standing before a window, thinking out his probable course, when Sam came into the room.

"You wanted me, dad?" he asked.

Harms whirled toward him.

"Sit down!" he commanded. "I want to talk to you again, as I did the other day, and I want your obedience. Are you going to quit this fast set you're running with, and be a little decent?"

"But, dad—"

"*Are* you? Do you know where that sort of existence will lead you? I saw an example to-day—the case of a young man who has ruined himself and his brother's career because he forged a check."

Sam's face grew white.

"But, dad—" he said.

"I'm not saying you'd forge a check, nor commit any felony. But I do mean to say that you'll drift along with that crowd of young asses until you get to the point where you'll forge or do anything else to get money, because you'll be ashamed to ask me for it. I don't want you to do anything like that, boy."

Sam's face was buried in his hands. He did not look at his father.

"I'll try to do better," he said.

"You've said that before. I want you to mean it this time. Break away from that crowd. You can spend money

and have a good time without making a fool of yourself. Let's have an end of it, now. I don't like to be stern—to talk this way. Be around the house a little now and then. Bobbie was complaining this afternoon that you never played with him any more. He gets lonesome in this big house with nobody but the servants. Poor little chap!"

Harms turned toward the window again, to hide his emotion. Somehow, everything connected with Bobbie touched his heart—and little else did.

"I want you to buck up and be a man," he continued, turning to Sam after a while. "You find yourself in a peculiar position. You are the son of a successful man, at whose heels all the curs in the town are snapping. I've had to fight my enemies, and you'll have to fight the same enemies after I'm gone, unless you back down and let them put you down and out. And I don't think you'll do that—you're not that kind. You want to take a little interest in the business—in things generally. I don't ask you to forego your pleasures, because you are young and ought to get all the pleasure you can. But show a little interest now and then."

"I'll try," said Sam.

"I've got some of 'em going now. Thank Heaven, you aren't one of the moral kind, or you might try to preach to me! I'm gettin' 'em, and they'll learn, maybe, to be careful where they jump after this. I've got Freely going now."

"Freely?" said Sam, looking up.

"Yes—that little cur of a district attorney. I've got a strangle hold on him. He has a fool of a half-brother, Walter Newton, who spends money but can't make it. Newton forged a check on Blakely, one of my business associates. Freely paid the check and didn't prosecute Newton. I got the facts. I'll have Freely hounded for malfeasance, and I'll spoil his senatorial race and send him to jail!"

Harms was walking back and forth again, clenching his fists. He had forgotten about Sam's dereliction from obedience in his anger at the district attorney who had thwarted him.

"Is Walter Newton the half-brother of Freely?" Sam asked.

"Yes! Do you know the scamp?"

"I know Newton."

"Well, you'd better drop him!"

"He—he never seemed a bad sort," said Sam.

"Drop him, I say!"

"Can't you get Freely without dragging Newton in?"

"I could, I suppose, but I'm not going to," said Harms. "He says he's protecting his half-brother because he promised his dying mother to look out for him. Wonder if he thinks I'm a jury, to try that heart-interest gag on me? But I wont let things drop, because I've got something else on him—on Newton, I mean. Beardsley just called up."

"The banker?" asked Sam.

"The president of the Third National. They have a check down there, with my name forged to it. It's payable to Newton. The young scamp is busy with his pen, it seems."

Sam's face had gone white again.

"Dad," he said, "I—I wish you'd let Newton off."

"Let him off? Let Freely slip through my fingers? You're crazy!"

"No I am not, dad. But—well, Newton did something for me once that was a great favor."

"That may be, but it doesn't give him a license to commit a felony."

"It will look like ingratitude if you go after him—you, my father."

"What great favor did he do you?" demanded Harms, sarcastically.

"Oh, he—well, he's done several things. He's not a bad sort at all—just got educated to a champagne taste at college, and is trying to gratify it now on an ice cream soda allowance, that's all. And he isn't really a bad sort!"

"A forger—and not a bad sort?"

"It's the way you look at it, dad Some people, you know, call you a swindler and a thief. Wont you let him off?"

Harms crashed his fist down upon the table.

"I'll not!" he said. "I'll go to the district attorney to-morrow morning, with my attorney, and demand an indictment for Newton. And you may bet that I'll get it!"

"But, dad—"

"That's all, young man. I'm surprised at your attitude! I've the chance to crush Freely, and I'm going to do it. Don't say another word—the matter is closed for the present."

The door opened and Bobbie tottered into the room. That was the second time in one day that he had interrupted an interesting scene. He looked at his father, who had stopped in the middle of the room with fist half-upraised in the act of making a gesture; he looked at Sam, who sat on the divan, his face in his hands again. Then he stumbled up to his brother.

"Tham," he said, "you come play."

"Run along, Bobbie; I don't want to play."

"Please play, Tham!"

"You go with him," thundered John Wellington Harms, "and remember what I told you when we first started to talk."

"Come, Tham," Bobbie pleaded.

Sam got upon his feet, looked down at Bobbie and smiled—though it was a poor smile.

"All right, youngster," he said. "We'll play."

III

When once John Wellington Harms made up his mind to do a thing, that thing was generally done. And so, on the following morning, he took his attorney and went to Freely's office and sent in his card.

Freely ordered them admitted at once. Harms took the chair the district attorney indicated, and his attorney sat in another. The attorney, whose name was Allen, began the conversation.

"My client," he said, indicating Mr. Harms, "has a case to put before you, and he asks immediate action. I may state that we expect to get it."

"Expect!" thundered Harms. "We *are* going to get it! You keep still, Allen, and allow me to do the talking. You may stop me if I get on dangerous ground."

Allen subsided, and Harms turned so that he could face Freely.

"Yesterday," he said, "I accused you of shielding a criminal. You gave me reasons—a lot of stuff about having promised your mother something. And I told you that I was going to crush you anyway. Now I have come to you to demand that, instead of shielding young Newton, you bring action against him at once. Your idea that he would profit by the lesson of one crime seems to have been a bad one."

"What do you mean?" Freely demanded.

"I mean that the young man has committed a second crime—that he has forged another check. This time, he forged my name. The amount was two hundred dollars, and he made the check payable to himself. That's nerve, of course—but I suppose he wanted to use the money to get out of the country."

Freely bent forward suddenly and looked Harms in the eyes.

"Let me understand you," he said. "You say that my brother, Walter Newton, forged your name to a check for two hundred dollars?"

"He did; and presented the check himself and received the money on it."

"And you demand that he be indicted and tried before a jury for that crime?"

"I do," thundered Harms.

"No matter what the consequences?"

"Consequences! I fail to understand you, sir."

"You want him tried, no matter what the consequences may be?"

"Certainly! It is nothing to me if he goes to prison—a forger! Let him take the punishment reserved for criminals. And I want you to act quickly! I have my eyes on you, mind! I've got you where I want you, and I'll not only ruin your career, but I'll make you send your brother to prison and crack that heart of yours—that heart you brag so much about!"

"You have no heart, it seems," said Freely.

"Not when criminals are to be considered, sir."

Freely touched a bell.

"Very well," he said. "I am glad you have not. It will be all the easier for you."

A deputy entered the room in answer to the bell.

"Tell my brother to step in here, please," said the district attorney. "He is in the waiting room."

None of the three men spoke until Walter Newton pushed open the door and entered, and took the chair indicated by Freely. Harms glared at him, Allen cleared his throat and awaited developments. It seemed to Allen that there was a sort of peculiar atmosphere in the room, that the air was charged with the unexpected.

"Newton," said Freely, looking at his brother, "this is John Wellington Harms. He accuses you of forging his name to a check for two hundred dollars."

Newton sprang from his chair, his face livid.

"*He* accuses me of that!" he cried. "Does he know? Have you told him that—"

"Silence!" commanded Freely. Newton looked at the district attorney and then sat back in his chair.

"I have told Mr. Harms nothing," said Freely, "and did not intend to do so. But he has forced me to do it, in order to protect myself. I'll say to Mr. Harms now that I stand ready to prosecute the forgers of two certain checks—"

"Forgers!" cried Harms.

"I spoke in the plural," said Freely. "I stand ready to prosecute the *forgers*, if you desire it."

"You can't bluff me that way!" cried Harms. "Do you mean to try making some other poor devil answer for this second forgery?"

"I'll make no one answer for it, except the guilty man," said Freely. "The two forgeries are connected, Mr. Harms. I knew it yesterday, when you were talking to me in your office. I was laboring under a false idea of honor then. I refused to prosecute my half-brother for another reason than to observe my mother's dying request."

"Why?" demanded Harms.

"Because, sir, I was placed in a position where I could easily humble an enemy of mine—a man who has tried everything his brain could contrive to disgrace me, belittle me, stop my work, kill my chances for a successful life. In other words, you, sir!"

"I!" cried Harms.

"I found myself in a position where, to obey my oath of office and prosecute my half-brother, I could drag your name in the dirt deeper than it now is, how I could wound you beyond recovery, make you a laughing-stock, and play a part that would make the people you designate as common curs rise up and call me blessed. Had I been a man like some men, I would have done so. I did not, sir, because I felt it would be taking an advantage of you. So I did not prosecute my half-brother, and by refusing to do so I not only gave him a chance to lead a better life, but I threw aside a chance to beat you once and for all because I felt it wouldn't be a fair fight. In other words, though you take advantage of your wealth and influence to injure me, I respect you too much as an enemy to take advantage of my public office to wound you."

"I don't know what you are talking about," said Harms. "And whatever scruples you may have had in the first case need not prevent you having this young rascal indicted for his second offense."

"He has no second offense," said Freely, quietly. "He never forged your name to that check, Mr. Harms."

"What? When it is made payable to him?"

"He is innocent of that forgery, sir, though it is a forgery. I know the circumstances of the case. Beardsley called me up last evening and had a talk with me. He thought Newton guilty, too. I had a talk with Newton, afterward, and I finally got at the truth of the matter."

"I think you're trying to dodge us," said Harms. "But if you think you have the truth of the matter, let's hear it."

"As a last request, sir, I ask that you let the whole matter drop. Believe me, it will be better for you to do so."

"Drop!" cried Harms. "Not on your life! Tell me your confounded story, and after you are done I'll probably tell you that you lie."

There was a dangerous gleam in Freely's eyes for a moment, but it soon passed. When he spoke it was in a low tone, and there was no chance of anyone hearing except those in the inner office.

"Newton," he said, "you presented a check at the Third National for two hundred dollars, signed by John Wellington Harms, yesterday afternoon, did you not?"

"Yes," Newton replied.

"And got the money after properly endorsing the check."

"Yes."

"Where did you get the check? How did you come by it?"

"It was given to me, in partial payment of gambling debts, by Sam Harms sir," said Newton.

There was silence for a moment, then Harms sprang from the chair in which he was sitting.

"You lie!" he screamed. "But you can't lie out of this!"

"Just a moment," said Freely. "I told you not to insist upon knowing the truth of the matter. Now that it has been told you, you doubt it. As it is but eleven o'clock in the morning, and your son Samuel was perhaps out late last night, we may be able to find him still at home, Mr. Harms, if we go at once."

"What do you mean?" Harms demanded.

As Freely arose and bent toward him, there was a suspicion of determination in his eyes.

"I mean for you to take us all out to your house—right now—and bring us face to face with your son. Then we may perhaps learn the truth."

"I'll do it!" cried Harms. "And when my son denies his guilt, I'll cram these lies back into your throats and send you and your rascal of a brother to the pen where you belong. My car is outside. Come, both of you! You, too, Allen!"

IV

Half an hour later they sat in Harms' library, waiting for Sam, who had been summoned. He came in presently, dressed in an outing suit, his eyes still heavy with sleep. When he saw Newton and Freely, his face grew white, and his hands trembled.

"Sam," said his father kindly, "I have asked you in here to give the lie to these two scoundrels. They accuse you—you, my son, who has never wanted for money—of forging my name to a check for two hundred dollars and giving it to this man Newton."

Harms waited. The outburst of denial that he expected did not come. Neither did the look of surprise and then disgust, with which an innocent man might have favored his detractors. Instead, Sam Harms went down upon the divan, and buried his face in the pillows, and wept.

"Sam!" Harms cried. "Sam, boy—you—don't mean—?"

Sam sat up and suddenly dashed the tears from his eyes.

"I'll not make an ass of myself!" he said. "I'll not cry about it! I did it, dad, I—"

"You did it?" cried Harms. "You admit it?"

"Easy there, dad. Listen while I tell the whole thing. I've been going the pace, you know. You warned me, but I kept it up. I got in debt—fearfully so—gambling. Your allowance was so large that I didn't dare ask for more, for fear you would want to know what I did with so much money. I pawned things I could spare. Then I borrowed."

"Borrowed!" cried Harms. "You, my son—"

"Wait, dad. I borrowed from all the fellows. Once when Newton was flush, when he had been winning for several days—he was in our crowd, you see—he loaned me three hundred. The other day Newton was in a deuce of a hole, and he needed money. He asked me for the three hundred. I told him I'd get it by evening. I couldn't borrow it any place, and so I—made out that check for two hundred, and said that it was all you'd give me."

"You! Why didn't you come to me?"

"Wait, dad! I was afraid to come to you—and tell; and so I forged the check. Newton took it, and never said a word because he didn't get the whole three hundred. He was decent about it."

Freely walked across the room.

"Yes—he was decent about it," said the district attorney. "So decent that, instead of going to your father, he, himself, forged a check for one hundred to make up the deficit, for he *had* to have the money. Now you can see, Harms,

why I didn't prosecute my half-brother. It would have looked like I was taking advantage of you. The public would have said that I sacrificed my mother's son in order to drag you into the dirt with him. To prosecute him for forgery would mean that it would all come out —how your son gambled, and got in debt, and forged your name to pay his debts, and how, because he didn't pay all his debts, he forced another man into forgery. And because I refused to prosecute, you are going to have me tried for malfeasance, you say, and sent to prison, and are going to ruin my career. I'm ready to go either direction now. What do you say, Harms? Shall I prosecute, or not? To prosecute means that there will be two prosecuted; to grant immunity means that we fight our fight with other weapons than this affair."

Harms looked across at Sam. In his face gathered the anger-cloud. His pride was wounded—for his boy had borrowed money and had repaid it with difficulty; his boy had placed him at disadvantage before the district attorney, in a place where the district attorney acted in a manner that called for gratitude instead of war; his son had committed a crime, had been the means of another man committing a crime.

"That's why I didn't prosecute Newton," Freely summed up. "Because to prosecute him would be to disgrace your son and drag your name in the dirt. I'm fighting you, Harms, not your son; and I'm fighting you for the things *you* do, and not for what other members of your family do. I'm trying to fight fair. So I'm willing to drop this matter. You're not fighting fair—for you are not willing to drop it."

"You're right—I am not!" cried Harms. "You prosecute, sir, or I'll hound you out of office!"

Allen gasped, but said nothing. Newton and Sam looked at Harms with fear.

"Do you realize," said Freely, "that to prosecute means disgrace and perhaps a prison cell for your son?"

"I know what it means! You prosecute!"

"If you have no love for your son, I, at least, have enough hope in humanity to make an effort to save him," said Freely. "I believe of him as I do of my brother—that a first mistake may be the means of reforming, whereas prosecution for a first mistake may mean a ruined life. Laws should not look to revenge, but to reformation, I refuse to prosecute!"

"Because your brother would go to prison?" sneered Harms.

"Because his life, and the life of your son, would be ruined. And the evidence would show, remember, that my brother would not have committed this crime if your son had paid his debts. The public will lay my brother's ruin at the door of you and your son. They'll say he would never have become a criminal if you had given your son money with which to pay. There's more on your side than on mine. I'm speaking now merely as an officer of the law, and as to a man I had had no dealings with before. I refuse to prosecute your son. If he is prosecuted it will be because you, his father, swear out the complaint!"

"You shall prosecute!" cried Harms. "He's son of mine no longer! I'll have no forger under my roof! Prosecute, and I can stand the consequences, if you can!"

"You are willing to ruin your son's life in order to discredit me with the people through my brother's downfall," said Freely. "You rise against your own flesh and blood in order to win another point in your eternal battle for wealth, your eternal battle to sweep your enemies from your path! Have you no heart?"

"Will you prosecute?" demanded Harms.

"No!"

"Then you'll be tried for malfeasance, and the whole thing will come out anyway. I say I've got you where I want you—and I'll crush you this time, even if I do send my son to a prison cell doing it. He's a forger anyway—a criminal!"

"Some people say the same of his father," said Freely.

"You dare? But I'll crush you—crush you! I've got you either way. Which shall it be? Will you prosecute, or not?"

"I'll not, unless you swear to the complaint against your own son, and so force me!"

"Then I'll swear to the complaint!" cried Harms.

"Dad!" screamed Sam.

"Dont' speak to me—don't call me that! You're nothing to me—nothing!"

He turned toward the window. The library-door opened just then, and Bobbie came in. He had a rope in one hand, a little whip in the other. He stopped just inside the room, and surveyed the scene before him.

"Play, Tham!" he commanded. "Horsie—play! Tham, play!"

"Run away, Bobbie," Sam said, sobbing.

"Play, Tham. I so lonesome. Lizzie work in back of house. I so lonesome, Tham. Please play!"

Harms had turned from the window and was looking at his two sons. Sam still had his head in his hands.

"Tham—I so lonesome—" Bobbie protested. "Play, Tham!"

Allen got up suddenly and walked to the other end of the room. Newton turned his head away. Only Freely watched John Wellington Harms, as the millionaire gazed at his sons.

"Run away, Bobbie. We're—we're busy I—I can't play, Bobbie; I can't play with you—ever!" Sam was sobbing as he spoke.

Bobbie turned around and faced his father. He looked up at him soberly, the remembrance of yesterday afternoon in that same room still strong within him. He looked up, his eyes shining, his face expressive of hope of success through this appeal to the highest court.

"Make Tham play," he pleaded. "Pop, you make Tham play! I—so—lonesome—"

Lonesome! And what of the future, with Sam a felon, what of the lonesome hours coming then, before he was old enough to understand; and what of the hours of shame after he was old enough to understand? John Wellington Harms thought of that at last.

He caught Bobbie to his breast, and held him there, and gave a sob that seemed to come from the depths of his soul. Then he placed Bobbie down upon the floor again—a much astonished Bobbie—Bobbie, the buffer—and looked over at his other son.

"Sam," he said, "you play—with the—baby."

Bobbie danced gleefully, holding out rope and whip.

"Tham! Tham!" he cried.

His big brother took the end of the rope, and with Bobbie cracking the whip behind he stumbled from the room, the tears streaming down his cheeks, his head hung low so that he looked none of them in the eyes.

Harms went forward to Freely.

"You need not—prosecute, sir," he said. "And there'll—there'll be no trial for malfeasance. I want to thank you for the way in which you looked at the matter, and for the way in which you stood up for my son—for saying you believed there was good in him and that this would be the only necessary lesson."

"I fight you fair," said Freely, "and not through your son."

"And the other matters—I don't believe I can fight any more," continued Harms. "I'll answer to the indictments you have against me, of course; but—well, you'll never bring another. I'm going to get out of business. My baby—he's lonesome! And I want to rear him clean. I didn't rear my first son that way—and I've suffered to-day because I did not."

Freely turned toward the door, taking his hat from the table.

"And one other matter," said Harms. "That senatorial race of yours— You needn't worry about the opposition in our quarter, the opposition of the 'interests.' There'll not be any opposition. I control the 'interests' and I promise you that. When you need help of any sort—I'm ready!"

Freely passed into the corridor, and together with Newton went into the street. Harms' car was there, to take them back to Freely's office.

Alone in the library, John Wellington Harms sat before the long table, and listened to the baby chatter that came to his ears through the open door from the hall above: "Get up, Tham! Play, Tham, play!" Bobbie, the buffer, was getting over being lonesome.

The Quests of Youth

By PHILIP RUTHERFORD KELLAR

OVER the barren, dirty strip, which by courtesy was called a yard, Pete Kelly looked until his twelve-year-old eyes ached. The August sun glared on the red brick wall of the warehouse. The heat-waves quivered the dusty ground, the peeling walls, the half-paved streets. The boy drew back from the window with a sigh, to answer a wailing call from his five-year baby-brother. Bob Kelly lay sweltering on the pallet—the only sleeping-place in the small, squalid room, his fat, round face flushed, and an unnaturally bright light in his blue eyes.

"What's de matter, Kid?" Pete knelt and patted the baby's cheek. "Aint you feelin' right yet?"

"I so tired, Pete," the little boy gasped. "I so tired an' hot. I wanter drink cold water—ice-water."

Pete brushed his shirt-sleeve across his eyes and hurried to the tin pail on the box in one corner.

Bob tasted the lukewarm water Pete offered him, and pushed the cup away.

"We'll see how dis is," Pete spoke bravely. "How is it?"

He placed a damp cloth on the baby's head, his awkwardness more than offset by the tenderness and love that spoke in every movement and look.

The cloth soothed Bob, and as he sank back with a weary sigh, Pete spoke cheerfully:

"I'll tell you a story, Bob, an' you listen till you go to sleep. Dat's what de doctor 'ed say fer you to do—if he was here."

"I don' wanna go sleep," the baby wailed. "I so tired an' so hot."

"Dis story'll make you cooler, Kid," Pete answered softly. "It's about er great big yard wid green grass all over it an' flowers an' —"

"What's grass an' flow'rs, Pete?"

Bobby tried to sit up, in his eagerness and interest.

Pete pushed him back.

"Flowers, Kid? Aw you know what flowers is. Didn't I show some to you de day I took you down to help me sell papers? And aint I showed you pitchers of flowers an' grass?"

"Yeth, yeth!" The baby clasped his chubby hands, a wan smile lighting his face. "I wanna see some mo' flow'rs, bruffer, an' I wanna see some great big green grass."

"All right, Bob, we'll go find 'em tomorrow!"

The older boy walked to the window to hide his tears.

"No, I wanna go now," Bob insisted.

A sudden determination took possession of Pete Kelly. He turned back to his baby brother.

"All right, Kid, we'll go right now. Can you walk very far?"

Little Bob was quite certain he could walk a long distance if green fields and flowers were to greet him at the end of the journey.

The two boys trudged down the dark, narrow stairs. Bobby's clothes laughed at Pete's. Pete was glad in a pair of patched knee-trousers and a faded blue shirt, topped with a sadly dilapidated

straw hat. Bobby looked like the well dressed son of parents in moderate circumstances—with his parents away from home and his twelve-year old brother acting as nursemaid. Mrs. Bell, the kind-hearted woman from whom they rented their little room, was on the front steps, looking for a breath of air.

"We're goin' to find some green grass an' flowers," Pete informed her. "De Kid says he wants 'em bad."

"You poor children!"

Mrs. Bell's life was filled with such pictures, but her heart had never hardened. She retied the ribbon that Bobby wore for a tie, and gave the baby a few apparently meaningless pats that changed him from a thrown-together youngster to a well dressed one.

"Where'll you get them?"

"Pete knows," Bobby answered confidently.

"We going to de joint out in de country what de *Daily World* runs for poor kids," Pete replied. "It's out to Fairrocks—know how to git there?"

Mrs. Bell did not know; she had never heard of Fairrocks in the thirty years she had lived in Jefferson street.

But Pete was undaunted and Bobby's faith in his young-old brother was unlimited, so the two started off bravely in the white sunshine, in search of green fields and flowers.

Pete Kelly had been a family man for two weeks—since his mother had died and left him to look after Bobby. Pete's life had been passed in the streets and his city-tongue had never been tied. He knew how to ask questions, even when there was little at stake, and to-day he was more industrious than he had ever been, because Bobby's pleasure, possibly his life, was in danger. A policeman, several blocks away gave him the information that Fairrocks was fifteen miles away on the railroad.

"Going to take the baby there?" The policeman smiled encouragingly. "It'll be fine for him."

"How much does it cost to go on de train?" Pete asked.

"Oh, about a half a dollar, I reckon."

Pete took Bobby's hand and started north, his disappointment showing momentarily in his brave little face.

"Fifty cents, Kid! Did you hear dat? We can't stand fer a touch like dat! We gotter beat it." He patted the baby head. "But we'll get there if I hafter tote you on my back."

"An' I see grass an' flow'rs?" Bobby gurgled.

"You betchu will!"

Through block after block Pete gently led Bobby, the solid, squalid tenement-houses on each side of the narrow streets cutting off every breath of a breeze. Pete was hunting for the freight yards of the A. & B. railroad. He assured Bobby, time after time, that after they got to the freight-yards, they could slip onto a train going north that would take them to Fairrocks and green grass and flowers, and Bobby bravely answered that he would follow Pete anywhere.

After they left the tenement-district and came among the black belching factories, whose fires added to the August sun's heat, Bobby rebelled. He was so tired, he said, and did not want to see any green fields or flowers. He just wanted to rest.

"Aw, Kid, you're joshin' me," Pete answered cheerfully, though there was a look of dread in his eyes. "You are just tryin' to work me, dat's what! Here, climb up on my back."

Bobby climbed up, and resting every hundred yards, Pete carried him to the debris of tracks leading out of the A. & B. freight yards. After an interminable wait, so it seemed to Bobby, who was constantly demanding ice-water, Pete found the car that suited him. He pushed Bobby into it and climbed in afterward.

"This car's going up past Fairrocks, Bobby, an' if we don't make too much noise in here we'll get took along with it? We gotter keep quiet though, or they'll throw us out. Can you keep still?"

"Yeth, bruffer." Bobby tried to answer bravely, but he laid his head on Pete's knees and began to sob, "I so tired, an' hot, bruffer."

"You go to sleep wid your head on my knee, an' I'll wake you up when we get to Fairrocks. We're sure to find the green grass an' flowers there—an' I betchu they'll give us some ice water."

Pete fanned the baby with his cheap

straw hat, that was rapidly nearing the final stages of its usefulness.

"I got some ice water—once—" Bobby murmured.

The tired lids closed and the little boy soon was quiet in a half-stupor sleep.

Pete smiled, and closed his own eyes. He was tired. The train started with a jerk. Pete awoke with a start. He looked apprehensively at Bobby, but the little boy had not been disturbed, and again Pete smiled when he looked through the car door and saw they were going north.

The jolting of the freight-train made his back ache. He tried several times to lift Bobby's head and place it upon a pillow of newspapers, but each time the baby gave signs of waking, and Pete finally leaned back determined not to move until Bobby should awake.

Pete dozed. He slept hard. He was awakened by a shout:

"Hey, there, kid, what you doing in there?"

The boy was startled, but he remembered Bobby in time, and did not disturb the baby.

He looked into the smilingly sympathetic face of the brakeman.

"I'm takin' him to de joint for sick kids at Fairrocks," Pete replied, pointing to Bobby. "He aint right."

"Well, you'd better get right out, before we start again," the man answered in a kindly manner. "This is as close as we go to Fairrocks."

"How far is it?"

Pete did not want to disturb Bobby, and he sighed when the brakeman told him it was half a mile to the hospital.

"Will you please help me get him out. An' then put him on my back."

The brakeman sheepishly held Bobby while Pete climbed to the ground, then tried to put the baby on the boy's back. Bobby's stupor would not be broken; and Pete, after thanking the brakeman, grabbed the little fellow in his arms, and started down the dusty road following the directions of the trainman.

Pete never told even Bobby how many times he stopped on that short journey, nor how many times he stumbled, nor how many times he dreamed he was being imprisoned in a huge cake of ice, nor how many times Bobby grabbed frantically at something in the air, and murmured "grass an' flow'ers." Pete did not remember these things clearly enough to give much information. He knew the hospital was straight ahead; that green fields and flowers, and possibly ice-water for the hot little Bobby, could be found there; he did not look to either side, where he might have seen part of the green fields they were seeking; his eyes were fixed upon the white tents and houses the trainman had pointed out to him as the Summer-hospital.

Dick Browning, young, rich, handsome, sighed and turned away from the doorway, his glance sweeping over the beautiful green lawn. Margaret Holt, looking cool in her nurse's costume, her sweet face clouded with a half-formed shadow of sorrow, answered his sigh.

Dick turned to her.

"And this is final, Margaret," he said slowly,

She nodded, and after a moment's pause spoke impulsively, resting her hand on his arm:

"Yes, Dick. I'm sorry, but it seems for the best. I—I do not want to lose your friendship, but you have seen these last few weeks how my love is for my work."

"It isn't right," the man replied fiercely. "It isn't right for you to throw your life away—"

"I do not call it throwing my life away to try to make others happy," she interrupted.

"Bosh! That's your school-girl sentiment, Margaret." The man's voice became softer and more persuasive. "You've given lots of your money for this Summer hospital. Isn't that enough? Why should you give up your life to nursing."

The girl shook her head. "You don't understand, Dick, you don't understand. Of course money is needed, and it does good, but these poor children need sympathy and love. They get very little of it, and I have a heart."

"Meaning that I haven't," he laughed sharply.

"Oh, no," she spoke quickly. "I know

you have a heart, Dick, but it doesn't always work."

"Nonsense," he replied. "I'm just as sorry because people are poor and sick—"

"And hungry," she murmured softly.

"And hungry," he added, "as you are. You needn't think I am not, just because I don't begin to sniffle every time I hear about some sad case."

"That's the trouble, Dick," she said. "Your philanthropies are all in the abstract. The people you do things for are nothing to you. You've given the use of these grounds for the Summer hospital and a lot of money besides, but you think you have done all you can when that is done. You have no interest in the people who come here."

"I take enough interest in you to make up for the lack," he answered banteringly.

But he noticed the hurt look flash over her features and added quickly:

"Forgive me, Margaret, and—" He paused. "It is real good-by this time, is it?"

"Yes."

"You don't want me to come out again?"

"No, Dick, I think it will be best if you don't. I shall miss you, dreadfully, but—but—I think it for the best."

Browning lifted his hat, turned and walked bravely down the driveway to the gate a hundred yards away. Margaret Holt watched him for a moment, shook her head sadly, and turned back into the hospital's office building.

Browning did not look back until he reached the gate. Leaning against the gatepost he glanced up the driveway toward the white tents, half in sorrow, half in anger. He shook himself, threw back his head, and with a defiant shrug of his shoulders turned his back upon the haven of his heart's delight.

He almost stumbled over the staggering Pete and the sleeping Bobby, their faces begrimed with perspiration and the black dirt of the city and the dust of the country roads. Pete's old face looked very wan and tired. Something seemed to snap in Dick Browning's throat. He stooped quickly and took the baby from the unresisting Pete.

"You poor little devil," Browning said. "Where have you been?"

"We aint been," the boy answered wearily. "We just goin'." He pointed up the driveway. "Is dat de hospital for poor kids?"

"That's the place. Going there? Is this your brother?" Dick was wiping Bobby's face with his handkerchief. "I'll go with you. You've carried him far enough, and besides I know some people up there and maybe I can help you."

"All right."

Pete's gratitude showed through his eyes, though his voice expressed only weariness.

In the short walk, that seemed without an end to Pete, the boy and the man became good friends. Dick learned the family history of the little wanderers, and felt that strange snapping in his throat grow stronger, and a feeling of tenderness that frequently caused him to turn aside to keep Pete from seeing his eyes becoming misty.

Several times Bobby awoke and made vigorous kicking objections when he found himself in strange arms, but each time Dick's soft voice soothed him and the return of the fever, stupor silenced him. Even the sight of the green grass and the flowers, failed to arouse him for long. He gave one squeal of delight and then closed his eyes. Pete looked at his baby brother, a great fear tugging at his heart and showing through his eyes.

"Don't worry about him," Dick said, "he'll be all right in a day or two out here. It's just a little Summer fever, and this is just what he needs."

"You aint stringin' me?" The boy eyed Dick askance.

"Not a bit of it, Peter. I'm all on the square with you." Dick unconsciously dropped into Pete's vernacular. He watched the boy's face brighten, and the hungry look in it as he took time to notice the lawn and flowers. "How would you like to live in the country—like this—all the time in the Summer?"

Pete's eyes spoke his doubt before his tongue framed the answer.

"Quit yer kiddin'. I couldn't. I gotter work. But," he added hopefully, "maybe I could make enough by working late to keep the kid out here."

"You can stay, too—if you want to," Browning replied.

He swept his arm around in answer to Pete's doubting look.

"All this belongs to me. I've got a farm over there, and I know the farmer and his wife would like to have you and Bobby—if I say so."

The prospect was too stupendous for Pete to grasp. He couldn't conceive of one man owning so much land.

Browning repeated the question.

The boy smiled,

"Gee, wouldn't it be great!"

They were near the office-building, which Dick pointed out to the boy, and Pete ran ahead and rapped on the door. Browning, with a curious, knowing smile, followed and stood to one side. When Margaret Holt opened the door she saw only the embarrassed Pete, who stammered,

"Is dis—de—joint where de paper looks out fer sick kids?"

The boy's face was filled with wonder and admiration as he looked into Margaret's eyes.

"Why, yes, this is the hospital," she answered. "What did you want?"

Her gentle smile and tender pat on his head put Pete at ease at once.

"Gee, we did make it," he sighed.

In answer to her look of inquiry he added:

"Me an' me kid brudder, Bobby, I mean. He—he I dunno—something's de matter wid him. We was gittin' on all right after me mudder died two weeks ago; den de kid begins to git to feelin' bad. Say, take him in an' give him some dope, wont yer?"

"Why—er—you know you must apply to the bureau of charities, downtown." She looked puzzled. "I'd like to—"

"Aw rats!" Pete answered indignantly. "I don't know nothin' about no bureau of charities. I see in de paper about dis joint an' a copper tells me where it is an' we beat it out here."

"From the city?" She was horrified. "Did you walk all the way out here?"

"Naw," Pete answered, "we jumped a freight part of de way. But de kid's all in, I tell you."

His defiance suddenly gave way to tenderness, a fearful look in his eyes.

"Say, please take him in an' dope him up."

"But where is your brother?" Margaret knelt and put her arm around Pete.

"Here he is, Margaret, and do, for goodness' sake, forget red tape long enough to look after the baby."

Browning stepped before her, the chubby Bobby sleeping peacefully in his arms.

"Dick Browning!" Margaret gasped. "I—I thought you had gone."

"I did feel like it—and never coming back." His voice was pleading. "But these tots did me a good turn, I hope. I met them at the gate, Pete staggering along with the baby in his arms. I think it's just a touch of fever."

Margaret took Bobby, smiled at the sleeping baby, at Pete and at Browning. "Yes, he will be all right in a day or two."

She called an assistant, who took Bobby into the house, Pete following. Margaret turned to Browning and spoke one word:

"Dick!"

Browning laughed for joy.

"I'm going to take the boys over to the farm for the rest of the Summer. Pete's made of the right stuff, and I'm going to help him along."

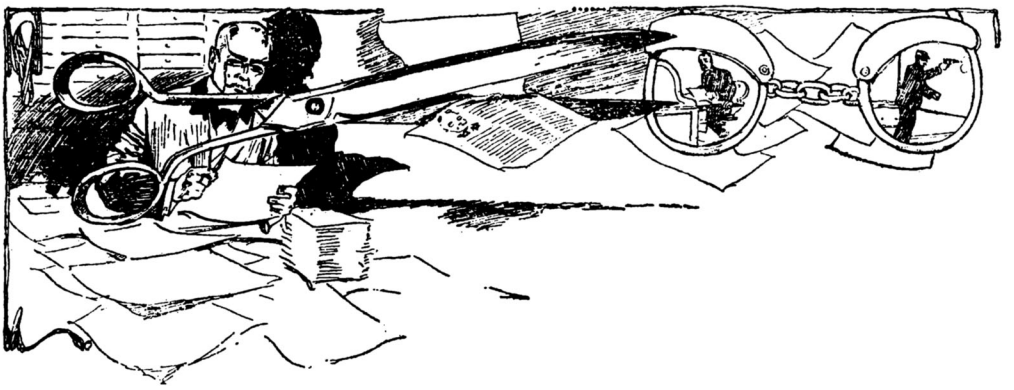
"I am proud of you, Dick!" There was a strange look in her eyes.

"Because I'm not utterly heartless?" He smiled.

"Because you have found your heart," she answered. "I always thought you had it, but it seemed that it was hidden by your life of idle, selfish pleasure. Now I know you have one."

"Wrong again, Margaret. Pete and Bobby have a little of it, and the rest is still all yours."

Pete was sleeping on the floor beside Bobby's snow-white bed. The other children were fast asleep or at play, and the nurses were busy. So no one saw Dick take Margaret in his arms and kiss her—no one except the spirit that had guided Pete and Bobby and Dick and Margaret all that Summer-day on their quests for happiness.



An Agent of the Government

By CLARENCE HERBERT NEW

THIS is the first of a series of narratives, each one complete in the number in which it appears—dealing with the experiences and adventures of Cyrus M. Grisscome—known to the public as a millionaire yachtsman and society leader, but in reality one of the most able and trusted secret agents of the U. S. Department of State. Mr. New is well known as a short story writer and his name is especially familiar to readers of THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE *through the six splendid stories, bearing the general title of "The International Bureau," the last of which was told in the October, 1908, issue. And this new series surpasses in absorbing world-wide interest anything Mr. New has heretofore attempted. In the underground game of diplomacy between the world's great Powers, he matches American intuitiveness, resource and wit, against the most brilliant and unscrupulous emissaries of the foreign governments. That men of prominence and wide experience are actually employed in such service by the government is only vaguely understood by most Americans, yet, were it not for their unceasing watchfulness and resource, we should find ourselves seriously embroiled with other nations every year. And while some of the minor details given are necessarily fictitious, the author has endeavored to present a more or less truthful idea of the ways in which such men are constantly working, and some of the generally unknown results they are able to bring about.*—THE EDITORS.

No. I.—THE ANTIRAGUAN AFFAIR

I

ALTHOUGH there were upwards of a dozen yachts lying at anchor off the Hotel Chamberlain at Old Point Comfort, the one farthest from the shore attracted the most attention. To those with some understanding of marine architecture, she appeared to measure probably a hundred and thirty or forty feet over all; and while her lines indicated seaworthy qualities enough to weather any deep-water storm, they were so fine as to imply considerable speed at a pinch. Her rig was that of a topsail schooner, with

Marconi "ærials" stretched between the masts; the arrangement of her deck-houses showed that she was built for cruising in any waters; and her paint was a spotless white enamel, with burnished copper rail and deck-fittings. The neighboring yachts appeared to be in the pink of condition, but there was a business-like smartness about the *Mirage* which held the observer's attention without his knowing exactly why.

A large black yacht, farther in shore, also aroused much comment and speculation, appearing from her lines and funnels to be much the fastest in the anchored fleet. She flew the Prussian ensign at her stern, and was known to be the property of a certain Baron Grosserhaupt, a millionaire Prussian who was making a tour of the world, and had become a celebrity of the moment at the Chamberlain, where he was making himself quite popular among the fair sex. In this respect, however, he divided the honors with Mr. Cyrus M. Grisscome, a wealthy New York clubman, who had retired from business at the age of thirty-eight after the development of a lucky bonanza in the Arizona mining-country, and was the owner of the *Mirage*.

Ostensibly, Grisscome had no occupation in the world beyond that of following his own inclinations—drifting from his palatial estate beyond Gloucester on Cape Ann to his beautiful *hacienda* in Southern California—and from there to the *Mirage* for months of cruising, which frequently ended at his country-house in Devonshire, a short two-hour ride from Charing Cross Station.

On the afternoon of the fourth day after the *Mirage* dropped anchor in Hampton Roads, Grisscome was lazily smoking under the awning on the after-deck when he noticed that a launch from the *Luisa*, the Prussian yacht above-mentioned, was leaving her starboard accommodation-ladder and apparently heading straight for the *Mirage*. After watching for a moment to see if she held on her course, Grisscome spoke quietly to a quartermaster, who stepped forward on the port side—shielded from observation by the deck-houses—and returned in a moment with the captain.

"Glenning, let a couple of the men cast off the gaskets from the mainsail and overhaul it as if they were hoisting to dry it out after this morning's rain, but drop the slack of it over the stern so that no one can see our screws. I dont know just what errand that launch of the Baron's is on, but I'll bet a hat there's someone on board with a pair of mighty sharp eyes. I know a few things about Grosserhaupt that I rather fancy he doesn't suspect."

"Aye, aye, sir. Are you quite sure that our new engines are not registered up to date in the yacht-club books?"

Grisscome chuckled—and winked, slowly.

"They would be, if it were not for some good friends of ours in Washington. The hull was designed for three turbines, originally, and those two sets of reciprocating engines were installed merely as a blind until I could have her registered in three or four of the clubs. You've probably noticed that whenever we do enter for a race, which is seldom, we finish about seventh or eighth, and take no prizes. Her speed is practically established now as a scant nineteen knots at the outside; which suits my purposes very well indeed. Better hurry up with that mainsail; the launch'll be close aboard of us in a few minutes!"

As the approaching boat held on her course, two of the quartermasters manned the accommodation-ladder, and in a few moments the Baron himself stepped upon the deck, where he was received courteously and escorted to a chair at the stern. While the drinks and cigars were being served, he confined himself to general subjects, but when the deck-steward retired he proceeded to get at the object of his visit.

Noticing out of the corner of his eye that the *Luisa's* launch had dropped back to the stern, so as to leave the accommodation-ladder clear, Grisscome congratulated himself that the big mainsail hung down over the stern and for several feet under water.

"You haf a peautiful poat, Mr. Grisscome; I haf peen much admiring her."

"Why, she suits *me*, Baron. I had her built from designs of my own, and I live on her about half the year. Seems to me you've got a pretty nice boat, yourself."

"Yess, I t'ink so, too. Put she iss new; this my first trip in her iss. And I haf the desire that she pe tried against some of your American yachts, so that I of her speed may know petter. Soh—I haf the broposition to make that we do get up a race—perhaps to Bermuda, eh? What you t'ink of the idea?"

The Prussian's beady little eyes had been wandering restlessly about, as he spoke, taking in every detail of the yacht's fittings, deck-arrangement, funnels, *etc.*. And the American smiled inwardly at what he guessed to be the Baron's reasons for making the proposition.

"Why—er—Baron, my boat wasn't built for a racing-craft. I've entered her in a few private races just to please the club-committees, but I've never taken a prize yet and it seems rather foolish to try it again. I suppose you mean to suggest a race between the five or six of us, here, whose yachts are nearly of a size, near enough so that a fair handicap would make up for the shorter lengths of some?"

"That iss it, Grisscome; that exactly my idea iss."

"Hm-m—have you spoken to any of the other gentlemen?"

"To three of them, yess. They t'ink I haf the fastes' boat, but they race me if I gif handicap on the length and the engines. Vould to-morrow be a goot day for the start? Yess? You haf blenty of coals alreatty?"

"Why, I guess so. We coaled yesterday at Newport News, but—well, I'll tell you how I'm fixed, Baron. I've been rather talking up a little cruise with some people over at the hotel, and I think they all want to go. Now, I suppose they could hustle and be ready to sail by to-morrow afternoon; and if you're willing to agree to a proposition of *mine*, I've no great objections to racing with you, so long as it seems worth while. The point is this: If my boat seems to be hopelessly beaten, I wont agree to stay in the race clear to Hamilton unless my guests wish to. If, after doing our best, we drop behind two or three of you, I shall switch off up or down the coast—wherever my party may decide to go. Will that be satisfactory?"

"Oh—I subbose so. Put you haf not the racing-spirit, Mr. Grisscome."

"Oh, yes, I have! Plenty of it! But I know what my boat can do, and she's built more for safe cruising than for racing. I expect one of my guests down on the Cape Charles train to-night, but I'll have to wait until he turns up, anyhow."

After some further exchange of courtesies the Baron took his leave without seeing much of the yacht beyond her main saloon and deck, in spite of one or two broad hints that he would like to inspect her throughout.

The visitor's launch had scarcely been gone five minutes when Grisscome's private secretary came on deck and whispered to him:

"Major Sickles has just called '624' on the wireless 'phone, sir—from the Fort. Says he'd like to have the gentleman in charge give him a certain number."

"Humph! I was rather looking for something like that; felt it in my bones. Atmosphere's getting kind of electric down here."

Grisscome followed the younger man below into a state-room opening off from the main saloon at the stern, near his own private suite.

Instead of the usual bunks and fittings, however, this room contained nothing but a trap-door in its deck planking, from which a substantial ladder descended to a space near the lazaretto, which had been converted into a sound-proof "wireless" room. He had stated to one or two friends, confidentially, that when he sent a message from *his* boat, he didn't propose having it read from stem to stern by the spark-explosions.

Turning the switch of his "tuner" until he was getting exactly the same wave-length as that being used at Fortress Monroe, he asked if Major Sickles was at the phone, and receiving a prompt reply, merely said:

"Seventeen."

"This 'Seventeen?' Ah! Thank you, sir. I've just been talking with the Department, in Washington, and the Secretary of State happened to be in the room at the time. He thought you might be picked up somewhere within our radius, and wished me to ask if it would be possible for you to see him for an hour before to-morrow noon. I believe he wishes to confer with you upon political conditions affecting some of your property. This communication was to be confidential, I understood, though I've really no idea who or where you are."

"Thank you very much, Major. Why, let me see—I expect to leave for a rather indefinite absence very shortly. But, I suppose—tell you what—if you're talking with the Department again this evening, have your people tell the Secretary that I'll try to see him before I go, and that I thank him for his courtesy in trying to protect my interests. Good-by."

Grisscome had scarcely regained the deck when the yacht's launch came off from the hotel with a party whom he had invited for afternoon-tea; and for the next hour there was considerable lively chatter under the awning concerning the Baron's proposed race and the cruise upon which all of them were anxious to accompany the hospitable New Yorker.

He had the reputation of being eccentric in a very agreeable way, and those who had cruised with him upon previous occasions whetted the appetites and curiosity of others by their descriptions of idyllic days upon the *Mirage*, a most attractive feature of which was the fact that the yacht's destination was never announced before she sailed. Grisscome always claimed that he left it to a majority vote of his guests after they were in deep water, and this was generally accepted as a fact; but there was always someone on board to hint, quietly, that if the real burden of decision were thrown back upon their host, no one would have reason to regret it. He usually made a point of telling his guests, laughingly, that if any of them were dissatisfied with the course chosen, they could be landed at the nearest port and provided with a first-class passage home at his expense. This proposition, however, had never been taken up but once—in the case of a railroad president, who had been on the yacht for two weeks and was forced to return for business reasons.

As he was bowing the party away from the side about six o'clock, his secretary again approached him, this time with a translated message in his hand.

"Did you notice that 'Sloman' liner that passed us while you were having tea with the ladies, sir? I didn't pay much attention to her myself until I saw her 'ærials.' She was bearing up for Newport News and didn't do any talking until she was four or five miles in; then she began calling the *Luisa* in 'Telefunken.'

"The Baron's operator wasn't long in answering, and this is about what he got:

> Not positive about yacht in diplomatic service, but we think there must be one. Certain discoveries of our plans cannot be accounted for in any other way. We assume that she is necessarily very fast. If used in the service she would be pretty well equipped, and irregularities in her movements would strike you as soon as you were cautioned to look for them. We do not think it likely that you would find her cruising with a party of guests. She may be commissioned as a dispatch-boat. Hampton Roads is pretty sure to be her rendezvous, occasionally. You might also look for her at Newport, Portsmouth, Bar Harbor, Nassau, and Bermuda. Keep in touch with Embassy for new developments.

"That seems to nail the Baron about where he belongs, doesn't it, sir?"

"Yes, but I've known a good deal about him for the last year or more. Ask one of the stewards to take my deck-chair up on the bridge, will you, Frazier?"

Five minutes later, Grisscome was comfortably lounging at the port end of the bridge when the captain came out of his room, just abaft the pilot-house.

"Get your anchor up, Glenning, and run her over toward Cape Charles. Call down to Mansfield that he can run the middle turbine full speed, without the others; that'll give us a comfortable twelve knots and make it look as if we were doing pretty near our best. I see

by his flag that the Baron's ashore, so we'll get pretty well over to the Cape before he moves about the Roads to take the air, in case he feels that way inclined."

To those who glanced up at the bridge of the *Mirage* from other boats, as she passed them, Grisscome appeared the personification of idle and luxurious ease, as he smoked and lounged comfortably in his deck-chair, but his keen eyes were unusually alert, and he occasionally looked back with his glass at the barely perceptible group of yachts which lay off Old Point Comfort. Apparently, his casual remark about expecting a guest on the Cape Charles train had been accepted at face value, and his steaming over to meet the new arrival, rather than subject him to the delay of being ferried across to Old Point was so natural a proceeding that it never occurred to the Baron to watch him closely at that particular time. So, the *Luisa* remained at anchor while Grosserhaupt busied himself ashore—missing, thereby, something he would have given much to know.

The *Mirage* had ambled across the Roads in so leisurely a manner that it was dark by the time she appoached the Cape Charles channel, and turning her nose more to the North, she slipped along up the coast as if looking for some particular anchorage. In a few minutes only her lights could be distinguished from the shore, and at a word from Grisscome, these were suddenly extinguished, there being no other boat in their vicinity at the time. Then all three of her turbines were opened up to full speed, and she went streaking up Chesapeake Bay like a comet.

II

Shortly after eleven o'clock she glided softly up to the end of a small pier near Long Bridge, in Washington, and Grisscome hurried ashore. From a nearby liquor-store, he called up a certain number on the telephone, and after a question or two, left the place, walking rapidly up through the Monument and White House grounds to the Executive Mansion. There were no lights burning in the business-offices on the west side, so he rang the bell of a small door in the basement and was immediately admitted by one of the White House servants, who escorted him upstairs to the President's study. There he found the chief executive and the Secretary of State poring over a topographical map of Central America, which was spread out upon a table near the President's desk.

As the door opened, that gentleman looked up in quick surprise:

"Hello, Grisscome! Come in. Glad to see you. Lock that door, will you? By Jove, Foote! Look at the clock! Not twelve, yet! Grisscome, that boat of yours is a wonder! The Fort told us that no boat or train left there before six. If you hadn't already rendered us valuable service, I should say you were in position to do so on the strength of that alone. Pull up a chair and let's get down to business. I suppose you will want to say good-by to some of your friends at the Chamberlain, to-morrow, so we haven't overmuch time."

"I must be at anchor off the Hotel pretty soon after daylight, sir. If I'm not, the Prussian Embassy may start in on some figuring that I'd rather avoid."

"Why, how is that?"

"Baron Grosserhaupt is down there on the new yacht that was built in Stettin for the Government as the *Fledermaus*, supposed to have been rejected for some reason or other and sold to the Baron, who re-christened her the *Luisa*. I gave Foote, here, some of Grosserhaupt's private history several months ago. He makes a point of speaking English imperfectly and posing as a wealthy Prussian with a strong liking for sporting-affairs. As a matter of fact, he speaks seven languages fluently; is a scientist, hypnotist, and doctor of medicine, and was the man really responsible for the Kiau-Chow deal in China. They are pretty certain that a well-equipped and possibly fast yacht is used in our diplomatic service, but have failed to spot any clew to her as yet, so the Baron is watching everything afloat, I've agreed to enter a race with him to Bermuda, to-morrow, which, of course, I propose to lose, and switch off with my cruising party elsewhere."

"Oh come! You don't mean to say you're booked for a cruise with a lot of guests?"

"Exactly—to Central America, I judge, from this map on your table, though not one of them has any idea of such a destination."

"Oh, I see. Humph! That's neat; plausible, too. Now look here, Grisscome, what do you know about Antiragua? How many people are there in the country—and what sort?"

"Let me think a minute. I haven't been there for two years. At that time there were, roughly speaking, about half a million people, four-fifths of whom were Indians or half-breeds who had little or no practical voice in the government. The governing class are, of course, Spanish-American, with a pretty large sprinkling of European immigrants who own a good deal of plantation property and seem to be settling there in a rather larger proportion than in the neighboring republics."

"Exactly. I see you know something of the conditions, so what we have learned from the British Consul, who acts as our representative in San Cristobal, probably wont surprise you very much. The bulk of those European immigrants are Prussians. This year, two cabinet officers and twenty deputies are of this class, and they have influence enough in the Chamber to carry a majority vote on pretty much anything they wish. I don't know how they got around the naturalization qualifications, but graft will do most anything down there.

"Now, on the coast, at just about their southern boundary line, is a landlocked cove with plenty of water, three miles from one of the richest coal and iron districts in the country. The mines have been developed by some of the immigrants, backed by Prussian capital; a permanent wharf and a 500-foot dry-dock have been built there, and a bill is to be introduced in Congress within a few days by which the entire property—mines, wharf, docks, and harbor—is to be leased to a mining and shipbuilding company with an Antiraguan name and officers, but owned absolutely by Hamburg and Berlin capitalists, The lease is to be for ninety-nine years, and gives this company the privilege of erecting fortifications to defend its property if it should appear necessary. Incidentally, this harbor—small, but of sufficient size to accommodate fifteen or twenty war-ships—is not more than eight or ten hours steaming distance from the Panama Canal. Catch the idea?"

"Rather! Half the Prussian navy might coal and refit there at their own convenience, and they'd be accommodated to the limit. You can't bring up the Monroe Doctrine—because there's no apparent acquisition of territory by a European Power. I reckon a United States company will have to secure that lease; that's about the size of it, and it's considerable of an order.

"Well, this is Wednesday morning. I can be in San Cristobal Friday night with any decent kind of weather—and the glass has been rising all day. It's about sixteen hundred miles—say, Saturday morning at the outside, with three or four hours' stop at Kingston. You'd better arrange a credit for me, confidentially, through the Colonial Bank of Jamaica for a million or so. Let it appear to come from a private syndicate, of which I am President and General Manager; the Government mustn't show up in the transaction at all. Of course I wont spend any more than I have to, but we've got to carry our point without considering money. Once that property is held by an American company we can protect it by force of arms, if necessary. You can delay the introduction of that bill for a week by cable, at a pinch, can't you, sir?"

"Oh, I think so. We've influence enough for that, haven't we, Foote?"

"Just about. I'll instruct Carruthers in cipher to spread a little money around where it will do the most good; but that foreign outfit, down there, are no fools. It wont do to let them think there's any real influence against them."

"That's where you're dead right, Foote. Let them once suspect that Uncle Sam is on to their game, and they'll match us dollar for dollar, way up into the millions. Now, Mr. President, does anything else occur to you? If not, I'd better get back down the river; it's nearly one o'clock now."

"All right, Grisscome, go ahead, and good luck to you. I don't think there's anything else to say, except—well, if it comes to a show-down, you may tell President Olivarez that such a lease would be considered an unfriendly act and would lead to our abandoning diplomatic relations with Antiragua. He may take the ground that such a result would be immaterial to him, but I doubt it. He's too bright a man not to appreciate the fact that we stand between him and European aggression of any sort."

By half past one, the *Mirage* was racing down the Potomac as fast as the twisting channel would let her, a dozen barrels of pitch, which Captain Glenning had managed to secure while waiting, lying upon the forward deck. Grisscome had figured out a use for these in the proposed yacht-race which savored of gallery-play, but which might prove just the hair's weight to avert suspicion from his movements.

III

It was daylight by half-past four, but very misty on the water as he had hoped, so that when the *Mirage* anchored between six and seven, she drifted up so very slowly that no one on the *Luisa* suspected that she had been doing more than shifting her anchorage.

Breakfasting ashore at the hotel, Grisscome learned that the Baron had actually perfected all the arrangements for the race during the previous evening—five other yachts having entered as ready for sea—and the start had been scheduled for three o'clock, from an imaginary line between Cape Charles and Cape Henry. This meant a pretty busy morning for all concerned, but with the double incentive of such a race and the cruise as well, Grisscome's guests had all their luggage on board, and their arrangements made, by lunch-time.

The start was a spectacular one. A number of crowded excursion-boats from Newport News, Norfolk, and Willoughby Spit running out past the Rip Raps to see it, partly from a rumor that had got about concerning the fabulous sums which were said to have been wagered and the phenomenal speed which some of the yachts were supposed to possess.

Among the guests on the *Mirage* was the handsome and brilliant daughter of a senator who had been in Congress through five administrations. Intellectually, she possessed a capacity far beyond that of the average woman and, having been reared in the atmosphere of Washington life almost from her babyhood, she frequently dropped into her father's ear casual bits of gossip which, unknown to her, mysteriously found their way to the Secretary and confidential officials of the State Department. The Government had considered approaching her with a proposition to become one of its most trusted agents, but for the present was hesitating because of her youth, and some doubt as to how such a proposal might be received. That she knew nothing of Grisscome's affairs beyond what appeared upon the surface, he was pretty certain. But he had an idea that she credited him with enough daredevil patriotism to carry out any crazy scheme that came into his head, as long as it exploited American ideas. He was fully posted, of course, as to her status with the Government, and knew that up to a certain point he might discuss diplomatic affairs without arousing her suspicions as to his personal interest in them.

The two had seated themselves at the starboard end of the bridge where they had a clear view of the contesting yachts—the other end being occupied by a party of three who were too thoroughly interested to be content with the partial view from the after deck. And while Grisscome kept up his end of a lively chat with his fair guest, he was watching the other yachts with a glance of thorough understanding.

The *Lapwing*, a Boston yacht about twenty feet shorter than the *Mirage* and *Luisa*, was nearly a mile ahead of the others, and from the way she was apparently increasing her lead it was evident that the Baron would have to get busy and play ball, or find her anchored in Hamilton harbor when he arrived there. Somewhat to Grisscome's

surprise, the *Luisa* had been steaming along about even with the bunch, but she now began to let herself out a little, running easily away from all but the *Silver Streak*, of Philadelphia, which seemed to be matching her, knot for knot, and having some in reserve. The excitement of the race had by this time taken possession of the various officers and crews, and the yachts began speeding up to their approximate limit, hoping for a chance on the time-handicap, even if they were distanced in actual steaming.

About half an hour before sunset, Grisscome stepped into Captain Glenning's room.

"What are we doing now, Glenning? About sixteen?"

"About that, sir."

"Well, I reckon this is a good time to bluff a little. There's about a third of our boiler capacity that we aren't using on account of the middle funnel being housed, but we can get twenty-six knots with what we've got, in this sea, if we want them. Go below and tell Mansfield to feed those barrels of pitch into his grates until after dark; that'll make a thick, black smoke from our funnels, and look as if we were buckling down to business. Have him shove her up to twenty knots—then twenty-three or four. That yacht of the Baron's made twenty-four on her trial trip, and from the way he's acting, he may let us get a few miles in the lead and then try to overhaul us. We'll keep our lights burning until he sees that he's doing it; I rather imagine he's more interested in the *Lapwing* just now than in any of the rest of us. He's probably found out that Williamson has no guests aboard and means to win if he can."

From this time until it was too dark to make out anything but the rigging-lights, the race was one of absorbing interest to everyone on the yachts. The spurt made by the *Mirage* was considerable of a surprise to the other owners, who didn't think she had it in her; and judging from her known performances in the past they were confident that Grisscome couldn't keep it up, particularly in a freshening breeze. As he had expected, the Baron allowed him to get a lead of two or three miles, and then began to creep up; the two yachts were then appraently holding their own with the *Lapwing*.

Dinner on the *Mirage* had been delayed until 7:30 when, it being too dark to judge accurately as to their position in the race, the party assembled in the saloon. It was a lively meal, and someone presently asked their host what he considered their chances were of winning.

"Oh, it lies between the Baron and Williamson, I think," he said. "If they've increased their lead by six bells, I'll quit the game. There's no particular object in our running into Hamilton with the mourners. Now, where do you people want to go? It's up to you."

This started a discussion, which presently led to a remark from Miss Noyes:

"I've heard a good deal of Mr. Grisscome's original ideas in the way of cruising," she said, "and I think none of us will be disappointed if we leave it to him. What do you suggest, Mr. Grisscome?"

"Why, I don't know. I'm a reckless sort of an individual when I get started. How would you like to turn pirates for a week or so?"

There were exclamations of delighted protest and curiosity.

"Why, what do you mean, Mr. Grisscome? You don't want us all hanged to the yardarm, whatever that is, do you?"

"Oh, no; nothing quite as serious as that. I was thinking we might alter the boat's appearance a little; dig out some fictitious titles from Burke; pose as the Earl of Something-or-other, with his friends, run down to one of the Banana Republics, and let the government officials entertain us in princely style for a few days. Then come back and forget that it ever happened, if people ask too many questions about the cruise. It would be a perfectly harmless escapade; we're in position to fully return any hospitalities extended to us, and we might have considerable fun. Of course it would never do to let the affair get out among people who know us."

The audacity of the proposal rather took their breath away, but it promised such a thoroughly unusual experience that one and all of them promptly agreed to it. So, after a private talk between their host and Captain Glenning, there were mysterious proceedings on the yacht.

Shortly after eleven all the lights were extinguished; the course changed due south for the Windward Passage at the east end of Cuba, a third funnel taken from its housings and shipped, fires started under all of the boilers, and the three turbines raced up nearly to full speed. Before morning, the foretopsailyards, the gaffs and booms, were sent down, altering the rig to just the two pole-masts, with no canvas, and the forward deck-house, unbolted and removed, revealed a long, five-inch, rapid-fire, breech-loading rifle. These changes gave the yacht an entirely different appearance—half naval, half piratical. But as many yachts are frequently armed for cruising in dangerous waters, it wasn't necessarily suspicious.

IV

Grisscome made but a short stop in Jamaica, where he had private interviews with the Governor and the manager of the Colonial Bank, while the yacht lay over near Port Royal, and before daylight on Saturday morning they dropped anchor in the harbor of San Cristobal on the Antiraguan coast of Central America.

As they were flying the British Naval Reserve Ensign the Consul, Mr. Carruthers, came off in a shore-boat, while the party were at breakfast, to pay his respects—and Grisscome, who had shaved off his mustache, promptly led him into his private cabin where they smilingly touched glasses.

"The Earl of Wapping and friends—on his cruising yacht, the *Red Lion*—at your service, Mr. Carruthers. How! I see you've never heard of the title—nor possibly of 'Lady Devonport,' 'Sir Henry Blummington" the 'Honorable Gladys Weymouth,' or the 'Right Reverend Bishop McGurland,' either. Well, you want to remember our names for future reference concerning our visit here. Don't quite recognize me, either, do you? We've met before—very pleasantly—but it may be just as well if you don't recall me at present. Now, after you've given me the actual situation, down here—I needn't say 'Washington' to you, need I?—we want to be introduced to the President and Cabinet here, by you, as the British Representative. And if a dinner of State *should* happen to be given us, I think it would be as well if all the native Antiraguan Deputies were invited to be present, so that I may include them in our return invitations. Be mighty careful to weed out the foreigners, though."

The Consul grinned in delighted appreciation.

"Most extr'ordn'ry idea, Old Chap, making up a lot of bally titles like that, but it's a good one. There'll be only a few Englishmen about the place, and they'll keep mum at a word from me—though your craft looks like a cross between a dispatch-boat and an up-to-date pirate. I'll not awsk too many questions—no fear. Ye'll be wanting to know about the situation, of course.

"Well, first, there's Olivarez, the President: a good, level-headed man and no fool. He'll not antagonize your Governm'nt if he can help it, though Hemphill, your Minister at the Capital, told him the Laguna Cobre lease was a matter of no interest or importance to his people in Washington. Hemphill's been depositing Hamburg money in his bank, of course. The Ministers of the Interior and of Public Works are both Hamburgers, and they think they know to a *pfennig* how much it will cost to have the Ministers of War and Finance vote with them upon any Cabinet measure. As a matter of fact, I don't think they do—entirely. You can buy those men yourself, if ye go about it quietly, and they're more or less under the President's influence. Of the fifty-two Deputies, twenty-four are foreigners, and they'll easily carry a majority in the Chamber if they spend money enough. But there's this in your favor: none of the natives really fawncy the foreigners; they're quite too overbearing and dictatorial; too everlawstingly hustling to suit the native tempera-

ment here. If 'twere not for the foreigners, there'd have been no extra session called at this time of year to vote on this lease. The proper Congress meets in January and February, ye know."

"How about the naturalization? How did all those fellows get around that?"

"Oh, the usual way—grawft. The time is legally twelve years, ye know, and I doubt if more than two of them ha' been in the country that long. Most of them claimed previous residence over Pacific side, several years ago—but of course the claims were ne'er investigated, and they know bally well they wouldn't be. A close investigation would unseat nearly all of them, I'm thinkin'—if it came to them a bit unawares."

"Humph! I think I'm beginning to see a little daylight, Carruthers. I notice a flag on the Government buildings ashore, there. Is Olivarez down here?"

"Aye. Came down yesterday with a lot of the officials for the opening of the new railway to Mirandole."

"Bully! You call on him when you go ashore, and make an appointment for our party to pay our respects about four o'clock this afternoon, or as soon as the ceremonies are over. Now come out into the saloon and finish breakfast with us; I'll introduce you officially to my bunch of aristocrats. They're people you may like to know some day in the States or in England—after you've forgotten all about this visit, of course."

As all of Grisscome's party had entered heartily into the spirit of what they considered a harmless escapade, they made it very pleasant for the Consul as soon as they understood that he would assist them in carrying out the joke, and the events of the following week proved novel enough to keep their interest and secret merriment up to the boiling-point.

The accepting of lavish hospitality under false pretenses caused some hesitation among them, until they saw their mischief-loving host returning it twice over on the yacht. For every dinner or courtesy extended them ashore, there was a return one upon a more liberal scale aboard—including a two-day cruise down the coast, with the President and four of his Cabinet Officers. There were dinners and firework-celebrations by night in honor of such Antiraguan Deputies and other prominent men as had been properly introduced to the pseudo Earl of Wapping—and if any of the foreign Deputies felt slighted at being omitted from such introductions, they laid it to jealousy upon the part of the British Consul and placed no especial significance upon it.

Outwardly, there was no talk of politics at the various entertainments, it being considered that this would be of little interest to a visiting English Earl, cruising for pleasure. But it was privately conveyed to most of the Antiraguans before the end of the very first twenty-four hours that the Earl was very wealthy, and would be found quite receptive to any attractive proposals for investment in Central American enterprises.

V

On the second day, the Minister of Finance and four of the Deputies put out a mild feeler on the subject while they were being entertained aboard the yacht, and elicited a frank admission that the supposed Earl had plenty of money to invest, but had been given to understand, by the Consul, that the presence of so many foreigners in the Chamber made all investment more or less risky at the time.

"If your foreign-born Deputies actually represented their proportion of your people," he said, "and had no interest outside of your country, I should be inclined to look about a bit and place a hundred thousand or so. But Carruthers tells me it is a serious question as to whether they were ever legally seated—according to your naturalization laws."

"That is true, Señor Conde, and it is a matter which I assure you is not relished overmuch by our Spanish-Antiraguans. Some day we shall make stricter laws and see that they are enforced."

"If you wait a little longer, *señor*, they will be in the majority, and then *they* will make the laws. There'll be

nothing left for Antiraguans to do but emigrate."

"It is true, *señor;* we have foreseen it. But there can be nothing done at present, I fear."

"Why not? I understand that a special session has been called to consider some lease or other down the Coast—some mining and shipping enterprise, isn't it? Exactly. Well, it is clearly within your rights, and possible, if one of you makes a motion demanding an investigation of each and every election of a foreigner to your Chamber. You've a majority at present, haven't you, and you'd all support such a bill, wouldn't you? Of course it's none of my business, *señors*, but I hate to see a rich and promising Republic like Antiragua permit a lot of immigrants to come in and rob them of their government and, eventually, of their birthright!"

"*Diós!* El Conde is right! Why did we never think of that! It could be done—surely—if we all worked together!"

"Of course, *señors*, your plans would have to be made with the utmost secrecy. If those foreigners should get wind of any such attempt to unseat them, they'd manage to fake up a lot of evidence to protect themselves. Tell you what I'd be willing to do. You know we Englishmen don't object to throwing our money a bit for anything like real sport, and we like to see fair play. Now, doubtless there are among you several who are not rich; it might be made their interest, in various ways, to support the foreign element on a final vote. Well, if you know of any like that, or suspect them, just send them privately to me. I'll make it for their interest to support their own countrymen; that's a promise, mind you, just between ourselves, and Carruthers is a witness to it."

"But the lease of Laguna Cobre, Señor Conde? 'Tis true the proposition has been brought about by the heretic foreigners, but it is of great advantage to Antiragua, and any agitation at this time would postpone it indefinitely."

"Pshaw, *señors*, what does that lease amount to? A nominal rental of a few thousand *pesos* to your Government, I presume, and the advantage of having an up-to-date shipbuilding plant on your own coasts. I'll wager that anything in the way of rental mentioned in that lease doesn't amount to much. Of course I appreciate the private side to it. The deal undoubtedly means concessions, or contracts, or something of personal advantage to several of your Deputies; but your foreign element, here, are not the only people with money enough to take such a lease. If it's worth anything to them, it is certainly worth as much or more to other people."

"Does the Señor Conde know, personally, of any others who might wish to lease that harbor and the mines back of it, and build such a plant as is now proposed?"

"Why, if you want a straight answer, *señors*, I'm willing to give you one, I think. You get the foreigners cleaned out of your Government so that my money will be fairly safe, and I'll agree to form a syndicate by cable within a week. We'll take that lease and pay your Government a rental of— What's it worth, Carruthers? Suppose we can get as much as twenty thousand a year out of it, with reasonable certainty? Yes? Very well, *señors*, we'll agree to pay twenty thousand a year—in gold. That's forty thousand *pesos* of your money—cash—whether we realize that much out of the property or not; though I think there should be a clause releasing us if the mines and enterprise prove worthless after the first five years.

"More than this, if any of your Deputies or officials feel that their personal interests would be jeopardized by granting the lease to my proposed syndicate, I'll agree that each and every one of them shall be at least twenty-five per cent better off with us than with any other parties who may be interested in the matter. Let them come to me privately and state exactly what other proposals they have received, and I'll guarantee a proposition just twenty-five per cent better in each case. This is on the understanding that the whole affair is to be absolutely confidential, and that no hint of it is to reach the opposition. If they were to hear of any competition, they might manage to block the whole matter so that there would be no lease for any-

one, and, incidentally, no opportunity for personal profit—in a legitimate way, of course. Be sure that you can trust whoever you speak to on the matter, but just make a few inquiries among your colleagues and see what the prospects are."

When Grisscome returned to his private cabin after escorting his visitors to their boat, alongside, Carruthers filled two glasses, chuckling appreciatively as he did so.

" 'Ere's a 'ealth to your Ludship,' as they say in Lunnon. Old Chap, you're a bird—a bird of nimble wit and borrowed plumage! I've listened to ye most appreciatively—my word. As flagrant a case of downright bribery and grafting as e'er was put in words, and yet ye never so much as mentioned the word 'money' in connection with a single individual! Bribery! Who said 'Bribery?' Not you; oh, no. 'Twas all of consulting each man's *personal interests;* of protecting him in such a way that 'his private affairs shouldn't suffer,' and that he should find everything to his advantage 'in a perfectly legitimate way.' Oh, my eye; it was rich! For the love of Heaven, Old Man, who are ye, anyhow? I've seen ye before; I know that. But where? When ye're leaving, mind ye don't forget to give me an address and a name that I'll be looking up when I leave this bally hole."

"Well, think it'll work?"

"Faith, I do! I'm sure of it. Those five men are the leaders of the whole native element. It may run to money—but your Government wont mind that. Confidentially, that Cobre property'll pay a hundred thousand the first year it's properly developed—all of that. Ye could agree to pay a rental of forty thousand, gold, if ye had to; but ye wont. It's the protecting of their personal interests that catches the Antiraguans, every time, and they hate the hustling foreigners just enough to spring that investigation motion on them within the next three days, see if they dont. Of course that'll deprive those fellows of the right to vote on anything until it's settled one way or the other. I was afraid the influence might be too strong against ye, but that proposition hit the nail on the head, I'm thinkin'."

"We wouldn't have been able to do much down here, but for your timely hints and ass stance, Carruthers. I trust that our State Department will recognize them in some fitting way, on the quiet. Really, you know, we're under obligations to you."

"Oh, I'm not so clear about that. His Majesty doesn't wish a Prussian navy-yard on this coast anymore than President 'Teddy' does. So I rawther think that Downing Street 'll secretly approve my course in the matter."

VI

Had there been any doubts in the minds of the Antiraguan politicians as to the value of the supposed Earl's promises and his lovable qualities as a man, they were banished conclusively, next day, by an incident wherein the Minister of War was privately concerned. Meeting the nobleman on the Plaza, he insisted upon taking him home for an hour—his house being one of the most pretentious in San Cristobal—to meet his family. And during a little preliminary conversation in the *patio,* before the ladies appeared, he mentioned a casual opinion that the salaries of Cabinet Ministers should be increased, as they fell greatly short of the expenses they were obliged to meet. The Earl expressed himself as complimented to receive such a confidence, and insisted upon taking the Minister back to the yacht with him. There in the seclusion of his private cabin, he took from a safe five thousand pounds in Bank of England notes, which he handed the Minister in exchange for his twelve-months' note of hand. Then he calmly lighted a fresh cigar with the aforesaid note and told the Minister that he could pay at his own good time and convenience, and that he must never attempt to do so unless he were in ample funds and felt that he could spare it.

This appealed to the Spanish-American temperament in a way bound to produce results. Here was *un generoso*

who appreciated a friend's necessities at the merest hint—who dealt with one as a man of honor—who needed no unpleasant commercial document to hold threateningly over one if—well—if it should be inconvenient to pay in the twelve months—yet who accepted one's note for an instant to give every legal appearance to the transaction in case—in case foolishly inquisitive people should ever ask impertinent questions. Ah! It was a pleasure; a gratification that went to one's heart, to have business-affairs with such a man; to embrace him and to feel that he was a friend who understood one's ideals and appreciated the subtleties of one's financial reasoning!

After this confidential transaction, events moved with a suddenness and disastrous effect that completely paralyzed the foreign element. The twenty-four Deputies were one and all impeached within an hour after the extra session opened, and by a majority vote were debarred from all Congressional privileges pending investigation. Later in the day, a bill was introduced providing for a ninety-nine year lease of all the Laguna Cobre properties to a syndicate known as the "Antiragua-Columbian Mining & Shipping Co.," a small nominal payment being specified to reimburse the foreigners who had been working the property up to date without any regularly authorized concession. After three hours' discussion over some of the clauses, it was passed unanimously, and next morning was signed by President Olivarez and the Minister of Finance.

As he was returning to the yacht with the lease in his pocket, Carruthers met him with a cipher-despatch, which he translated as soon as he was on board:

> *Luisa* left Hamilton Saturday—arrived Kingston this morning. Their Embassy astonished at cable advices from San Cristobal and Antiraguan capital. Have probably ordered B. G. down there.

Grisscome's lips puckered in a thoughtful whistle.

At twenty-four knots, he might look for the Baron any time after midnight, and there were calls of ceremony booked ahead for ten days or more. He had the best of reasons for not wishing his identity with the Earl of Wapping, and the yacht herself known to his astute diplomatic adversary. So, getting word to the President before that gentleman returned to the up-country capital, he explained that by leaving at once he could assemble the engineering-staff and supplies for the development of the new venture within a few weeks, and asked that in honoring with his presence an entertainment on the yacht that evening, the President would permit him to cancel his acceptances for later dates. His guests were instructed to do likewise, and when they understood that Baron Grosserhaupt was approaching as fast as steam would bring him, they lost no time in writing their regrets. From their point of view, the cream of the joke might prove rather flat if they were caught in the act.

That evening's entertainment surpassed anything which had gone before, and by midnight, the Earl of Wapping's popularity in Antiragua rested upon a foundation of strong and powerful self-interest. Olivarez had proved himself a thinking man of few words, and he gave Grisscome something of an inward jolt when he said, in parting:

"*Adiós*, Señor Conde, your visit has been a pleasure and, may I not say, a profit to us all. I am a man who dreams at times of syndicates and friendly governments and diplomatic methods—until everything becomes confused, and I really do not know what to make of them. Will you—ah—convey my congratulations to the members of your—ah—syndicate—when you next confer with them? *Si? Mil gracias.*"

As Grisscome steamed out of the harbor in the misty dawn, the *Luisa* passed them, going in at full speed, and with an inward chuckle of appreciation at the situation, he ordered the British ensign dipped three times in salute. In the mist, the yachts were but dimly outlined to each other, but the salute was promptly returned.

An hour after he landed, the Baron cursed himself red in the face for this bit of natural civility, having had the political situation put graphically before him.

On the voyage home, after the *Mirage* had been restored to her regular appearance, Grisscome stopped at Kingston, Nassau and Bermuda, to give his party material whereby they might answer the numerous questions which were bound to be asked upon their return. He was conscious for two or three days that Miss Alicia Noyes had been studying him with more than her usual interest, and finally asked her, in his bland and humorous way, if she cared to hear the story of his life.

"I have a doubt that it would prove a hair-raiser if you faithfully went into all the details," she said. "By the way, how far do you call it from Old Point to San Cristobal—in knots?"

"Why, you can get that from the charts, any time, Miss Allie. Oh, well, if you don't care to take the trouble, I suppose, approximately, sixteen hundred nautical miles."

"That's about what I thought; you see, I did figure it up. We made it between Wednesday evening and Saturday morning at daylight, with an eight-hour stop in Kingston. Don't you think that a rather amazing performance for a yacht that was hopelessly out of the race to Bermuda after a six-hour attempt to keep up with the others? And isn't it 'rawther odd, don't you know,' as Mr. Carruthers would say, that your deck-houses have a way of coming unbolted from the planking, and leaving in their place formidable naval guns which I can swear are not dummies, and that you sometimes steam along with the smoke pouring out of three big, squat funnels, and sometimes from only two of them?"

"Why, for that matter, Miss Allie, there are lots of curious things in the world which it is well not to examine too closely. We all agreed to forget our little piratical escapade when we reach home; I guess that's one of them."

"Oh, you wont find me talking too much. But don't you suppose your other guests are doing a little speculating?"

"Don't care much if they are, so long as they keep their mouths shut ashore; and self-interest would do that even if it were not for our social code, which makes it exceedingly bad form to betray one's host. I'm usually pretty careful in selecting my guests. I've tried to be nice to everyone on board, haven't I?"

"You certainly have. We've had one of the times of our lives. But, *entre nous*, my friend, I think it more than possible that Baron Grosserhaupt has had a nightmare ever since we disappeared from the face of the waters and that he is, just now, a most exasperated and disappointed man."

"Possibly. The Baron is an excitable person, who takes things very much to heart, at times. I shouldn't like to feel that he had a grudge against me which he had determined to pay off at first opportunity. Understand?"

She nodded—and whispered:

"It would worry me a good deal if I thought he had any such idea. If I hear any rumors of gossip relating to this affair I shall certainly let you know."

A Flyer at Reform

By FRANK X. FINNEGAN

IT WAS an especially good dinner that Thomas Edward Bagley, clubman and man of leisure, had just disposed of. The cigar from which odorous rifts of smoke were rising toward the café ceiling was one of his favorite brand and Mr. Bagley was at such perfect peace with all the world that he was weighing in his mind the comparative delights of remaining where he was for

an hour or so over the excellent liqueurs of the establishment or dropping in at a show before going home. Fate decided for him brusquely, arriving in the person of a hurried young man who, after a word with the head waiter, came direct to Mr. Bagley's table.

"Mr. Bagley?" he asked with the rising inflection which implied a question.

That well-fed gentleman looked up, rather annoyed by the unexpected interruption to his train of comfortable thought, and nodded briefly. He was anxious for company at that moment—certainly not for the company of this rather shabby stranger, who looked over his shoulder nervously to make certain he had not been followed by the head waiter and that no one was listening.

Thrusting his hand into the outside pocket of his overcoat the young man drew out a thick white envelope and with a swift, deft movement laid it before the surprised Mr. Bagley.

"Then this is yours," said the nervous stranger in a low voice; "you know where it comes from, and I was to bring it to you personally and see that it got into your hands."

A glance at the envelope showed Bagley that it was innocent of address; its plain white surface blinked back at him from the tablecloth. He turned it over curiously.

"What is it?" was the natural question that followed this cursory examination, and as he spoke he drew a pencil from his pocket and was about to insert it beneath the flap and rip the envelope open when the nervous young man stopped him.

"Wait a minute," he begged, laying a detaining hand upon the clubman's arm; "not till I'm gone. Don't open it while I'm here, Mr. Bagley; that was part of my instructions. I don't want to know too much."

Mr. Bagley stopped with his pencil poised beneath the flap of the envelope and stared in amazement at the nervous youth, who was evidently laboring to control his excitement.

"What is all this confounded mystery?" he demanded.

But even as he spoke the distrait youth turned quickly and strode to the door, through which he slipped and vanished. The colloquy had not consumed two minutes and had not attracted a ripple of attention. The head waiter was joking with the cashier. The other diners in the café were nodding over their newspapers or busy in conversation. Mr. Thomas Edward Bagley, with something definite to rouse him from his after-dinner lethargy, stared after the retreating figure of the messenger for a moment and then picked up the envelope again.

"Well, here goes," he muttered, "whatever comes next."

As he spoke he ripped the envelope open and into his hand dropped five $1,000 bills.

That was all the mysterious envelope contained; no letter, no card, no word of explanation.

The first thing Bagley did when he realized it was Uncle Sam's currency and not stage-money that he held in his hand was to quietly stow the bills out of sight in his trousers-pocket, with as nonchalant a movement as if he had fully known what was in the envelope. The head waiter was moving in his direction, taking stock of everything in sight, and assuring himself that all was well with the guests. Before he reached Bagley's table the envelope was also slipped into an inside pocket and Mr. Bagley arose yawningly to announce that he would potter along home.

In a couple of minutes he was in a cab and when he reached his rooms he found his nearest and dearest chum, "Bobby" Lowe, had calmly taken possession of the apartments, as was his habit when the mood seized him, and was sipping a highball in great content.

"Hello, Tom!" was his off-hand greeting. "Thought I'd run in on you for a chat. Your man said you'd probably be along in an hour or so and I made myself comfortable."

"Glad you did, Bobby," said Bagley warmly. "You're just the man I want to talk to. Seems like Providence sent you. I was going to call you up as soon as I got my coat off."

"Not Providence," said Lowe with a smile; "just bored to death at the club—no shows in town I haven't seen half-a-

dozen times and nothing on earth to do. What's up?"

Briefly Bagley told the amazing story of the $5,000 that had been thrust into his hands by the stranger and before he was half through "Bobby" was as excited as a pointer-dog that has flushed a covey of partridges.

"Let's see 'em," he demanded, and the yellow-backs, with their impressive looking figures, were spread out on the table beside the blank envelope.

Lowe drew up a chair and turned the exhibits over eagerly. Again and again he examined each bill and the envelope, while Bagley watched him narrowly, but at the close of the scrutiny he was no wiser than before.

"There isn't a mark on any of them, that I can find," he announced, holding the envelope to the light in the faint hope that some mysterious message might appear. "What do you make of it?"

"I haven't the faintest idea," said Bagley, "although, of course, it's a cinch that messenger mistook me for someone else. I had no $5,000 coming from any source on earth, and I certainly was not expecting a remittance in any such weird and underhand method as this arrived."

Bobby lighted another cigaret and stared at the little pile of money. Bagley mixed himself a drink and allowed his chum to do the heavy thinking.

"Have you any relatives in town of your name?" demanded Lowe, suddenly.

"Not one," said Bagley. "I'm the last of my illustrious race and all the old maiden aunts and little cousins and things are far from here—that is, all that I know anything about. Of course," he added, "there may be plenty of Bagley's in town but they are no kin of mine."

Suddenly Bobby brought his hand down on the table with a crash and leaped to his feet.

"I've got it?" he yelled.

"I thought you'd get it," said Bagley, quietly; "that's why I wanted to see you first. Well, what is the secret?"

"Why, it's the easiest thing on earth," said Lowe, with a smile of triumph. "Don't you know there's an Alderman Bagley in this city?"

"No, I didn't know the family was so prominent," said Thomas Edward. "What of it?"

"Why, can't you see?" said Bobby impatiently, "This explains everything! That $5,000 was some sort of graft-money that was coming to Alderman Bagley and was slipped to you by mistake!"

Mr. Bagley sat down suddenly in the nearest chair. Mr. Lowe surveyed him in triumph, and for a few seconds neither spoke. The eyes of Mr. Bagley were irresistibly drawn to the five yellow-back bills lying before him on the table.

"By Jove, Bobby," he said at length, "I believe you're right!"

"Right?" echoed Lowe. "Of course I'm right! It can't be anything else. Who else get thousand dollar bills passed to them by mysterious emissaries but aldermen? Why should you be the hero of this strange adventure but for the coincidence that your name happens to be the same as that of a city-father? There is no argument about it."

"I didn't know you were interested in politics, Bobby," said Bagley, "but this is merely another semblance of your many-sided nature. That's why I like you."

"I'm not particularly interested in politics," said Lowe, "but as a citizen and a taxpayer—to some extent—I follow in the newspapers the doings of the city council. I happen to remember that the telephone company's franchise has been before that charming body of statesmen for some time and came to a vote this week. The franchise was granted. Evidently Alderman Bagley voted 'aye.'"

"Bobby," said his friend, "you're a wonder. You make Sherlock Holmes look like a uniformed policeman on a street-crossing. But admitting that your deductions and arguments are true, the question remains, what are we going to do with this five thousand?"

"We?" said Lowe. "Please don't count me in on your underhanded and nefarious doings. If you are accepting crooked money from public-service corporations, don't declare me a partner in crime. But as a friend, and solely in that capacity, I should suggest that the thing to do is to notify the police."

"And find my honored family name

blazoned in four inch type in all the newspapers?" said Bagley. "Not if I can help it."

"Well, what do you suggest?" demanded Lowe. "You can't keep this money!"

"No, that's true," admitted the worried Thomas Edward; "then I would be putting my foot in it."

"And you can't send it back to the donors because you really don't know where it came from," continued Bobby, argumentatively. "After all," he added, "you know this is all guess-work about the alderman and the telephone-franchise. It's surely circumstantial evidence but it's not strong enough to warrant you in flipping $5,000 around the town. After all, Tom, if the money was intended for Alderman Bagley, I don't see what right we have to interfere with his getting it. He probably earned it, all right."

"What?" yelled Bagley, striding up and down in his excitement. "Do you mean to say you would lend yourself to the corruption of a public official if it was in your power to prevent it? Where is your citizenship? Where is your moral training?"

"Forget the moral training," said Bobby, shortly. "All I can see is that you're likely to get mixed up in a nasty mess over this money and, as you suggested, get a lot of unpleasant notoriety out of it. You know how things get twisted in the newspapers, and once a story of this sort is published it can never be rectified. Better go slow, old man. Think it over a bit."

"I know this," said Bagley hotly, "that if once I am convinced this $5,000 is bribe-money, I'll do all in my power to prevent it from reaching the itching palm of Bagley."

"Good boy!" cried Bobby, in mock admiration. "We shall now be treated to a few remarks upon 'Municipal Reform' by that eminent young publicist, Thomas Edward Bagley. Gentlemen, Mr. Bagley."

"It's no joke," began Bagley, but he was interrupted by the discreet tapping of his valet, and as he strode to the door he picked up the five bills and swept them into his pocket.

"Two gentlemen to see you, sir," explained Hicks.

"At this hour of the night?" said Bagley in surprise. "Who are they?"

"I don't know, sir," said Hicks deferentially. "They wouldn't give their names but they insisted on coming in. It told them you were engaged, sir, but they said they must see you."

"Let 'em come in," suggested Lowe; "maybe it's something about th—er—mystery."

That was enough for Bagley. He had quite forogtten the incident of the $5,000 present in his surprise over the strange conduct of his late callers, but Lowe's suggestion sounded good.

"Show them in," he ordered, and a few moments after Hicks had slipped down the hallway he returned in advance of the two callers.

When they stood in the light of Bagley's parlor one was revealed as a heavily built, powerful looking fellow, red of face and coarse of general aspect, with a two carat diamond stud glistening in his shirt-bosom. The other man was short, suave, and apologetic, standing as it were in the shadow of his more important companion.

"Which one is Bagley?" demanded the big visitor, staring at Thomas Edward and Bobby in turn.

"I am Mr. Bagley," said the owner of that name, stepping forward. "What can I do for you?"

"Well, you're the man I want to see," said the intruder, "an' I want to see you alone."

He looked pointedly at Lowe, who started to arise.

"Sit still, Bobby," said Bagley with more than a touch of indignation. "This gentleman is my guest this evening," he went on to the visitors, waving his hand toward Lowe. "I know of no business you have with me that he may not hear,"

"Don't you?" retorted the big man. "Well, I do—plenty of business. My name is Bagley, too, Jim Bagley—Alderman Bagley. Now do you understand?"

"I can't say that I do," said Thomas Edward, still with freezing hauteur, "though I doubtless shall when you have explained. And this other gentleman," he continued, with a nod toward the apologetic little man, "is—er—"

"Oh, him?" said Alderman Bagley. "He's my lawyer. 'Botts' is his name. Botts—Mr. Bagley."

Alderman Bagley waved a red hand in the general direction of the two men he sought to introduce and glared again at the uncomfortable Bobby Lowe. Thomas Edward intercepted the glance.

"This gentleman," he said, "is an intimate friend of mine, Mr. Lowe. As I said, I believe anything you may have to say may be said in his presence. Wont you be seated?"

"No, I wont be seated," retorted Alderman Bagley, "until I've made my little *spiel*. You wanted your friend to stick around and rubber in on it. All right. That's up to you. Now, I want to tell you, Mr. Bagley, that you've got a roll of bills that belongs to me and I want you to dig 'em up before we make you a lot of trouble."

Thomas Edward went very white. Bobby changed feet uncomfortably and glanced from one face to the other and Lawyer Botts coughed behind his hand and looked worried.

"Why do you come here and make such a charge as that?" demanded young Bagley. "What right have you to accuse me of what amounts to a crime?"

"Oh, that's all right," said the alderman, waving his hand lightly; "nix on the crime-stuff. We aint here to talk about that. All I want is that dough. I've got the goods on you, Bagley, so what's the use of holdin' out? A certain party was sent out this evenin' to find me and hand me a certain bunch of money. He happens to be a dummy an' gets off my trail. He strikes yours an' when someone throws a switch in front of him he gets off the main track altogether, runs up a sidin' until he strikes you, and slips you this bundle. Now, I know all this is straight an' so does my attorney here an' I brought him along for a witness to back up what I say."

"I am very glad you brought him," said Thomas Edward, speaking with some difficulty. "I am also fortunate in having a friend present as a witness to what is said and done."

Thomas Edward realized that he was face to face with a crisis. But he had determined upon his line of conduct and would go through with it then even in the face of this red-faced, bull-necked person and his accomplice. He braced himself for the effort and was surprised to find that he was mentally calculating whether it would be best to plug the alderman in the eye with a sinewy fist or attempt to trip him, in case he grew demonstrative.

"Alderman Bagley," he said after a few seconds of silence, "I admit that what you have said is, in part, true. There was a mistake made by a messenger who, I have no reason to doubt, was sent out to find you. I was handed the sum of $5,000 to-night by a stranger who gave me no explanation of his conduct. But," and here his voice took on a firmer ring, "I do not propose to hand over that money to you until I know exactly where it came from and how it became due to you."

Alderman Bagley took a step nearer the pale young man and thrust out a pugnacious jaw.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"I mean," said Thomas Edward, "that I have reason to suspect this $5,000 was to be paid to you as a bribe for voting for the telephone-franchise!"

"What?" yelled the alderman, raising both hands above his head as if to strike down the presumptuous youth where he stood.

But Thomas Edward stood fast and Bobby hastily arose to have a hand in anything that might follow.

Alderman Bagley changed his mind, fell back a step, and turned to Lawyer Botts with a short hard laugh.

"You see?" he said. "Didn't I tell you. Wasn't I wise bringin' you along? I was afraid I'd be up against some such a game as this."

He turned again to young Bagley and Bobby Lowe, who were standing close together.

"Why, say," he began, "do you think I'd be sucker enough to come up here after any queer money an' bring witnesses along? An' make a *spiel* like this in front of your man? You must think I'm dippy. Why, that money you got hold of aint got no more to do with the telephone-ordinance than—say," he continued suddenly turning to his companion, "you tell 'em. Tell 'em the

whole story. I can't stand for it. I'm too surprised to talk. Usually I'd be ravin' mad over a break like this but now—say, I'm just goin' to laugh about it."

And he did laugh again as he turned to examine young Bagley's pictures and Botts took up the thread of the conversation.

"I am truly sorry, gentlemen," he began, "that events have made it necessary to reveal certain unfortunate circumstances, as I may say—quite unfortunate, indeed, in certain quarters—but such seems to be the case. As a matter of fact the—er—money, the sum of money which fell into your hands by such an extraordinary accident, Mr. Bagley, so far from being what you say, I regret to say, make bold to charge against my client, was in fact intended as restitution by an unhappy young man to save him from—er—serious trouble."

"Restitution?" said Thomas Edward as Mr. Botts paused to moisten his lips.

"Exactly," said Mr. Botts, "restitution. As a matter of fact, the young man, who shall for the present, at least, be nameless, was formerly a trusted employe of Alderman Bagley in his—er—rather extensive business establishment. You may have heard of it?"

"Never in my life," said young Bagley shortly and Bobby shook his head in negation.

"Most extraordinary," said Attorney Botts. "The alderman, as I thought you might know, conducts a large and rather famous saloon and café. A branch of the business which, I may tell you in confidence, has to do with—er—certain trials of speed of trained horses —"

"You mean he runs a hand-book?" asked Thomas Edward shortly.

"Er—yes," said Mr. Botts, "you anticipate me. Thank you. That is, I believe, the technical phrase. This unfortunate young man was in charge of that branch and a week ago he weakly fled with a sum of money approximating $5,000 belonging to Alderman Bagley and his —er—clients."

"I see," said Bobby, wisely; "he welched with the bank-roll."

Mr. Botts cast up his eyes.

"I presume that would be about it," he admitted. "As counsel for the alderman I managed to get into communication with the fugitive and his friends and I submitted, on advice of the alderman, a proposition that if he would refund the stolen money no prosecution would follow. They acquiesced. Of course, these things must be managed with er—tact and—er—caution. It would not do for the unfortunate erring youth to appear personally with the money—too many people know him. But the alderman, in the largeness of his heart, consented to a scheme I arranged whereby a messenger was to deliver the sum in a plain envelope, leaving, as you will readily see, no trace of its origin. By an unfortunate error the messenger found you, Mr. Bagley, instead of the alderman, and—that's all there is to it."

Alderman Bagley faced about when the tale was done.

"That's the whole facts, gents," he said briskly. "I had Botts tell 'em because he's a better talker than me. Now you see where you done me an injustice by pullin' that stuff about bribe-money an' telephone-franchises. I'm tryin' to do a fellow a good turn—tryin' to save a young chap that's made his first break an' keep him from the pen. I aint no grafter," he added, almost humbly.

Thomas Edward was walking swiftly up and down the apartment while the alderman talked and Bobby was following his movements with anxious eyes.

"Of course," said the young man at length, "this puts a different complexion on the matter."

"Naturally," chipped in Bobby.

"You will admit, alderman," he went on, "that circumstances were against you at first. The thing had an ugly look."

"Oh, sure it did," said Alderman Bagley, cheerfully, "it always looks bad when someone slips five thousand to an alderman—unless you know it's his own money."

"Now then," went on young Bagley, "I'm going to give you this money, alderman."

The statesman heaved a great sigh of relief and Mr. Botts washed his hands together with renewed vigor.

"But in order to clear my own skirts," went on Bagley, "and be free of any entanglements that may arise later, I'm going to ask you to give me a receipt."

He reached into his pocket as he spoke and took out the five $1,000 bills, which he held tantalizing under the purple nose of the alderman.

"Well, I guess the receipt thing is all right," said the latter, "aint it, Botts? That's no more than fair?"

"Certainly," said Botts, with rather suspicious avidity. "I was going to suggest it myself."

While Bobby stared at the ceiling and wondered which way the cat would jump next, Thomas Edward sat down and scribbled off a receipt.

"Here you are," he said. "We can't go into details in this thing, I suppose. It reads: 'Received of Thomas Edward Bagley the sum of $5,000.' That will fix things up if there's any trouble afterward."

"I suppose so," said Alderman Bagley, putting his check signature at the bottom of the paper, "but my lawyer has suggested that this writin' is a bit one-sided. See? You've got it all. Of course, there aint goin' to be no trouble, but s'pose there is, how would it be if I had a writin' from you that you give me these five thousand? You're goin' to keep that one, you know."

"I don't see the sense of your having one," began young Bagley, but events had followed so rapidly that night that he was not quite clear as to what was right.

"Similar to a bill of sale, Mr. Bagley," suggested the suave Mr. Botts. "For instance, something like this."

He sat down and wrote rapidly for a few moments and then read as follows:

"Paid to Alderman James Bagley the sum of $5,000 in full of all demands to date."

"Now, you just sign that," he suggested, "and either side will be legally protected. It can't do any harm," he added, "because you did pay him the $5,000, you know."

"I suppose so," said Thomas Edward, rather wistfully, and he put his name to the slip of paper. Botts pounced on it, young Bagley handed the five bills to the alderman, and the pair began to back out.

"Sorry to disturb you," said the happy statesman, "but business is business. Good-night. Much obliged."

With Botts toddling along in his wake he fled into the darkness and Thomas Edward came back into the parlor to Bobby.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he demanded.

"I don't know," said Bobby, "maybe it's all on the square but I don't like Botts."

The next morning, as young Mr. Bagley and his chum, Bobby Lowe, lounged over a late breakfast at the Union League, an assistant prosecuting-attorney known to both of them strolled up and nodded.

"Looks like we were going to have plenty to do for awhile," he said after the salutations; "the boss is going out after these telephone-franchise grafters hot and heavy."

Thomas Edward looked at Bobby and spilled a bit of coffee on the immaculate cloth.

"I suppose that namesake of mine will have to sell out his gilded saloon and *trek* to Canada," he said, with assumed lightness.

"Who, Bagley?" said the prosecuting-attorney. "He hasn't any saloon. He hasn't a dollar in the world—unless he got a piece of money this week. He used to run a fake employment-agency, but he never had anybody stake him to a saloon. So long—I'm going to the office."

"And he's got your highly prized signature at the bottom of his little document," suggested Bobby as both watched the lawyer disappear

Thomas Edward looked out of the window a moment in silence. Then he leaned across to Bobby and hissed in his ear:

"Stung!"

The Labyrinth of the Law

By HARVEY DENTON

SLOSSON, SR., wanted his son to show what he could do as a business-man, so he turned over his affairs to him and went to Europe. The boy wanted to make good—big, of course—and he bit at the biggest contract-bait that dangled before his eyes. He didn't see the hook, however; just one little legal technicality saved the whole business—firm and all—from going to destruction—and Mellish knew it and saved the day. If you are interested in the possibilities of legal technicalities, read this splendid complete story. Then you'll wait as patiently as you can until the next BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE *comes out and you can read about "The Failure of Diggs & Co."*—THE EDITORS.

No. IV.—THE SOUTHBRIDGE CONTRACT

I

SLOSSON, junior, blond, clean-shaven, clad in an immaculate gray flannel suit, tan oxfords, and straw hat, entered his father's private office, and closing the door stood respectfully at attention. Looking up from the mass of papers in which he was engrossed, Slosson, senior, was struck by the unwonted atmosphere of filial respect that seemed to envelop his rather sporty offspring.

"Well!" he growled, with a vain attempt at brusqueness. Nobody could be angry with Billy Slosson very long. "How much is it now? Plate-glass window, or cabby's head? How is it you're walking about? Somebody bail you out? Darn fool, whoever he was—little vacation in Ludlow Street might knock some sense into you."

Billy, with a dignified expression of injured innocence, disdained to reply.

"Well, well," said the old man, "forgive me if I've hurt your royal highness' feelings. I'd forgotten you've sobered up and settled down. Don't get sore at your old daddy's jokes. What is it you wanted, Will?"

"Well, sir," said the younger man, "I don't know whether you'll grant the request. Perhaps you'll even think it pretty shabby of me to ask such a thing right on top of your taking me into the firm, but—

"Well, the fact is, Fred Sanders is taking a yachting party out to-morrow for a fortnight's cruise and I'm invited, and I wondered if now that the slack season is on you couldn't get along without me for just those two weeks?"

"I suppose Mabel Harrison is one of the party, eh?" remarked the old man slyly.

"Why—er—" replied Billy, his cheeks reddening slightly, "I believe so."

"I'm sorry, Will," said the father seriously. "I understand quite well what it means to you, but I'm afraid it's impossible. In fact, just before you came in I was about to send for you to inform you that beginning Monday you will take entire charge of the firm, for an indefinite period. You know I haven't been well lately. Last night your mother insisted that I see Doctor Walters. He poked and prodded and asked a thousand-and-one questions,

and finally wound up by laying down the law to the tune of a trip abroad for not less than six months and longer if necessary. I was on the point of refusing, when it occurred to me that it was an excellent chance for you to prove what you're made of. And so I consented, and Saturday your mother and I sail for Havre.

"You will take absolute control of the business, and you have my earnest hopes and prayers, old man, that you make good and make us all proud of you. Mellish handles the office-end, so you'll have no bother there. Your work will deal exclusively with the actual construction-part of the business, the carrying out of present outstanding contracts, and the making of new ones. I've only one serious warning to give you before I leave; have a care of McCurdy. We're old-time enemies, and nothing would tickle him more than to run you into a hole and then plug it up. If you get into any tight place and can't see your way out call on Mellish. He'll find daylight in the blackest mess."

II

Two weeks after Slosson, senior's departure for foreign shores the junior partner sat in the private office gazing at a letter lying open on the desk before him, his brows knit and one finger tapping nervously on the chair-arm. Rising suddenly he took a cigar from the humidor at his elbow, clipped and lighted it, and fell to pacing up and down the office with quick, nervous strides. It was the chance of a lifetime. Carry it through successfully, and he would have proved beyond caviling his worth as a member of the firm, would have unequivocally "made good." He could picture the old man's delight on his return, could hear his voice as he would take his hand and say, "My boy, I'm proud of you!" But fail—! And it was a big undertaking for a chap not yet of age, a risky piece of work that would require the careful devotion of his every waking moment and even his sleeping thoughts. Going back to the desk he picked up the letter and read it for the fifth time.

MAYOR'S OFFICE
SOUTHBRIDGE, MASS., JULY 5, 1907.
SLOSSON & SLOSSON ELEC. CONST. CO.,
WORLD BUILDING, N. Y. CITY.
GENTLEMEN:

The city of Southbridge, being dissatisfied with the existing old-fashioned telephone-service, has annulled the charter of the present company, and having had you recommended as one of the most competent and reliable concerns in this line of work, I am herewith writing to inquire whether or not you would care to contract for the installation of a complete modern, thoroughly up-to-date telephone system in this city, your terms for same, and your time-estimate. We desire the latest pattern switchboards, and all the features of the most improved system obtainable, excepting underground wiring.

Awaiting as early a reply as you can make convenient, I am

Very truly yours,
GRAHAM ST. CLAIRE,
Mayor.

Enclosed was a map of the town, with the number of houses and offices requiring service, and the distance necessary to be covered.

For awhile he pondered, looking the thing over from every side, then at last, with a determined squaring of the shoulders, he pressed a desk-button and to the answering stenographer dictated briefly:

SLOSSON & SLOSSON
WORLD BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY.
JULY 6, 1907.
GRAHAM ST. CLAIRE, MAYOR,
SOUTHBRIDGE, MASS.
DEAR SIR:

Replying to your inquiry of the fifth instant *re*-installation of a new telephone-system in your city, I will have our chief engineer draw up at once a cost and time-estimate per your enclosed diagram, and shall be in Southbridge day after to-morrow to consult personally with you.

Yours truly,
WILLIAM SLOSSON, JR.,
SLOSSON & SLOSSON.

III

For three hours they talked over the plans and estimates drawn up hurriedly by Murphy, the chief engineer, and finally the mayor, knocking the ash from his perfecto, said genially:

"Good! That's settled, then. And now, Mr. Slosson, let's drink to the success of our new system, and to Slosson & Slosson."

"I'll be out again in the course of a week," said Slosson, setting down his glass, "with the final terms, and then, if satisfactory—and I feel sure from this interview they will be—we'll sign the contract and get to work. So, *au revoir* till next week, and thank you for your courtesies."

In the private office next morning Slosson and Mellish were discussing the new job.

Slosson had found that his father's estimate of this silent, systematic, rapid-working man very far from misplaced, and he had fallen into the habit of consulting him on any matter that was not perfectly clear, whether it had to do with the managerial end or the actual construction-work, and always the advice was clear, terse, and illuminating.

"It's to be a municipal service," Slosson was saying, "because they've become disgusted with private corporation control. A body of citizens have petitioned the mayor to have the city take hold and straighten things out and keep them straight. He said a New York man had become heavily interested in the enterprise, which was what had enabled them to get to work on it at once, without the customary delay through tardiness of subscriptions."

At Slosson's last words a low exclamation fell from Mellish's lips.

"I didn't understand?" said Slosson inquiringly.

"Er—who is this New York man?" said Mellish, avoiding the question.

"Well, that's what I've been wondering. Nat. St. Claire wouldn't tell me. Said he'd taken this heavy interest in the undertaking only on the strict condition that his connection with it be kept absolutely secret. Some big financial bug, I suppose."

"H'm!" mused Mellish. "Odd sort of thing for a big financier to dabble in, the telephone-system of an obscure country-town."

"Oh, I don't know. Some men like a flyer of that sort—kind of toy to amuse themselves with as a relief from their greater undertakings."

"M'm, yes, I daresay," acquiesced Mellish abstractedly.

"How old are you, Billy?" he asked suddenly.

"Why, let me see," stammered Slosson, somewhat nonplussed at the apparently irrelevant question. "Er—twenty-one next Sunday-week. Why?"

"Nothing—I was just wondering. When do you see St. Claire for the final signing of the contract?"

"Sometime next week. Saturday, I guess."

"H'm, I see. Billy, has anything about this whole business struck you as queer?"

"The whole business?"

"I mean, the whole thing, their coming to us for the work at all."

"Why, what's queer about that? What do you mean by 'queer?'"

"Well, I've often passed through Southbridge, lived there a little while, and know the town quite well. Did you notice a big red-brick building just on the edge of the town, right across from the station?"

"I believe I did, now that you mention it. What about it?"

"That's the New England Telephone Installation Company. They're second to none, and they have an office for businses-transactions right there in the town. Yet Southbridge, with one of the finest at her very door, sends all the way to New York for us to handle a job the New England could handle just as cheaply as we, if not cheaper, and no freight tariff."

"Well," said Slosson, albeit somewhat dubiously, "perhaps some one cracked us up so they thought we'd give better satisfaction. That's the only answer I can see."

"Perhaps," said Mellish shortly. "Well," with an air of dismissing the subject, "I want to ask just one favor of you, Billy. When you sign that contract next Saturday sign it with your own name only, bringing in the firm name in no way whatever. Don't ask me any reasons right now, just do it. I ask it as a personal favor. Will you do this?"

"Certainly, Nat," he tyounger man replied, "if you wish me to. I know there must be good cause or you wouldn't ask it. Now, if you'll call Murphy in we'll get busy on those plans."

IV

Out in Southbridge the preliminary work for the installation of the new telephone-system was getting rapidly under way. Central headquarters, formerly over a store in an obscure side-street, were moved to a new, modern business-block in the heart of the city. Switchboards of the latest pattern arrived from New York, accompanied by expert electricians, under whose swift and skillful fingers they became rapidly fitted into their proper places, awaiting only the awakening touch of the wires, soon to be connected, to start on their career of service to the citizens of South bridge.

Every house on the list enclosed in the mayor's letter to Slosson was visited by the company's men, and 1907 instruments were substituted for the clumsy crank-bell style of the past decade. Some of the houses were brand-new subscribers, won by the mayor's alluring notice in the daily paper of the up-to-date, satisfaction-guaranteed system that was to replace the inefficient service that had for the past five years been trying the tempers of the feminine portion of Southbridge and improving the vocabularies of her impatient business-men.

Linemen were busy removing the rusted, worn-out wires, and wagons came and went carting away the rotten poles and cross-trees. The route of the former line was adhered to in the main, but several miles had to be added for the accommodation of new rural subscribers outside the town limits. Very few of the old poles were service-worthy any longer, only ten escaping the instant condemnation of the expert examiners, and all the cross-trees were swiftly consigned to the bonfire. Stout new pines arrived by every freight and were quickly imbedded in the surveyed sites.

The town hummed with this unwonted display of the lightning, systematic dispatch of peerless Manhattan, and on every side, at table, in offices, and on the street, men were to be heard congratulating themselves on having secured to their city so eminently satisfactory a company. In Southbridge, at any rate, Billy Slosson had made a hit.

At the same hour that Billy Slosson was seated in his desk-chair, puffing contentedly on a little black briar and reading aloud to Mellish with great gusto a letter from St. Claire, expressing the city's eminent satisfaction with the progress of the new line, in another part of Manhattan, on a street whose narrow confines have been the theater of some of the most thrilling battles of the mart the world has ever seen, five brokers stood before a man seated at a roll-top desk, listening attentively to the curt, concise orders issuing from his lips.

He was an interesting type, this man at the desk, a man whose every line, of face and form, spelt fighter. The heavy, powerful frame was surmounted by an unmistakably Irish face, keen and shrewd with the shrewdness of the shrewdest nation in the world, with a pair of chilly blue eyes that had sent many a good man whimpering to defeat before the striking of a single blow.

As he spoke his voice was soft and quiet with a quietness that those who knew the man had learned to fear. His face betrayed no more emotion than if he were giving the customary orders of the day, yet every word that fell from those clean-cut lips added another nail to the coffin of the hopes and ambitions of a young man seated in a private office a little further up-town, already flushed and exultant with the fast-approaching achievement of his first big undertaking in the world of men.

"Now, remember," he was saying, emphasizing each word with the fountain-pen between the thick, stubby fingers, "it's ruled off the Street and financial death to any and every man who blabs one syllable of this or seeks to turn it to his own profit, even by legitimate speculation. That last may seem harsh, but any individual operating would tend to draw the attention of the whole floor to you, and I particularly do not wish my connection with this movement to be known till such time as I shall see fit myself to divulge it. Conduct your buying as quietly as possible, and remember that your main object is to corner the entire visi-

ble supply, as cheaply as possible of course, but to *corner* it. Succeed, and you'll not be sorry; fail, and—well, you *will*. Report at my residence, not here, at the close of the market. That's all."

V

Two days later, as Mellish was going over some papers at his desk, the chief's bell rang sharply. Answering the summons he found young Slosson standing in the center of the private office his eyes like those of a frightened child, his lips twitching, his face as white as the sheet crushed in his clenched, shaking hand.

"Why, what is it, Billy?" asked Mellish, aghast at the pitiful transformation of the moment-before happy, laughing boy.

Slosson motioned to him to shut and lock the door. The general manager obeyed.

"What's the matter, Billy?" he asked kindly, crossing and placing his hand on the other's shoulder. "Has anything happened? Not bad news from abroad?"

"Read it."

Holding out the letter to Mellish he sank into the desk-chair, and dropping his head upon his arms sobbed hysterically:

"I wish I were dead, I wish I were dead!"

Silently Mellish unfolded the crumpled sheet and read it slowly through.

NORFOLK CREOSOTING CO.
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA,
OCTOBER 10, 1907.

SLOSSON & SLOSSON ELEC. CONST. CO.,
WORLD BUILDING, N. Y. CITY.

GENTLEMEN:

We regret to have to inform you that owing to a sudden unexpected rise in the market, and a cornering by some unknown operator of the entire available supply of creosote, we are unable to fill your order of the first instant at less than 25% advance on our usual quotations. We quite appreciate the necessity for haste in completing short-time contracts, and had we on hand at the present moment any finished cross-arms of the type you require we would ship without delay at the regular price, but unfortunately a recent large order has cleaned out our entire stock.

Regretting this unlooked-for advance, and trusting to receive an early and favorable reply, we remain

Yours truly,
THE NORFOLK CREOSOTING CO.
J. Siddell, Chief Contract Dpt.

"Well," said Mellish, with a sigh, "it's tough luck, old man, and no mistake, but we all have to buck up against that sooner or later, you know. Even if we can't get a few weeks' grace from Southbridge, and the whole thing goes to smash, why, it's too blamed bad, of course, and I know just how you'll feel, but I reckon we'll pull through whole, all right. The firm's been in tighter places before this."

"Oh, Nat!" moaned the boy, "you don't understand, you don't understand! You don't know the worst. I've ruined my father's financial name, I've beggared the family, I've put Slosson & Slosson to the wall! Heaven forgive me for a brainless fool! Why did dad ever entrust the business to me! Oh, Nat, I wish I were dead!"

"Now, see here, Billy," said the general manager, his voice very kind but very firm, "cut it! This sort of thing don't help matters any. You'll only get yourself so worked up you wont be worth anything, and now's when you need every ounce of nerve you've got. We're going to pull through this mess somehow. We can't finish on schedule-time, of course, unless somebody comes in and throws the money at us, but we'll finish not far from it."

"Oh, you don't know, Nat, you don't know what I've done, you don't know what I've done!" the boy moaned, over and over.

"What do you mean?" queried the other.

There was silence for a moment.

"What do you mean?" he repeated sharply.

Raising his blanched, fear-smitten face and gazing helplessly at Mellish the boy replied, in a whisper that was barely audible:

"When I signed the contract I signed also a $250,000 time-forfeiture expiring November 1st, without grace."

The general manager dropped limply into a chair, the letter slipping from his fingers and wafting across the polished floor.

VI

Informed by wireless of the impending disaster to the house, Slosson, senior, took the first steamer for New York, and the morning of the Thursday following found him closeted with Mellish in the private office.

"I can't find it in my heart to blame the boy," said the general manager. "It was a great chance for him, and of course he's too young and inexperienced to have smelt the fishiness of so absurd a forfeit requirement, but if he'd only told me! If he'd only told me!"

"Who do you think it is?" asked Slosson.

"McCurdy," replied Mellish. "Don't you?"

The senior partner nodded slowly.

"Yes, it looks like his fine Italian hand. We'll have a tough fight of it, Nat, but we'll win. He smashed me once, but he'll never smash me agan."

For several hours they talked the situation over, and noon had come and gone without the discovery of a single loophole. At last Mellish rose, and unlocking a drawer in the desk took out a long envelope.

"Well," he said, slipping it into his pocket, "I guess there's only one move left. I put it off in hopes of carrying the job through somehow, but I guess it's no go. If you'll put on your hat and come along to McCurdy's with me we'll just get through with this little matter."

Wonderingly, the senior partner obeyed and followed his general manager to the subway. Ten minutes later they were ushered into McCurdy's sanctum, in the Drexel Building.

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen," said the financier courteously. "Glad to see you, Mr. Slosson. Wont you have a seat?"

An angry retort sprang to the other's lips, but at a quick glance from Mellish he forced it back and silently taking the proffered chair waited for the general manager to open the interview. Mellish came to the point at once.

"Mr. McCurdy," he began slowly, fastening the coldly glittering blue eyes with a gaze as steady as their own, "three months ago Slosson & Slosson, as you know, contracted for the installation of a new telephone-system in the town of Southbridge, Massachusetts. Shortly before the signing of the contract I learned that the town had been enabled to start at once upon the work through the heavy interest taken in the undertaking by a New York financier who required as a condition to his investment absolute secrecy concerning his connection with it. Big New York financiers do not dabble in picayune matters such as this as a habit, and I became suspicious.

"I began quietly investigating, and the result of my investigations was that John McCurdy was the largest, almost the only, backer of the Southbridge telephone-system. That, coupled with the peculiar fact of Southbridge having passed up as fine a company as can be found to-day, situated in her very midst, to send all the way to New York for us, made me practically certain that the whole thing was only a scheme, a scheme of ruin and devastation. Now you've cornered the creosote market, and I know I was right."

"Well?" said McCurdy evenly. "Admitting for argument's sake that you are right—what then?"

"What then?" said Mellish. "Just this. You think we're ruined, don't you? Because our work is at a standstill, and we cannot even hope to finish on contract-time, you think Slosson & Slosson are down and out—don't you?"

"Not at all," said McCurdy smilingly. "I *know* it."

"Well, you're wrong, dead wrong. Just take a look at this."

Taking from his pocket the long envelope, he extracted a copy of the contract and handed it to the other.

"You will note that the only signature is that of 'William Slosson, Jr.,' no mention whatever being made of the incorporated firm of Slosson & Slosson at either the beginning or the end or in the body of the instrument."

"Well," said McCurdy, "what of it?"

"Merely that when Mr. William Slosson, Jr., signed that instrument he lacked twenty-four hours of being the twenty-one years of age necessary to make such an instrument valid—"

"*You lie!*"

Springing from his chair McCurdy towered over the quiet man before him, his coarse, thick-veined hands twitching as if in a fever to clutch the throat of the man who had beaten him and shake him as a terrier would a rat. Then he paused, and dropping back into his chair glared helplessly at the smiling Mellish.

"Of course," said the general manager, "if you wish to retain your hold upon creosote we cannot finish on schedule-time, but we lose nothing thereby, the contract being null and void under the Infants' Rights law, and you lose whatever you may have sunk into the undertaking."

"I—I'll throw it back on the market," gasped McCurdy, after a silence. "No man need tell John McCurdy when he's licked."

The Champion

By BARRETT O'HARA

ROBERTS, sporting-editor, looked up from the mass of papers on his desk and over toward the door, where a commotion among the office-boys announced an unusual transpiring.

"Hey, Jimmy!" he shouted to the particular red-head that did the leg-work for his department. "What's the rumpus?"

"Jest another of those champeens comin' to see you, Mr. Roberts," rereplied the youth, half-disdainfully.

Jimmy could afford to be *blasé*. He belonged to the department, he did, and his shiny elbows had rubbed against so many "champeens" of sports that there wasn't any sensation left.

Roberts leaned back in his swivel-chair, and waited.

An enterprising young man, whose dress suggested an advance pattern-plate elaborated and improved upon, pushed his way through the gaping office-boys. At his heels came another young man, not so extremely garbed, but swinging along in a free-and-easy gait that revealed him as the possessor of physical powers above the average. Let there be no suspense. The former elegant gentleman was Mr. Charles Hertzer, of New York, manager of pugilists. The latter athletic gentleman was, in the parlance of the game, his "meal-ticket."

Mr. Hertzer, flapping the side of his trousers with his slender walking-stick, paused momentarily to cast a dignified glance about the room, which done, he advanced impressively toward the waiting Mr. Roberts.

"Hello, Charley!" greeted the latter, holding out a hand. "What's up to-day?"

Mr. Hertzer smiled, put one hand in Mr. Roberts' outstretched one and the other on the sporting-editor's shoulder, and chirped:

"My old pal Roberts. Deucedly glad to see you. Just in from Phila, and all the boys down there wanted to be remembered. You've no end of friends in this old world."

"Supposeso," assented Roberts, somewhat dryly. "But what about you? What are you preparing to spring?"

"Nothing—nothing at all," hastily denied Mr. Hertzer. "The idea! Call on an old and dear friend and be accused of a design to spring something! Now, you don't believe that, do you, old man? By the way, Mr. Roberts, shake hands with Young Horace. He's a great boy, Roberts, that's what Horace is, and no joke."

"Glad to know you," said the sporting-editor, taking the pugilist's hand.

"Thank you, sir," and "Young Horace" retired modestly into the background again, leaving his manager to finish the conversation with the sporting-editor.

"Good looking lad," observed Roberts. "Tall and wiry; good shoulders; keen eyes. Can he fight?"

Mr. Hertzer's shoulders went back with a snap as his chin went upward with sudden dignity.

"Can he fight?"

He repeated the words in a voice trembling with emotion caused by the mere suggestion that anyone doubted Horace's ability to perform well with his fists.

"Can he fight? Well, I should say he can. Fight? He doesn't know how to do anything else. Down East he has set 'em all on their heads. There aint nothing could touch him, and I'm right here to say that he's the best I've ever saw, and you know, Roberts, I've saw most all of 'em. There aint nothing to it; he's sure the coming champion. Why, he's only been fighting about a year. Goodness knows where he came from, I don't; and he wont never talk about himself or his folks."

"Maybe he never had any?"

"No, he's had folks and training all right."

"How long you had him?"

"About three months. I picked him up fighting in the backs of barrooms in Phila. You know the game there. They take a young fellow who wants to be a pugilist, but aint never had a chance to get on at one of the clubs, and they give him a dollar, or, if they're right generous, a two-spot, and pit him against a gin-soaked ex-champion, or maybe a big burly black, and if he doesn't get massacreed the first time out, he's got it coming the second time. Well, sir, this boy Horace didn't get any massacreeing. He did it. He was the massacreer himself, he was. Near as I could find out, he fought as many as twenty men during the Winter—all sizes, all colors, all kinds—and he laid them all out as slick and neat as if he was old Father Time himself galloping down the line and prodding people with his scythe.

"I've done wonders with him since I've had him. Got him his first fight at a regular boxing-club. Didn't I, Kid?" turning to the fighter for confirmation.

The boy nodded his head.

"Course I did. And I'm going to make you the greatest fighter the world has ever seen. Aint I?"

Another nod from the "meal-ticket."

"What's your object in bringing him West? Couldn't you find enough for such a promising young 'phenom' to do back in Phila?"

"Enough for him to do? Well, I should say so. But it's all small fry back there. We can't make any money whipping that kind. We're after the top, and the man we want first is 'Old Mike,' if you please."

The sporting-editor whistled.

"What's the matter?" the manager challenged aggressively. "Suppose you think we've gone dippy; gone clean out of our senses, hey?"

"No, I wouldn't say that—not exactly, Charley. For all you are pretty breezy, you've got the reputation of being astute in these matters. But you're aiming mighty high when you scheme to pit a green youngster against 'Old Mike' Murphy."

Roberts paused a moment for sake of reminiscence.

"Why, 'Old Mike' has been champion since the days when I was a cub-reporter," he resumed. "In all these years there hasn't been anyone who could stand up with him for fifteen rounds. He's a real wonder, is Mike Murphy. Guess you know what you are about, Charley, but if I were you, I'd go slow—mighty slow. There's plenty of easier game for you before you try 'Old Mike.'"

"Poppycock!" retorted Hertzer. "You don't know this boy of mine. He's great, I tell you. He's got the punch. He's got the science. There aint anything he hasn't got. And he's going to fight Mike Murphy for the lightweight championship of the world just as soon as we can drag Mike into the ring. Take a tip from an old pal, and have a bet down on us.

"Well, so long, Roberts. Glad to

have seen you again. Remember me to all the boys. Deucedly sorry we haven't time for a dinner together. Come along, Kid; we're off."

And with erect head and swinging cane, Mr. Charles Hertzer, manager of pugilists, made for the door, with Mr. "Young Horace." a few feet behind.

II

"Now, that's what I call the limit! Give an ear here, lads, and see what you can say to this!"

Mike Murphy began reading aloud from Mr. Roberts' sporting-pages in the afternoon-newspaper.

"'Mike Murphy Branded a Coward! Young Horace, Challenger for the Lightweight Championship of the World, Declares Veteran Belt-Holder Is Side-Stepping Him. "If He Ever Gets Up Enough Courage to Fight Me, I'll Hammer Him Until He Falls Helpless to the Mat," Says Challenger!'"

Murphy threw the paper to the floor in disgust.

"That's too much!" he cried. "And them's only the headlines, too."

"Charley Hertzer's got hold of the boy," explained one of the champion's companions. "This slander-slinging is his style. If you don't give a match to one of his dub fighters, he's always running to his newspaper-friends and letting out a howl about being skeered of him. But why wouldn't you take this kid Horace on, Mike?"

Mike Murphy's fist came down with a bang.

"Because I haven't started faking yet!"

His companions, aghast at the revelation, were on their feet in a moment.

"You don't mean—"

"I do, I tell you. This smart guy Hertzer comes to me and wants me to lie down. 'You're getting old, Mike,' he says, dishing out the words like they was milk and honey. 'And you can't hold on much longer. This boy of mine can whip 'em all except you, and maybe he can whip you, too, Mike, but there isn't any need of taking any chances if you can get the money without. Is there?'"

"What'd you say to the scoundrel? Bet he wont forget it in a hurry."

"Nor will he!" replied Mike, warmly. "I reached over and got that dude by the throat. 'You needn't take the bother to say the rest,' says I. 'If you wasn't so crooked yourself, you'd know that some men would sooner stop living than stop being honest.' He squirms around until he frees himself, and comes back at me with this: 'Forget it, Mike! What's the use of all this flaring up? Let's stop preaching and understand one another! We can clean up $100,000 on this easy—and no one will ever know you wasn't whipped on the square!'"

"The nerve of the scoundrel!"

"I never could hit a smaller man; there's something in my blood that wont let me," resumed Mike, "else I supposé I'd have killed him, the dude, right there. Think of him coming to me, right to my face, and making a proposition like that! Me, whose been champion fifteen years, and never laid down to any man or paid any man to lay down to me. And it hasn't been for lack of chances either. Maybe if I had 'a' been crooked, I'd be better off to-day, as far as money goes; but I haven't been, and I aint going to start now."

One of the champion's companions picked up the discarded newspaper.

"So this is the way Hertzer gets even. Calls you a coward; says you're afraid to fight. Hello! What's this down at the bottom of the article. 'According to a dispatch just received from the West, the business men of Goldfield, Nevada, are raising a $30,000 purse for the purpose of securing a championship prize-fight which will advertise their city to the world. It is suggested that if Mike Murphy accepts Young Horace's challenge, this match would doubtless appeal to the Nevada promoters.' H-m, thirty thousand dollars is a lot of money, Mike!"

"It is that. But this Hertzer fellow and his dub fighter aint going to get no big loser's end off me," asserted the champion. "I'll fight, but it's got to be winner take all. Just call up Roberts and tell him that, will you, Bill? Tell

him to give it as much space as he did Hertzer's hammering. Thanks."

Mike Murphy's offer to fight Young Horace "winner take all" appeared in due course, and created a sensation in fistic circles. It was the general verdict that Hertzer and Young Horace had overplayed themselves, and that now that their challenge had been snapped up with a proviso added denying any consolation to the loser there was nothing for them to do but to accept with as much grace as they could summon. Hertzer attempted to arouse public sentiment against the champion's demand, saying it was unfair and unsportsmanlike for the loser, whoever he might be, to get nothing; but the public was with "Old Mike," and Hertzer was finally forced to give in. The Nevada people removed the last doubt of the match being made by raising the $30,000 and depositing it in one of the Goldfield banks. The articles were now signed and the principals went West to open their respective training-camps.

The Westerners, accustomed to taking chances with young blood, backed Young Horace heavily against the money of the Easterners, who conservatively supported the champion that had never known defeat. The wagering increased until the newspapers said there was close to a million dollars at stake on this championship boxing-contest.

The question soon centered about the champion's ability again to laugh to scorn the truism that youth must be served. Nowhere is new blood served so quickly and then kicked out, as in pugilism. A woman, it is said, remains beautiful for ten years; it is not infrequent that fighters come and go in five years. Mike Murphy was one of that small number in the history of the prize-ring who seem in growing older to have escaped becoming older. At forty years he was as formidable as at twenty-five.

Here he was: a short little man with an ugly face, several of his front teeth gone; his nose broken at the center and the lower half pounded to one side; his left ear remaining only in part. The sporting-writers referred to him heroically as "the battle-scarred veteran of half a thousand desperate engagements," and, their hideousness thus bathed in the glamour of glory, Mike Murphy loved his scars, his toothless gums, his yellow hulks, his battered nose and his lacerated ear. They were hideous but honest. A king in a barroom and an outcast in a parlor, the pride of this man was in his honesty.

The cartoonists drew pictures of a man, with flowing gray hair and bent shoulders, hobbling around a prize-ring on crutches. These they labeled "Mike Murphy Fifty Years From Now," and everybody, including Mike, laughed.

III

Mike Murphy was not a lady's man, and the appearance of a conveyance, which stopped abruptly at the door of the training-quarters and from which stepped a woman, heavily veiled, created consternation among the champion's handlers on the morning of the day preceding the big fight. She lifted the veil slightly, the better to take in her surroundings, and it was noticed that her face, while good-looking, was not youthful. She asked the man who answered her timid rap if Mr. Michael Murphy were in, and the man, thinking it amusing that Mike should have so formidable an appellation given him as "Mr. Michael," strove to repress his merriment while assuring the lady that the gentleman she had asked for was certainly in. At this moment the necessity of further instructions was removed by the appearance of the champion, attired in an immense bath-robe, with a Turkish towel thrown carelessly over his shoulders.

"Want to see me, ma'm?" he asked.

"I should prefer to see you alone—for five minutes," she said, indicating with a nod the man who had opened the door for her and was now standing a few feet away, curiosity having upper hand over his manners.

"What you hanging around for, you there?" Mike pointed toward the door. "Clear out. I'll call you when you're wanted."

The man stalked away.

"Well, ma'm," observed the champion, "we are alone."

She raised her veil, so that he might see her face clearly, and as she did so a beam of sunlight came through the open door and played on a lock of golden hair that had fallen onto her forehead. The golden was streaked here and there with a thread of silver.

"Is it Martha?" the fighter asked, slowly rubbing the back of his hand across his eyes.

"It is."

He brought a chair for her, and she sat down.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed, rubbing his hands together. "I'm glad to see you, Martha. It's been a long time, a long time."

"Going on twenty years. You look different, Michael. Indeed you do."

"I didn't have these then," he explained, caressing his bad ear and his nose.

"No."

"And I had better teeth," he continued, opening his mouth in an abashed smile.

She shuddered.

"Yes, Michael, you were a handsomer man when you—went away. Tell me, are you a happier man?"

"I am content," he said, after a pause. "I have become part of the game. It has become part of me, too. It had to be. You didn't understand then. How could you? We were kid lovers still, married young and not yet out of our honeymoon. Then this great yearning came. Maybe I got it from my ancestors back in the ould sod, and maybe I didn't. Indeed, ma'm, I don't know, but my blood would have burst its veins it was so feverish with the desire to fight."

"Yes, Michael, it was your inheritance; but I didn't understand it then," she spoke tenderly. "It never occurred to me that one man might inherit a passion for fighting as another would an appetite for strong drink. I thought you had ceased to love me, that you were courting disgrace in order that I would leave. And I did leave. One night when you were away fighting, I fled. Twenty years ago, and this is our reunion!"

The fighter's heart was touched by floods of memory. Where the sunlight played on this woman, he saw, another, a girl with laughing eyes and rosebud cheeks, his bride of two decades ago. He started toward her, his arms extending themselves as if he would embrace her.

She quickly held out an arm in protest.

"Careful, Michael," she admonished. "We are no longer lovers. The years have brought a gulf which separates us forever, however much we would will it otherwise. As you say, you have become a part of this fighting-game. I too, have made my place in life. There is, however, one interest left us in common. But, first, tell me, if, when you started boxing you had lost, instead of winning, would you have continued?"

"No," almost fiercely. "Winning is the only excuse a man has for fighting. It's no fun losing. If he is a dub—beg pardon, ma'm, I mean if he isn't good enough to be champion, he wants to get out of the game. There isn't anything in it unless you're on top, and if you are on top you are in almost as bad a way, for they wont let you get down until you get beat up. Every now and then, ma'm, you hear of a champion retiring, but they never stay retired, never. The promoters don't let 'em. It's: 'Ah, come out; just one more fight!' and you say to yourself, 'Well, why not? Just this once, and then it's all off for good!' So you keep bobbin' into retirement and bobbin' out again, until some young fellow cops you and you are done for. Then you keep hanging around, trying to win back your title and all the time making a nuisance of yourself. Yes, ma'm, that's what an ex-champion is—a nuisance; and a champion, it's always seemed to me, was what you might call, a nuisance-to-be."

"But until a man becomes champion, there is —hope?"

"Yes, ma'm, hope for him that he will be champion, and hope for his folks that he wont. Every fighter someday gets the whaling that he never can forget, and if he runs into it before he becomes champion, he'll quit."

There was a pause, during which the woman's eyes wandered through the

door off over the sage-brush country in the direction in which lay the rival training camp.

Meanwhile, the veteran fighter, drumming on the table an accompaniment to his thoughts, waited for his guest to speak.

"Michael," she broke the silence bluntly, "do you know that that boy over there is your son?"

Truths sometimes enter the brain like projectiles from a cannon, and as Mike Murphy felt the impact of this one he lurched forward. She had not spoken the name of "that boy," but he realized it without her saying.

"Who?" he cried. "Horace, Young Horace—my—my—son!"

"Yes, your son; born a month after our separation. You never saw him, and he has been taught that you are dead, that you died twenty years ago."

The champion groaned.

"Martha, Martha!" he cried, tumultuously. "This is awful. To meet my own son for the first time—in a prize-ring! Before I have time to see if his features resemble mine, to strike him, to be struck by him! It shall not be! I'll call off the match. I'll lose my paltry forfeit. I wont fight him. I can't!"

"Michael, you must!"

The champion turned on her angrily.

"Must! Do you know what you are saying, woman? Must! What sort of mother are you to spur your own husband into a fist fight with your own son. Must! The word should have burned your throat before it found utterance."

"But it must be, Michael."

"Why? Speak up!"

"To save our boy!"

"Ah, now I see. You've been leading me on. You've got me to say that it aint much after all to be champion. I've said that the way to keep a young fellow from being one is to trounce him good and plenty before he gets there. Now you ask me to jump in and end our boy's career by giving him that trouncing. Me, his father. For argument's sake, suppose I tried and lost! Suppose the boy was too much for me, that he won."

"You must not let him win."

"He's young and strong; I'm getting old. They do say he can fight, too."

"No matter; he must not win. Hear me, Michael, the boy is too good for the ring. You must stop him."

"I can't promise that. You're asking too much. Why did you ever permit him to fight?"

"Michael, think! How could I prevent it? I tried with his father, and failed. When Horace made his decision to be a pugilist, I put no obstacles in his way. Heaven, I thought, would bring him back to me. I never realized what would come to pass, that some day he would fight you. The ways of Providence are indeed strange."

"Have you thought that I might not agree to this? If I return your boy to you, I lose him almost at the moment I find him. I am a lonely man, and to have with me a son, a champion, as I was a champion, would be something. Have you thought of this?"

"I have so thought, and I leave the decision with you, whether Horace shall follow in your footsteps or shall go with me."

"The boy would never know me as his father?"

"No, Michael, never. For the boy's own good, when he leaves the ring, he must leave behind all that would tempt him back."

The mother continued looking over the alkali flat. The sunlight continued to play on the curl of gold and gray. The father drummed nervously. The sound of horses' hoofs broke the silence. It was the referee with a party of friends coming to instruct the champion on the way the Queensberry rules would be interpreted on the morrow.

"Come, Martha, you must be going," said the champion.

He escorted her to her carriage, and as they parted raised her hand to his lips.

"You will save our boy?" she asked, softly.

He dropped her hand abruptly and turned away.

"I aint saying what I will do," he growled.

But he watched the carriage until it was swallowed up in a whirlwind of dust, and when the referee's party drew rein, he greeted them with a somber face.

IV

There was no sleep in the mining-camp the night before the big fight. Sporting-men from the East and from the cities on the Pacific coast, in well-tailored garments of the latest dudish fancy, rubbed elbows with the coarsely dressed miners. The saloons and the gambling-halls were living in a blaze of glory.

A young man in a suit of greenish hue, with the trousers of that spaciousness affected by college-boys, and rolled up at the bottom, passing for a chic young fellow from an Eastern university, who had apparently been imbibing the Nevada refreshment with more gusto than taste, turned to his companion, whose acquaintance he had made within the last half hour. This latter person was old enough to be his father, but was not. He wore clothing with a check rather too loud to be in good style, a flaming red necktie set with a diamond pin, and several other diamonds in rings on his fingers. When he drank, as he did frequently, he made a great show of the diamonds as he lifted his glass, and this attracted attention.

"Who is he?" people would ask, nudging their neighbors.

"Why, don't you know, Simple? He's Brady!" and then there would be a long gasp and "O-oh!" for Brady was a celebrity among sporting-men, a professional gambler whose boast, like Mike Murphy's was that he was honest.

"It's a good bet, you say, Brady?" asked the youth.

"That's what it is, Kid. I tell you the youngster's a cinch—a copper-riveted cinch."

"You don't mean that the old man is fixed?"

"Fixed? Nothing! Why, Old Mike is as honest as the day is long. But he isn't right now, Kid. Take my word for it."

"How do you know?"

"Say, Kid, you don't suppose I've followed this game for a lifetime without learning how to read the signs? I tell you, Mike is no more fit to fight to-morrow than I am. There, is that strong enough? Didn't I go over to his camp just after dusk to-night? And d'ye think I saw a bright-eyed champion, bubbling over with confidence and talking cheerful to everyone, like Mike always does? Not on your life!"

And the veteran gambler brought his jeweled hand down on the bar with a bang.

"No, sir, I didn't see anything of the sort. There we were, Mike's trainers and sparring-partners and me and a few other of his old cronies, sitting around trying to jolly one another up. And there was Mike, standing at the open door, his hand shading his eyes and looking, just a-looking out into the darkness. It must have been an hour this way, Mike not saying a word and not seeming to hear what we said, and then finally he went out into the night and we could hear him walking back and forth in the gravel."

"Go on," urged the youth eagerly. "What then?"

"Not so fast, Kid," adjured the gambler. "The night's young yet. What're you drinking? Hey, bartender, fill 'em up again!"

"Now about Old Mike?" reminded the youth. "Did you leave him out there pacing the gravel path?"

"No," said Brady, "I couldn't stand it any longer, so I slipped out of the room and joined Mike. He didn't seem to notice me at first, although he couldn't help but know I was there, and I began to think I wasn't welcome and had better clear out, when Mike says, blurting out the words sudden:

"'Brady, you've always thought me pretty straight, aint you?'

"'There's none straighter,' says I.

"'Thank you, Brady,' replies he. 'It does me good to hear you say it.'

"Then he asks me how much has been wagered on the fight to-morrow, and I tell him what the papers have been saying, one million dollars.

"'I wouldn't lay down for 'em if they gave the whole million to me,' I hears him say, under his breath, as it was.

"Then he comes close to me, and puts a hand on my shoulder.

"'Brady,' says he, 'I wouldn't do it for a million, but—but they've offered me more.'"

Brady pulled an elaborately colored kerchief from his pocket, and wiped something that resembled a tear from his eye.

"No doubt of it, Kid. It's all off with Old Mike, and I feel bad about it. I've known old Mike ever since the night he won the championship. Cleared a fortune in bets on him that night. You see he was the outsider, and I got good odds for my money, and it sort of gave me my start."

"What's the matter with Mike? Do you really think someone has offered him more than a million dollars to lay down? Why, it's absurd, isn't it?"

"Sure it is, Kid. That's just it. With Old Mike the trouble's here," and the gambler put his finger to his forehead. "Maybe it's the heat, maybe it's the training. With some men it's their bodies that go first, and with others it's their minds.

"Old Mike is not as young as some," he hastened to add, explanatorily. "He's only human after all and had to go like the rest of them, although, Kid, I swear I've seen times when I thought he was more a god, or a devil, than a man. Greatest fighter I ever saw, that's what Mike Murphy was!"

After a moment the young man who had absorbed every word of the gambler's recital found occasion to slip out of the door, leaving Brady leaning heavily on the bar and gasping:

"Well, what d'ye think of that? The night's still young, and I thought he was a thoroughbred!"

"Hello, Brady!" greeted an acquaintance, joining him. "What's Hertzer got to say?"

"Hertzer? I don't know him, my boy," replied Brady. "I'm too close to Old Mike to go making friends in Young Horace's camp. I don't know this fellow Hertzer."

"Don't know him? Why, you've been talking to him here for the last hour!"

Brady's uplifted glass fell with a crash to the floor, breaking into a thousand bits.

"The de-vil you say!" he groaned.

Meanwhile Mr. Charles Hertzer, manger of pugilists, with the information direct from Old Mike's camp that the champion was suffering from a mysterious ailment which insured his defeat on the morrow, was wiring a commission of ten thousand dollars to San Francisco to be wagered on Young Horace at the best odds obtainable. As the champion was ruling favorite at 2 to 5, Hertzer figured on winning $25,000.

"I'm glad it's a sure thing," he told himself as he left the telegraph-office. "Ten thousand dollars is pretty steep for me. If I lost it I'd have to walk home. Think of walking from Goldfield to Broadway! Yes, I'm glad it's a sure thing."

V

A large amphitheatre had been erected for the day's sport, and this began filling at noon, when the doors were swung open, although the fight was not to commence until 2 o'clock. On all sides tiers of seats ran back, one above the other, after the manner of the circus, and in the center of the vast auditorium was a platform. This was at once the magnet of all eyes. Four posts, to which ropes were attached, formed an enclosure of twenty-four feet square. The posts were padded with soft material, wrappings of cloth were wound around the ropes, and a thin mat was spread on the floor. This was the site of battle. Within this square of twenty-four feet the athletes were to battle to a finish, until one of them was hammered unconscious.

At one o'clock the amphitheater was filled. The newspaper-men carrying their coats over their arms, commenced filing into the ringside-seats reserved for them, and the crowd, for lack of any thing else to do, stamped its feet, clapped its hands, and was noisy. The reporters smiled and chucked one another in the ribs, thinking it a capital joke. Then the crowd settled down, amusing itself with small talk and big betting.

At two o'clock an old man with a white mustache climbed into the ring, followed by a portly personage with a vast area of white shirt-bosom and many diamonds. They were, respectively, the referee and the announcer. They were cheered heartily, and they bowed

to the crowd with good nature. Then two young men in sweaters, carrying a chair and a pail of water, walked through the crowd. A third be-sweatered youth, with towels and bottles, joined them on the platform.

"Here he comes!" a voice cried, shrill and suddenly, and every eye turned toward a moving figure in the aisle and every voice mechanically gave utterance to sound.

It was Young Horace. A bath-robe was thrown over his shoulders, and he walked proudly, but with eyes downcast. The three trainers lifted him to the platform, and he stood for a moment gazing into the sea of faces and for a brief space there was no sound.

But the silence was suddenly succeeded by pandemonium. Everyone was stamping and clapping and screaming at once. Hats and coats were thrown high in the air. It was a superb demonstration, and Mike Murphy, advancing toward the ring with his coterie of trainers, seemed to enjoy it, for he bobbed his ugly little face to the right and to the left and swung his spindle legs in an exaggerated strut. But, though he seemed cheerful enough, no one saw Mike Murphy smile.

In truth, to smile was of all things in the world what Mike Murphy felt less like doing. He sat rigid in his chair while his assistants rubbed and patted and caressed his muscles, and while they tried on the gloves, and even while the announcer, with a great flourish of his hand, indicated "in this corner, gentlemen, Honest Old Mike Murphy, champion lightweight of the world, and the squarest fighter that ever pulled on a glove."

Mike heard nothing; he heeded nothing. He was studying the boyish face across that twenty-four feet of padded battlefield—the face of his boy.

Yes, there was some resemblance. The hair was the same shade as his had been twenty years ago, and he noticed a familiar contrariness in a lock that persisted in remaining up when it should have been down. The boy's eyes were his mother's. His nose—and Old Mike found himself aimlessly rubbing his wrecked frontispiece and laughing to himself ironically; but the boy's nose was certainly no straighter, indeed it was almost a duplicate of a certain nose Mike Murphy had seen in the mirror twenty years ago.

The champion felt himself shaken from his thoughts by a stout slap on the back.

"Come, come, Mike, it's time to get started," a voice said, and in a moment he was divested of his bath-robe, pushed into the center of the ring and was mechanically shaking hands with his opponent. Then they stepped back, he and the boy, the gong sounded, and the fight was on.

The prize-ring has never known such another combat. The sun, which crept into the building and bathed the contestants in its early afternoon-glare, sank on a scene of horror, of blood, of heroism—of one man reeling from corner to corner, helpless, his guns, as it were, spiked; the other atop of him, his eyes tight-closed as if blinded, and his arms working like piston-rods, hitting, hitting, hitting, relentlessly.

But the real battle was fought, not in the noisy ring before the screaming thousands, but secretly in the heart of Mike Murphy. Long afterwards, under bond of secrecy, he told the story to Brady.

"I hope, old pal, that will never be up to me to go through another such a time as that," said Old Mike. "At first I couldn't hit him at all. I hadn't the heart. I hadn't the desire, either All I could do was to hold up my mitts, like a dub, and keep backing away from him. Oh, sir, but he was a grand fighter, so graceful and easy about it and always keeping his head cool.

"Well, sir, I don't know how long it went along this way, the boy leading out with his right and following it up with as pretty a left as you ever saw, and me blocking the best I could and all the time backing away. Soon the crowd began to shout that Old Mike was done for, that he had forgotten how to fight, but some of the others cried back that I was playing 'possum, saving my wind, and they hollered to the boy to go in and make me fight. But the boy was not getting rattled. He was jabbing and hooking light-like, not taking any

chances, but looking all the time for an opening to get me with a decisive punch. Oh, he was the shrewd general, that boy!

"All of a sudden I shot out with my right, hoping I would miss. And I did. The boy saw his chance. Quick as a flash, he set himself and swung his left hard for the jaw. You know, sir, that it doesn't take long for your watch to tick off ten seconds, and as I hit the mat after that blow I thought I was done for. My head was reeling terribly, and when I tried to get over on to my knees my strength seemed unequal for the task. I could hear the crowd cheering and it sounded very far away, like the voices you hear when you are sick with fever. I also could hear the referee counting off the seconds, but that, too, sounded far away.

"Well, sir, I got up at the count of nine. I wasn't more than a rag of my old self. And there was that boy, standing there as cool as a veteran, ready to strike me down again. How the crowd yelled! 'Go in and finish him; you've got him going!' they cried, for, you see, sir, the crowd is always with the winner. I tried feebly to guard myself, but the boy was not to be stopped and, for the second time, I was stretched out.

"I don't mind telling you, pal, now, that it is all over, that Mike Murphy's greatest victory was won while I was lying there with the referee counting me out and the crowd yelling like mad. Mike Murphy, who had never laid down to any man, wanted to quit. The boy had me whipped. And, sir, you see he was my own boy, and it would have been nice to see him champion. Then I might have told him that I was his daddy, and I could have looked after him, and might have lived my career all over again in his victories. Yes, sir, I wanted to quit. Then I thought of that boy's mother, and maybe she was right. I grit my teeth and pulled myself to my feet.

"The boy came at me, and I dropped into a clinch. 'You're whipped, old man. What's the use of keeping it up any longer? I feel mean about hitting you. It's brutal,' the boy whispered in my ear. Me! Mike Murphy, whipped! Feels mean about hitting me! Brutal to hit Mike Murphy! My fighting-blood was aflame in an instant. I'd show the young'un! The next thought that came into my head, while we was still in the clinch, wrestling around the ring, and the referee trying to drag us apart, was that them words of the boy was made of the right stuff. He saw he had the fight two-thirds won and he couldn't find the heart to hit a man when he was helpless.

"All our affections start growing sometimes; I don't believe they come to us natural, full-grown; and at that moment I think my love for my son started. I don't know what the feeling I had for him before was; it wasn't quite love. And, then, all at once, I knew that his mother was right: he was too good a lad for the prize-ring. I knew, too, that I hadn't any right letting him win, if I wanted to, and I remembered how I had seized that sneaking Hertzer's throat when he suggested buying my honor.

"If you don't mind, I'd sooner not talk about the rest of it. I did what the boy's mother wanted, but there were times when I doubted my ability. Yes, sir, he was a grand fighter, that boy, the grandest I think I ever knew. And what a licking he took! He was that game to the bone that there wasn't a particle of him that would say die, and, sir, I had to close my eyes toward the finish as I struck.

"Him? He's with his mother now, doing well with a real-estate man. No, never again.

"Who, me? Well, pal, I'm still champion."

Of The Spider's Spinning

By W. BERT FOSTER

I

WITH the dropping of evening the drizzle drifted in across the bay on the breast of a soughing easterly wind, and Fisher Lockwood buttoned his coat throat-high to keep out the chill. He had been fishing that afternoon and the tautog—the gamiest rod-and-line fish in Rhode Island waters—had bitten well. His basket was well laden and Lockwood was looking forward in pleasant anticipation to the havoc he should make among the piscatorial denizens of Maine's ponds and brooks during his annual vacation, which soon came due.

He was an ardent fisherman. It was his single relief from the steady grind of Gumbart & Lockwood's general store, situated on the edge of East Greenwich village.

He was making his way toward the store now through the evening haze, when he came abreast of "The Poplars." Somehow, even the sight of the place in the falling dusk, made him shiver and quicken his step.

There wasn't a superstitious bone in Fisher Lockwood's body. He was a most commonplace, practical young man—with a soul scarcely above the sand in his sugar! Years before, The Poplars had possessed the usual reputation of the country mansion that is allowed to stand idle for any unknown cause. It was said that the place was haunted, and with an old blunderbuss, a meat-cleaver, and his dog Spot, Fisher Lockwood had stolen into the dusky house one night for the avowed purpose of "laying" the ghost.

But before the witching hour at which spirits walk, the youth was soundly sleeping on the bare floor of the mansion's parlor, and he did not waken until the sun shining through the chinks of the shutters drove every ghostly shadow from the room. So he had given up ghost hunting and pooh-poohed the general belief in the existence of supernatural occupants in The Poplars.

The house was a high-shouldered, square built structure, of brick covered with plaster. In places the plaster had fallen away and in others the dampness had made it green—as if the brown old house had the mange.

On the roof was a huge cupola, partly glass enclosed, and although the whole front of the house was dark on this evening, Lockwood could see a bright light in that sky-parlor. It was there almost every night. Sometimes the fierce glare of it made the curious neighbors believe the house was afire. But they did not attribute it to ghosts now.

Some twelve months before The Poplars had been leased and renovated (upon the inside at least) by a certain Dr. Jessop—Dr. Ballington Jessop. He was a complete stranger to the East Greenwich folk, and he came to the quiet town without other recommendation than an apparently well filled purse.

He did not come to practice his profession in the town. He had refused, indeed, to treat the child of his own gardener—and refused, too, in so rough and surly a manner that he had at once gained an ill name in the community.

With Fisher Lockwood, however, it

was the man's appearance that disgusted him. The doctor was an obese, short man, with a blotched face and flabby hands. But this flabbiness ended right at the knuckles; his fingers were taper, long, and manicured like a fine lady's. There was something deadly about the whiteness and flexibility of Jessop's hands and fingers.

With his spotted face, his paunched body, his white, supple hands, he reminded Fisher Lockwood of a great spider. Perhaps this was partly because Lockwood possessed an overwhelming aversion to spiders—as many people do to serpents and some to cats. To meet Jessop personally when he entered the store went against Lockwood's grain; and even now in passing The Poplars, where the doctor so mysteriously resided, he could not repress this nervous shudder.

What was being done in the cupola of the old mansion troubled Lockwood not at all. Whether Jessop was—as some of the neighbors whispered—a vivisectionist, or was engaged in some illegal practice like counterfeiting, did not disturb Lockwood's mind in the least. He did not care what the doctor did; it was the look of the man—his horrid appearance—that marked him as objectionable to Lockwood.

He scarcely glanced at the gloomy house behind the straight rows of black poplars. He wished to get out of the vicinity and shake off the apprehension which so mysteriously affected him. And this desire was so strong that an explosion of voices which, out of the mist and darkness, suddenly reached his attentive ear from behind the wall of the estate, did not at first bring Fisher Lockwood to a halt.

In a minute more he would have been out of ear-shot, for the voices were not high, though intense; but one—sharp, feminine, clear as a bell—stayed him.

"Take your hand from me! I have declared my intention of going; I will not be stayed!"

The second voice was gruffer, but no more resolute.

"And I say you shall stay, Anna! This is foolish—preposterous. You promised me—"

"A bad promise—a bad promise!" broke in a woman's voice. "I did not know—"

"By heaven! you shall stay, I tell you!" interrupted the man, in a passion. "I'll not let you leave here and with your prattling tongue do me harm —I swear I'll not! Back to the house you go, girl—and I'll lock you up if I can't keep you otherwise!"

"Take your hand from me, sir!" repeated the other voice, and now Fisher Lockwood had dropped his basket and pole and stepped back to the gate in the wall near which the actors in this surprising drama seemed to be standing.

He leaned over the iron gate and peered into the dark alley under the trees. It was a moment before his eyes became accustomed to the gloom; but he heard both the man and the woman panting and there were sounds as if a struggle was in progress.

"Let me go!" gasped the woman again.

At that Lockwood rattled the gate, found the latch, and rushed in.

"Who the devil's this?" demanded the man, and thrust his ugly, obese figure before the taller person of the woman.

"I'm Fisher Lockwood. If this lady desires my protection, doctor, I am here to offer it. No you don't! stop where you are!" commanded the younger man. "Let the lady speak her mind untrammeled."

The woman had glided around the doctor when Lockwood had announced his presence, and allowed the latter to come between her and her enemy. Now she spoke hurriedly—in good English, yet with an intonation that assured Lockwood that she was a foreigner.

"Thank you, Mr. Lockwood. I know who you are. I pray you make no distubance; but if you will accompany me to Mr. Trummel's house, I will consider it kind, indeed, of you."

"By heaven! I say the girl shan't go," reiterated Jessop, snarling more like an angry dog than a human being. "What, are you interfering in my affairs for, Lockwood?"

He tried to brush past the young man again, but although Lockwood did no

touch him with his hands, his belligerent attitude evidently made Jessop reconsider his intention.

"Stay right where you are," said Lockwood, firmly. "I do not wish to interfere in any man's private affairs; but the lady has asked me to see her to Trummel's, and I shall do so. We do not need your attendance."

He swung out of the gate and closed it with a sharp clang in the doctor's face.

Jessop did not follow them out on the street.

Lockwood turned to find himself face to face with a tall stately girl whose pale complexion and wealth of light hair shone vividly in the darkness. She carried a heavy grip in one hand.

How it felt to be a hero, even in a small way, Fisher Lockwood did not know. He never thought of that phase of the matter. He lifted his hat and with a murmured, "Allow me!" took the grip himself, offered the girl his arm, and walked her away from the gate in the wall which surrounded The Poplars.

Outwardly he was as calm and unconcerned as if it were quite in his regular line of work—this rescuing of distressed females from the hand of villainy! But the fact was, he was so perturbed and shaken over his encounter with the man whom he so disliked, that he forgot his rod and creel, and left both lying by the wall of the mansion grounds.

At the corner of the straggling street was a dim lamp on a pole. Although East Greenwich boasts an electric-light plant, the illumination of the white ray does not penetrate to all of the suburban parts. As if by previous agreement, the two—the young man and the young woman, until then strangers to each other—halted in the dull, yellow illumination of the lamp.

Lockwood remembered having seen her before at a distance. Her name, gossip at the grocery said, was Anna Sorelson, and she had come from New York to be a companion, or attendant, on the doctor's sister who was an invalid.

She was a tall, strong, massively formed young woman, with the corn-silk complexion of the Swedish race, set off by a vivid spot of crimson in each cheek. Her hair was like corn-silk, too, and the mass of it, piled high on her head, made her seem taller than she really was, and bared the white column of her beautifully molded neck from her low collar to the pink lobes of her ears.

The expression of her countenance was saved by eyebrows and lashes darker than her hair, and profuse, and Lockwood saw, in that instant glance, that her large eyes were hazel instead of the Norse blue which he had expected.

The physical beauty of the young woman, flashed upon him thus suddenly, actually made the young man gasp. Then she smiled, but with lips that parted tremblingly, for she was agitated too—murmured:

"I thank you, Mr. Lockwood. You are most kind."

At that, Lockwood suddenly found himself violently enraged at Jessop.

"What did that scoundrel mean? How dared he to touch you?" he demanded.

The thought that any person should lay a rude hand upon this statuesquely beautiful girl, seemed to him like profanation.

"He would not have hurt me—no. I am stronger than he, I think. But he was angry because I attempted to leave."

"But you had a right to come away!"

"Oh, yes! Although, in the first place, I came under an agreement to remain in attendace upon Miss Jessop. But in this free land they cannot make a bondwoman of a servant, no more than in my own."

"'A servant?'" repeated Lockwood, finding the word distasteful.

"Yes. I am what you call a professional servant. I have been a nurse and companion. That is right—yes?"

"Oh, I suppose so," grunted Lockwood, but dropping his gaze quickly.

This beautiful creature was not his idea of "hired help."

"And you were kind to carry the bag for me, sir," she said calmly. "You know where Mr. Trummel lives?"

"Of course."

"I will thank you for seeing me to his door. I had made arrangements this afternoon to go there to board for a while. I will send for my trunk in the

morning. This is the turning, is it not?"

They had walked on, and Lockwood was silent, taking now and then wondering glances at her in the semi-gloom of the suburban street.

Finally he blurted out:

"What is the matter with that man? Is he crazy that he should try to keep you against your will?"

"He very much desired to have me remain," Anna Sorelson said, quietly.

"But why?"

"That I cannot tell you, Mr. Lockwood. Here is Mr. Trummel's. See! they are expecting me. Thank you so much!" and she firmly took the bag from his half-resisting grasp.

"Good-night!"

He found himself dismissed, but lingered a moment before returning for his fish and rod. She did not look around again, however, and he saw the door of Trummel's cottage open at her knock, and then she disappeared within.

II

Gumbart & Lockwood was a passing prosperous firm. The store, situated in an old, dun-colored building on a highway much driven upon by those going to and coming from East Greenwich, "caught them coming and going," in the phraseology of Silas Gumbart. Gumbart had originally been sole proprietor, but had let Fisher Lockwood into the business rather than lose the best clerk he ever had.

Lockwood was a bachelor and slept in a room behind the store. He was popular with all classes of the firm's customers, and could dun a man for an overdue account so pleasantly, yet so successfully, that the man rather liked the process.

His popularity extended to the female portion of the community, too; but, heretofore, he had never been really interested in any woman. And his unimpressionable nature might have remained unruffled regarding Anna Sorelson had their first meeting been less dramatic. But for days he went about in a maze, seeing her wonderful eyes before his waking vision, and telling over, like a friar his beads, the physical charms of the beautiful Swedish girl.

He hungrily fed upon the gossip, too, that passed current about her. It was said by the Trummels, who had received her as a lodger, that Miss Sorelson was a very highly paid professional nurse and masseuse; that Miss Jessop suffered from some nervous disorder which was assauged by the Swedish method of treatment, and although Miss Sorelson would not remain at The Poplars, she went each day to see the doctor's sister.

"Funny about that," said Silas Gumbart. "Mebbe old Jessop's been shinin' up to her; she's er purty gal. Mebbe she thinks it aint the proper caper to live in the same house with a man she's likely to marry. I've heard tell that was eticat," he added, as if stating a curious idiosyncrasy of propriety.

"Oh, thunder, Si! why do you listen to such gossip?" demanded his partner, sharply. "Do you suppose that girl would marry a beast like Jessop? Ugh! the fat, diseased, blotch-faced old spider!"

"Ho, ho! a case of beauty and the beast, eh?"

"Don't be a fool, Si!"

"Gosh! what's made you so tart all of a sudden, Fisher?" demanded his friend looking quizzically over his iron-bowed specs. at the younger man. "I reckon you *need* that vacation you have been talkin' about for so long. Yer nairves air goin' back on ye."

"Nerves be hanged!"

"And you aint got no call to be so sour on Jessop. You never seem ter mind waitin' on the old King of Chippewenoxit when he comes here with his pet hawg, an' all the dogs in the village follerin' ter his tail. He's 'nough sight wuss lookin' than the doctor."

Lockwood smiled at this reference to a queer old character, more than a little mad, who lived alone on a small island near the shore, and whose taste in associates ran to swine and stray dogs.

"Of the two I prefer the old King," he said. "He may be dirty and crazy, but his heart is all right or the dogs wouldn't follow him. No man can be very bad if dumb animals are fond of him."

"Shucks! Jessop's been a good customer."

"He hasn't paid his bill for the last two months, and he hasn't been in the store for a fortnight," snapped Lockwood.

"All right," returned his partner, grinning. "You take the bill and go over and see him before you go to Maine. That'll be a good job for you."

Lockwood shrugged his shoulders, but he could not refuse. Collecting accounts was part of his work.

But he postponed this unpleasant errand until the last possible moment before he was to start on his jaunt into Maine. Indeed he neglected it until the very day of his departure. He had sent his trunk and bag to the station, bought his ticket, checked his baggage through to the railway-station nearest to the camp where he was to reside for three weeks or a month, and stood ready to depart with that one thing undone—the collection of Dr. Jessop's bill.

He had hoped, indeed, that the doctor would have come in and settled the account without being dunned. He knew very well why he did not trade any more with Gumbart & Lockwood; but he had not told his partner—or any other person—of his encounter with the doctor the evening that Anna Sorelson had changed her residence from The Poplars to Trummel's house.

He had frequently made business which took him through the side-street on which the girl lived, and on a number of occasions had met and spoken with her. She seemed as unfeignedly glad to see him as he was to see her; but whenever he hinted at her reason for leaving Jessop's roof, or touched upon that hateful individual at all, she was dumb.

It was afternoon and the usual crowd of loungers had gathered on the porch of Gumbart & Lockwood's general store. To Lockwood, who was a bit philosophical, these chair-warmers always reminded him of flies buzzing about a molasses-cask. They were just as idle and quite as useless in the community.

News was bartered here from the various outlying districts, as well as the more bustling center of Main street itself, and rough witticisms were bandied back and forth like shuttlecocks. The grocery-porch — in winter the circle about the stove inside — was the meeting-place of the local political clubs, the rendezvous of the minister, the doctor, the school-teacher and the lawyer—all the professions represented in the community—and the loitering place of the few patrons of the roadside inn nearby.

To-day the teacher had brought with him a lank, black-haired man with cadaverous face and sparkling black eyes, who was introduced to the general company as "Mr. Packard." The teacher mentioned that Dr. Jessop had recommended the stranger to him, and with the agreement of the school directors, Mr. Packard was to give a rather novel entertainment in the schoolhouse on the next Friday evening.

"Looks like er loony, don't he, Fisher?" grunted Silas, who was one of the school directors, and was doubtful of Mr. Packard from the start. "Didjer ever see such eyes on mortal man before?"

"Magnetic — magnetic, Mr. Gumbart," said the teacher, who overheard this comment.

"Huh? Mebbe," grumbled Silas.

Lockwood was not much interested. He saw Dr. Jessop turn out of the Shore road on which The Poplars stood, and approach the store.

"This will save me an unpleasant job," thought the junior partner. "The creature's coming to pay the bill now."

But when Jessop was abreast of the store and looked up, after nodding to the teacher and Packard, his eye fell upon Lockwood. His brow clouded and his mottled face glowed with a sudden purple flush. He passed on and did not enter the store.

"Gee, Fisher! the Doc must like you," exclaimed one idler, with a cackling laugh. "Whatcher done? Put too much water in his kerosene, 'r sanded his sugar too heavy?"

"I reckon the feelin's mootial," crowed another observing bystander. "Fisher looked like he c'd ha' eat him 'thout pepper 'r salt!"

"Ugh! I'd as lives eat a spotted spider," shuddered Lockwood. "That is what he looks like—a spider."

"Ahem!" ejaculated a thin voice at his elbow, and Lockwood shifted his gaze to find the black eyes of the stran-

ger examining him with unpleasant earnestness. "You seem to dislike my friend, Dr. Jessop?" he asked.

"We don't hitch," returned the young man, laconically, sorry now that he had been betrayed into any expression of his dislike for the doctor.

"An able man, the doctor—a wonderfully able man," declared Packard, his strange eyes seeming to hold Lockwood's gaze whether the young man would or not.

It seemed really as if a further expression of his opinion of Jessop was forced from Lockwood's lips.

"He does not impress me that way. He must eat swinishly for his body to be in that condition. Ugh! I never saw a man who looked so like a great, bloated venemous spider in all my life, than this Jessop! It—it fairly makes me shudder to look at him."

He swung on his heel and reëntered the store. He was sorry he had spoken so; he heard the cackling laughter of the bystanders.

When he glanced back the man, Packard, was already striding down the street in the direction Dr. Jessop had taken.

"He'll repeat what I said to him, I presume," thought Lockwood, angry enough now.

Then, being a Yankee and thrifty, he bethought him of the bill Jessop still owed the firm.

"I'd best get hold of the doctor before that lanky individual sees him," he thought.

He told Silas where he was going.

"Will I see you again before you light out for the woods, Fisher?" asked Gumbart.

"Mebbe not. By-by. Don't work too hard, Si. You shall have your good time when I come back."

"Yep. Four days at the county-fair—that's my vacation, Fisher. Huh! I was born and bred before vacations became fashionable."

They shook hands warmly, however, for between these two rather unemotional men there had grown up a sincere regard.

"Have a good time, boy!" said Silas, and Lockwood went out.

It was nearing the established supper hour. The call of the inner man had drawn the loungers homeward and the store-porch was deserted. Lockwood saw two figures, arm in arm, entering the side door of the inn. They were the stranger, Packard and Dr Jessop.

"That fellow will queer me with the Spider if I don't watch out," thought the young man and he hastened to follow the couple, finding them in the back parlor of the inn with a pair of tall glasses before them.

Lockwood tried to appear at ease under the doctor's scowl.

"Sorry to trouble you, doctor," he observed, fishing in his wallet for a statement of account. "A little matter that has doubtless slipped your mind—and it slipped mine, too, until just now. But I happen to be going away this evening and thought you might wish to settle up before I went."

He placed the bill on the table before Jessop. The latter looked up with a snarl and, using his thumb and finger, snapped the paper across the table again.

"Do you think I carry my checkbook around with me?" he demanded. "This is no place to present a bill."

"Pardon me," said Lockwood, suavely. "I thought it might save a trip to your house. You can send the check."

"Well it *wont* save you a trip, for I wont send the check," declared Jessop. "Go over to the house. You'll find your check waiting there for you—where it's been for the last two weeks."

"But—"

"You can go after it, or go without it—whichever you blamed please!" snarled Jessop, and turned his back on him.

Packard had slipped quietly from the room. Lockwood's blood boiled; but he had his partner's interest to think of and he was sharp enough himself not to allow even righteous indignation to interfere with business!

He picked up the bill and turned on his heel without a word. Possibly the uncanny feeling he had about the doctor would have kept him from manhandling him, anyway. He shuddered again as he closed the door on his own departure.

His time was limited now, yet in making his way to The Poplars he passed Trummel's cottage. As it chanced Miss Sorelson was at the gate, and Lockwood's pulse beat quicker at the thought that possibly she had expected him to come this way on his route to the railway-station. As he drew near the girl he noticed the lank stranger Packard, coming leisurely from the opposite direction, but on the other side of the way. *He* seemed interested in Miss Sorelson, too, and to Lockwood's vexation actually halted a moment across from the girl and stared boldly at her.

Anna shrank from his gaze and turned as if to retreat into the cottage; then her glance fell upon the approaching Lockwood, and he smiled and quickened his steps.

But to his amazement the girl's countenance showed no answering smile. She was of a placid nature and he had never, saving as regarded Dr. Jessop, seen the girl display any marked distaste for any living creature. But now he was stricken dumb, almost motionless, by the haughty look of disdain which flashed into her beautiful face!

She turned her back to him and walked, in her stately way, into Trummel's garden.

Lockwood gasped, the blood flooded into his countenance, and seeing Packard grinning sardonically from across the road, he hurried on without endeavoring to arrive at an explanation of Anna's mysterious conduct.

Once he glanced back. The girl had returned to the gate and was gazing up the road in the opposite direction as before.

Packard had walked on.

III

Lockwood, nonplussed and suddenly sore at heart, kept on toward The Poplars. Anna Sorelson had seemed so sweet and friendly heretofore that this astonishing change in her demeanor was as stunning to the young man as a physical blow.

As his feet carried him laggingly forward his thoughts went swiftly back, touching upon each meeting with the girl and recounting every word they had spoken. He was sure nothing he could have said or done had given her offense. And the last time he had seen her she had been as quietly glad to meet him as ever! The mystery confused his mind, yet he could not fail to connect it, in some way, with Dr. Jessop.

"I'll be bound that brute has poisoned her mind against me," Lockwood muttered moodily. "I—I wish I was not going away. I swear, if my trunk hadn't already gone up, I'd postpone the vacation and get at the bottom of this business. Why! She looked at me as if I were the dirt under her feet!

"If I find Jessop has done this, even the bestial appearance of the man sha'n't save him! I'll lay my hands on him—and to good purpose. Ugh!" and he shuddered again at the thought of the doctor's unfortunate physique.

"I wonder if I could? The venemous spider! I'd much liever pick up a spider than touch him. Pshaw! I believe I'm cowardly about the fellow. Such a looking creature ought to be shut up away from the sight of other mortals. I declare, if I looked like Jessop I'd rather hide from my fellow beings or commit suicide. Ugh!"

It gave him a peculiar sensation all over his body to think of such a possibility—that he, himself, might ever grow to such an obese and disgusting object as the strange doctor. That nervous affection of the cuticle known as "gooseflesh" stood out upon Lockwood, and he shivered as if cold water had run the length of his spine.

"Gad! what a thought," he muttered. "If I was Jessop, I'd either cure myself or destroy myself. As he sat there in the inn he looked like a huge spotted spider—and ready to spring upon me! He's queered me with Miss Sorelson, too—I know it was he! I've a mind to go back and ask her to explain now—or shall I write to her? Surely she will hear me in my own behalf, whatever may be the lie that scoundrel has set afoot against me."

So communing with himself he came at last to The Poplars. The front of the house was, as usual, grimly shut up. The doctor's sister seldom went out, and they received no company. Lockwood en-

tered the gateway, walked up the path, and rang a peal upon the lion-head knocker which adorned the heavy oak door.

His mind was scarcely upon the business he had come about as he awaited a response to his summons, and several minutes passed before he realized that the door had not been opened.

He knocked again.

Instantly the big door was pulled ajar and a smirking man-servant in a faded livery coat but half-buttoned, and face and hands showing traces of pot-smut, betraying the fact that he had come hurriedly from scullery duties, held the door and bowed to him.

"Is—er—the doctor in?" asked Lockwood, still confused in his mind, and forgetting that he had left Jessop back at the inn.

The man's expression changed to amused surprise and he still held wide the door.

"Why, sir, he's at home if *you're* at home, sir!" he stammered, as Lockwood walked in.

"How's that?" queried the young man, slightly puzzled.

The serving-man was closing the door and did not look around again; but Lockwood thought he saw the fellow's shoulders shaking as if he were struggling with internal laughter. When the door was fastened, without another word this strangely acting domestic walked away. Lockwood called after him, but a banging door at the end of the passage drowned his voice and the man did not return.

"Strange," observed Lockwood, under his breath, and stepped into the open reception-room, or parlor, where the furniture was swathed in linen. "And who is to give me that check?" he added, the next moment.

He turned hastily at this thought, intending to return to the hall and raise some member of the household; but he caught a glimpse of somebody moving at the end of the room. So he turned back again and, as he supposed, beheld a person walking toward him through an archway from the back parlor.

Lockwood advanced himself saying, in some confusion:

"I beg your pardon! The doctor told me—"

It *was* the doctor! Jessop—his empurpled face aglow, one flabby hand outstretched, his little eyes leering, the disgusting paunch of the man almost bursting the tight frock-coat he wore—was approaching him.

Lockwood halted and again could not repress a visible shudder.

"You—you must have taken a short-cut, doctor," the younger man said, speaking confusedly. "I really did not expect to find you—"

The doctor's lips had parted and Lockwood saw that they formed words; but he could not hear what the apparition said.

"I beg your pardon!" he said again, drawing a step nearer.

The apparition made another facial grimace. He seemed to stand just under the arch between the two rooms and he stared at Lockwood as amazedly as Lockwood stared at him. The younger man's wrath rose and his brow clouded as the doctor's own countenance grew black with dawning rage.

"Did you speak, sir?" Lockwood demanded sharply.

Again he saw Jessop's lips writhe, but no sound came from them. Lockwood advanced quickly and clenching his fist might, in his sudden passion, have struck at his enemy. A discovery stopped him in season—and a discovery the significance of which he did not for a full minute realize.

There was no doorway here. He had been advancing toward a huge mirror all the time and his rage was aimed against a mere reflection!

A reflection? Then the original must be behind him! He wheeled to confront the doctor's obese and disgusting person; the reflection in the great mirror turned likewise.

There was nobody behind Lockwood. *He was alone in the room!*

Stupefied, physically as well as mentally, by the utter horror of the discovery, Fisher Lockwood remained in a half-crouching attitude for a long minute. He was half-turned from the mirror, but could see into it plainly. He saw in detail the reflection of the room in which he stood; and in addition he saw—

crouching spider-like, as if ready to spring—the figure of Dr. Ballington Jessop!

Lockwood's mind was not one which dwelt much upon abstract subjects. He was devoted to the practical—the here-and-now—incidents of life. It had never entered his mind ere now to wonder why, or how, a man may suddenly go mad.

But mad he must be—or dreaming!

He was looking into a mirror and that mirror, instead of reflecting back to his visual senses a representation of himself, showed him the hated and vicious form of the man he so disliked. It was an impossibility—an absurd impossibility! It was the trick of a suddenly diseased and warped mentality. He was indeed mad!

More faithful than a man's shadow is his reflection in the glass. One cannot cheat the crystal. Whatever is set before it must be repeated therein. Yet here stood Fisher Lockwood staring horrifiedly at the reflection of Dr. Balington Jessop!

And suddenly the terrified man swept his person with a swift glance. He fell back from the mirror with a shriek of horror. He saw the reflection spring back likewise and fling up its hands.

For, instead of discovering the familiar outlines of his own person, Lockwood saw that the glass had not lied.

Fisher Lockwood did not stand before it!

Beneath his own clothing—the Sunday frock and light trousers he had donned to travel in—swelled the fat and hateful figure of the doctor. The garments fitted him not at all, hanging in folds in places, yet stretching almost to the bursting of the buttons in others.

These details sunk slowly into his sodden mind; yet they rankled not. The single stunning discovery that he had—by some horrid art, or some mystery of demonology—changed personalities with Dr. Jessop, dulled his appreciation of everything else in the world!

But of a sudden he came to life. He leaped to the door of the parlor into which the servant had ushered him. Rage inflamed, and intent for vengeance, it was in his mind—which was still the mind of Fisher Lockwood—to find Jessop. By some hellish art, of which the mysterious doctor was a master, this exchange of their bodies had been affected.

And yet, the thought was so fantastic that Lockwood halted and repressed his first intention of shrieking aloud and demanding the presence of the master of the house. He glanced down again at his changed person, and the thought smote him that if he cried out Jessop's name, he would be shrieking for himself!

He hung upon the door-jamb with both hands, scarce able to stand erect. There was not a sound in the house, and as evening had already fallen without, it was quite black in the hall. A strong feeling of nausea clutched him, and he felt that he must seek the open air or stifle and die in this hateful place.

Staggering to the door, he fumbled at its bolts and bars and somehow unfastened them and got the portal open. The cool air of the outer world rushed in and Lockwood rushed to meet it with arms outspread and nostrils quivering and dilated. The heavy door clanged to behind him.

Was it a dream? Had there been some strange influence in that old house which had so worked upon his brain, and so tortured it? He remembered the ancient gossip regarding The Poplars and bethought him of his own boyish adventure in the mansion. Was it some strange and supernatural power connected with the old house that had brought about this aberration of mind which had surely clutched him while he was under the roof of the old mansion?

He was still Fisher Lockwood! He thought with Fisher Lockwood's mind, he possessed his taste and desires. He clung there in the darkness to the iron gate of the mansion wall and went over in his thoughts the occurrences of the day—even to the sales in the store which he chanced to have personally made.

He knew his brain was clear enough. Had he been emotionally insane, and only for those few moments in which he had stood before the mirror in Jessop's house?

Preposterous indeed! How could a madman realize that he *was* mad? That seemed to Lockwood the climax of impossibility.

He realized with a horror that turned his blood to water and set him shivering like an aspen, that the nightmare rode him yet He thought indeed with Fisher Lockwood's mind; but it was Ballington Jessop's body that clung here to the gate!

In the semi-glow of the late evening he could make out the hated outlines of the Spider's shape. He could, indeed, feel the weight and awkward protuberance that made Jessop seem so much like a huge spider. This was how Lockwood had dreamed the doctor must feel; he had believed that paunch was a physical burden to carry around.

Fear—horror—a desire for vengeance. These three passions filled Fisher Lockwood's soul.

He was indeed a madman now!

That Ballington Jessop was the cause of this exchange he did not for a moment doubt. Jessop was his enemy, and a man of mysterious resources. It was here, on this very spot, that they had first clashed—that the younger man had first gained the elder's ill-will.

And the trouble had risen over Anna Sorelson! As the remembrance of the girl, whom he had come during these recent weeks to be so fond of, shot the clouds in his troubled mind, there came to Lockwood, too, a remembrance of their meeting this very evening. Her haughty and disdainful glance was explained. Even then he had masqueraded in Jessop's hateful physique!

"God! God!" he shrieked, running out into the road and clashing the iron gate behind him. "I'll kill him!"

Passion and hate bursting all the bonds of his nature, he rushed toward the spot where he had last beheld his enemy—the inn parlor. How he reached the house of entertainment, whom he passed, who may have seen him, he never knew. But as it seemed, in a moment he came pantingly in sight of the place. Dr. Jessop's body was not used to such violent exertion.

He must needs halt for breath. The side door of the inn opened and let out with the lamplight, the cadaverous, lank-haired Packard—the man with the strange eyes. He spoke to somebody behind him in the room, and laughed. Then he walked out into the roadway, and his step was not altogether steady.

On the instant that Packard reached the middle of the road there was the harsh *honk honk* of a touring-car which, its three eyes glaring like those of some fabled monster, tore down the country road to the center of the town.

There was an ear-piercing scream, the impact of the driving-car with the man's body, and then Packard was down, being rolled along the roadway by the wheels of the motor-wagon!

There were added screams from the women in the tonneau. A group gathered quickly about the braked car. This crowd shut away from Lockwood's shrinking gaze the view of the car and the injured man.

"A doctor! For goodness sake send for one!" cried somebody in the group. "Isn't there a physician in this dark and forsaken hole?"

Somebody dropped a heavy hand on Lockwood's shoulder.

A voice which rang as if from afar in Lockwood's ears, exclaimed:

"Dr. Jessop! the man is terribly hurt. You can surely do something for him?"

At that an added fear overwhelmed Fisher Lockwood's soul. The effect of this exchange of bodies upon other people had not so smitten him before. He knew nothing of surgery; he could do nothing for the injured man!

He wrenched himself free of the restraining hand, burst through the crowd, and fled—fled like the madman he was—into the gathering darkness of the night.

IV

It was a starless night and a sea-fog that had crept in from the bay added to the difficulties of pedestrianism over the uneven ground. Down a rocky pasture toward the hard, narrow beach, stumbled the ill-defined figure of a man.

His erratic course might have been the result of drink; but bite nor sup had passed his lips this night. Where he had traveled since escaping from the crowd in the village street, he could not have told.

Like a lost soul he had wandered through waste places, and now came to the wave-lapped beach at as lonely a point as there was on the long curve of the Greenwich Bay shore.

The tide was low and the yellow bars of sand glistened under the thin fog. The man walked into the shallow water, but knew it not. Physically he was exhausted, and before him shone a single, steady point of light. It promised refuge —a shelter—a place to lie down to sleep; he was beyond realizing need or desire for any other thing.

Points of compass, or local landmarks, were of no importance to this exhausted man. Physical weariness had erased all that from his stupefied mind.

Once he waded through a swift current, near knee high, but he gave it no thought. He came out finally upon the beach of a low island—scarcely an island at this low water—and approached the hut in the window of which the light shone. He did not knock, and there was no bar or bolt to stay him when he lifted the latch.

He stepped into the hut. There was a startled grunt and snuffing, and a half-grown shoat scrambled up from the clay-floor and darted out of the hut. The man sitting on a stool before the hearth-fire was old, dressed in a soiled dust-coat of yellow linen, wore no shoes or stockings, and had long, straggling hair and beard to match in hue his outer garment.

He looked up with sparkling eyes at his visitor, but said no word as the wanderer came staggering in. The latter gazed about the single room, saw a heap of fir-branches and a blanket in the corner, and approached this couch without a word.

He flung himself down upon the branches. The proprietor of the shelter observed this calmly, and without audible comment. By and by when the deep breathing of the exhausted man announced his repose, the householder got up, opened the door, and whistled back his hog, and then went and stood over his visitor, looking down upon him with a rather simple smile upon his face. By and by he lifted a lean forefinger and tapped himself upon the forehead.

"Gone there!" he muttered. "Mad as a hatter—mad as a hatter!" with which comment, and after laying a second blanket over his visitor, the old man turned his back upon him and went again to his seat beside the fire.

Later he contented himself with an old coverlet and the hard floor for a bed. He did not disturb his unexpected guest.

The hut was squalid but not exactly dirty. The owner made some attempt to keep it neat, and swine are as cleanly in their habits as the domestic dog or cat if given half a chance. The shoat's fat sides shone with much scrubbing, and all the rooting he did was along the shore for sand-clams and hermit-crabs. A row of clean pans and kettles adorned a pine shelf at one side; there was a brass pot pendant from an old-fashioned hook over the blaze; the other details of housekeeping showed some care on the part of the householder.

It was on these odd furnishings that the guest opened his eyes in the morning. He might have been far more amazed by them had he not been in the hut before. But he had no remembrance of making his way thither on the previous evening.

"This is the cabin of the King of Chippewenoxit," he thought. "Why am I here instead of on the train to—"

He sprang erect. Then he staggered back against the side of the room and leaned there, panting and shaking with horror. His eyes beheld his paunced body and the bloated, flabby hands which hung out of his wrinkled coat-sleeves!

Fisher Lockwood's mind awoke again to all the horror of his physical burden. He was clothed with Dr. Jessop's body. He remembered all the madness of the previous evening. Each event came back to his struggling senses with desperate clearness. Mad, or sane, he knew instantly that the grip of this nightmare was still upon him.

The door opened and the King of Chippewenoxit entered—evidently fresh from the bay on which he kept a dory and from which he fished. He brought several flopping denizens of the water and flung them upon the cleaning board by the window.

Lockwood had shrunk into the corner when he saw his involuntary host. For the moment he believed that any observer must be as horrified by the appearance of Dr. Ballington Jessop's body as he was himself; that they, too, must realize the devilish transformation that had taken place. Even this more than half mad creature should appreciate the incongruity of Fisher Lockwood's soul being in Jessop's body!

But the King of Chippewenoxit simply nodded good-morning and went placidly about raking together the embers of last night's fire as a foundation for a brisker blaze, over which he later broiled two of the blackfish for breakfast. He made corn-bread, too—"Rhode Island johnny-cake"—in an iron pan before the fire, and when these appetizing viands were on the table, he said, briefly:

"For what we are about to receive make us to be grateful, for ever and ever, Amen! You take the stool and I'll take the box. Come on!"

Lockwood remained speechless. The old King had not addressed him by name, but he looked at him and nodded. And of course he would not know that this horrible looking body was possessed by the *real* Fisher Lockwood. Perhaps the King of Chippewenoxit knew Doctor Jessop by sight, too.

"Do—do you want me to eat with you?" stammered the unfortunate man.

The old man laughed and shook his head, tapping his forehead again.

"Mad! Mad as a hatter!" he exclaimed. "Come on! For what we are about to receive, and so forth!"

Lockwood found this body he wore voraciously hungry. A ravenous appetite is usually an attribute of an insane mind, and Lockwood knew he was mad. He must be mad! Madder than this poor creature who had recognized in him a fit companion for himself.

Yet Lockwood knew that this horrid situation that had come upon him was no mere freak of imagination. It was real, terribly real! He had been transformed into this huge and ugly shape. His mind whether mad or sane, was living in Jessop's body, and—why, Jessop, then, must be living in *his!*

The thought stung the unhappy man to the quick. He leaped up from the table, left the breakfast half eaten, and rushed out of the cabin to pace the low beach of the island. The King chuckled again, tapped his forehead, and repeated the discovery that he, in his wisdom, had made:

"Mad—mad as a hatter!"

And the mad man paced the beach like a wild animal encaged, as the morning mist was slowly dissipated. Jessop! Jessop had his body! This fiendish shape he wore had been exchanged by the devilish doctor for the straight, goodly physique of Fisher Lockwood. The thought inspired him with feelings that transformed his mind almost as greatly as he believed his body to have been changed! Lockwood was naturally of a quiet disposition; never before had any human being so disturbed his peace of mind as had Dr. Ballington Jessop. And this marvelous thing which he believed was brought about by the doctor's black arts, roiled the very depths of Lockwood's being.

Gradually one determination took possession of him. He had been robbed—robbed most foully and most devilishly by the doctor. If he was bearing here, on this all but desert island, the burden of Jessop's foul body, the doctor must be appearing as Fisher Lockwood—and perhaps among those who knew Fisher Lockwood and held him in regard!

Suppose, in his transformed state, Dr. Jessop approached Anna Sorelson? The idea gave Lockwood all the physical discomfort of a barbed arrow! Suppose the doctor wooed the girl in his stead?

The determination in Lockwood's thought grew. He would go back to town, seek out the transformed doctor, *and he would kill him—kill Fisher Lockwood's body—if the wretch would not give him it back!*

But not now. Never by daylight would he leave the island and show himself among men. After dark he would go ashore, seek out Dr. Jessop at his lonely home, and that interview should be memorable indeed. Rather would he know that his own rightful body was in its grave than that devil incarnate—Jessop—possessed it!

So, as the sun stole up from the far-

away eastern shore of the Narragansett, scattering the mist, the haunted man fell back from the shore of the island and hid in the willows and thicker scrub which occupied the middle ridge of the narrow "hog-back," as the island might be termed. One could throw a pebble from shore to shore of Chippewenoxit.

The old King did not disturb him. He pottered about his little garden in the sand, barricaded from the inroads of the pet swine by a fence of wattles. At dinner-time he called his visitor to the frugal board. At supper-time the food was still supplied by the old man—and was the same. Fried fish and johnny cake. It entered Lockwood's thought that he would do well if—as he intended remaining here for the present, there being no better refuge—he did something toward supplying some of the food. That pampered body of Dr. Jessop's continued ravenous for food and the simple fare of the old hermit did not satisfy the inordinate appetite which had come to Lockwood with this physical change. He had always been satisfied that Jessop's obesity was the result of over-indulgence at the table!

Night came at last, and knowing the habits of the people who lived at this upper end of the town, Lockwood ventured to cross to the shore and push on through the dark by-ways towards The Poplars quite early in the evening. The light was not shining from the cupola of the old mansion. Indeed, there was not a gleam of lamplight in any window of the doctor's house, front, back or rear! The place looked more deserted and shut up than ever.

Lockwood prowled about the grounds and saw neither servant or master. The windows were shuttered and locked on the lower floor and the doors were barred. He even tried to force some of them in his recklessness.

Had the doctor locked himself away from him—barricaded himself in the old mansion—expecting his victim to seek him out? The query nagged at Lockwood's mind and drove him restlessly about the house, seeking some mode of entrance. What he would really have done on obtaining entrance, he did not stop to ask himself. All he realized in his half-stupefied state was that he *must* see Jessop.

But as the night waned and the East threatened the approach of another day, he bethought him of the hermit and the refuge on Chippewenoxit Island. He must not be caught here! Nobody but that crazy old King should see him while he wore this bestial appearance. Anna Sorelson? Ah! he would not have faced the girl for untold wealth!

His dulled senses led him to the store, however. He always carried a key to the back door, for he slept there—when he was Fisher Lockwood! He let himself in, made up a package of wearing apparel, canned goods, and sugar and tea, and wended his way back to the island before anybody was astir to see him.

The old hermit asked no questions when he presented his additions to the larder, but accepted the goods the gods brought without comment. That was *one* good thing about the mad hermit. He was too mad to ask questions!

Lockwood slept most of the day and the next evening returned to his vigil about The Poplars. It was resultless, and he kept up the night-excursions for a week. Several times he went to the store of Gumbart & Lockwood and filched articles of food. Once he wrapped his goods in a copy of the week's *Pendulum*—the local news-scavenger of the town. It diverted his mind—this newspaper—to some small extent the next day. Several items he noted particularly, the first of which related to a series of small burglaries which during the last week or two had troubled the village. Mr. Silas Gumbart, of Gumbart & Lockwood (please note the firm's ad in another column) reported that he had missed some goods from his shelves, but was unable to find trace of his store being broken into. These losses would not interfere with the bargains he was offering this week!

It was reported that a man—a stranger—had been lurking about the neighborhood at night; but Lockwood was surprised to note that the rather meager description of the marauder did not fit at all *his* present appearance. What he looked for and did not find was any

mention of Dr. Ballington Jessop. And the final item that caught his wandering attention was this:

"Mr. Fisher Lockwood, of the firm of Gumbart & Lockwood (see their add in another column) is enjoying an extended vacation in the Maine woods. Good luck, Fisher."

He pondered over this and finally evolved the idea that Jessop, immediately after accomplishing his devilish transformation, had fled the place. He had left East Greenwich and taken Fisher Lockwood's body away with him. Otherwise the local newsmonger would not believe that the junior partner in the general store was in the Maine wilds.

After this the haunted man fell into a desperately despondent state. He did not leave the island at all saving to get into the store to bring away more provisions. It was useless to lurk about The Poplars. Jessop was gone and he had no idea how to follow him. He shrank from ever seeing or speaking to a soul whom he had once known.

The King of Chippewenoxit was not always left in sole possession of his island. Visiting parties sometimes stopped there. Or curious tourists, who had heard of the old hermit, came across on the sandbars to kodak the King, his hut and his pet hog. Lockwood kept out of sight of all these, and as the King never allowed the ordinary visitor into his house, this was easy.

Once, awaking from a nap in the afternoon, Lockwood barely escaped being seen by one of these wandering camera-fiends who had lined the King and his hog up against the front of the hut for a snap-shot. The old man was as pleased as a child over these photographs and always asked for a copy to be sent him—which request some of the amateurs granted. One of the inner walls of the cabin was pretty well covered with prints.

On this occasion the King went over to town the second day thereafter and returning, brought the photo with him. He showed it to his guest with great glee.

"Come!" he said. "You're not too mad to see how fine a picture that is—especially of the pig!"

Lockwood eyed it with lack-luster gaze. The light had been very strong when the picture was taken and the outlines of every object was reflected with startling distinctness. The old King, in his linen robe, the pig sitting up on his haunches by his side, the broken settee beyond the open door—even a little of the interior of the hut.

And then suddenly the haunted man gasped and seized the picture with both hands to bring it nearer to his eyes. There was something within the hut which he had not beheld at first glance. There was somebody there, looking out of that open door!

The head and shoulders of a man were revealed peering around the door-frame. And the face of the man was revealed—a third dweller upon this Chippewenoxit island.

Or, at least, such was the thought that instantly smote the haunted man. He gazed with dilating eyes upon this person. He studied the features exposed in the photograph and a second discovery followed his first almost instantly.

The face at the door of the old hut was the face—the unmistakable features—of his own self, the real Fisher Lockwood!

V

This mind of the old Fisher Lockwood that was wandering in the mazes of a mysterious present, and was a creature of no future, had become fairly stupefied now by repeated mental blows. That his own old body—of course inhabited by Dr. Jessop—should likewise be on the island at the time the photograph of the King of Chippewenoxit and his cabin had been taken, set the haunted man to searching the place for this third dweller in the tiny kingdom. And it inspired him to further ventures by night into the town.

Jessop with *his* body must have returned to East Greenwich. He had been lurking about Lockwood's refuge on the island and might be spying upon him to better purpose than Lockwood had spied about the doctor's house. But Fisher Lockwood did not run any risk of being caught robbing his own store, or being seen by his old neighbors. He

roamed about The Poplars only, trying again and again to get into the well barred mansion.

He kept away from the store, being shrewd enough to know that old Silas would be on the watch for the "burglar" now. Despite the fact that he hated this body he wore, he did not want it filled full of birdshot—at present! And Silas had an old blunderbuss and was a famous shot with it.

He had money in his pockets, however—something that he had not thought of before since awaking in the hermit's hut. He gave the King of Chippewenoxit some of this and bade him buy supplies. Around some of the goods the old man brought to the island was another copy of the local paper.

Lockwood read this with eager attention; but the small "personals" yielded him nothing. It was a longer article that held his attention, and as he read it the passions of his nature rose within him again like water in a boiling pot, and he felt that he should indeed yield to his maniacal desires! His rage was well nigh uncontrollable, and had the object of his wrath been within reach he would have torn him limb from limb.

The newspaper-story was the account of a magistrate's case, and dealt with Dr. Jessop and the young Swedish girl, Anna Sorelson. To Lockwood's horror and amazement the doctor had dared swear out a warrant against Miss Sorelson, accusing her of taking certain articles of jewelry when she left his house; but that this was sheer persecution on the hateful doctor's part seemed to be proven, so the paper said, by the fact that Jessop did not appear to press the case and the magistrate had discharged the young and fair foreigner with an apology.

But Lockwood knew, or thought he did, well enough why Jessop had not appeared against Anna Sorelson. Nobody would now recognize Dr. Ballington Jessop. Although the wretch was certainly lurking about the vicinity, as witness the photograph, clothed with Lockwood's body, he dared not appear in court.

But this dastardly attack upon Anna Sorelson ran over Fisher Lockwood's cup of bitterness. He could stand no more. He could not go to the girl and take her part in anyway. The thought that he was so helpless—especially when she needed sympathy and advice— was fairly maddening.

That evening he saw the light suddenly flame out in the cupola of the doctor's house. Not since he had taken up his abode on the island had there been a light in Jessop's workshop. The moment it was dark enough the haunted man left the hut, took the King's dory, and paddled ashore.

He left the boat at a point near to the rear premises of the old mansion. He did not have to follow any street or highway, but crept through the brush and over the low wall that bounded the estate. Had there been a dog about the place Lockwood might have come in serious contact with the animal; but his previous nocturnal rambles had assured him that The Poplars owned no canine guard.

He approached the house and saw the light still flashing, like a beacon, from the glass room on the roof. The other windows were shuttered as before and not a sign about the place betrayed the presence of the family, or the servants. Lockwood had already, and so many times, tried to force a window or door, that he had become despondent. And he did not believe that he would be let in if he hammered at the portal all night!

What story Jessop might have told to explain his own change in appearance, the haunted man could not imagine. The fact that Jessop had *his* body—was traveling on *his* shape, as it were—was fully established in Lockwood's mind. And what he had done to that body, where he had taken it, what disgrace it may have suffered, what vileness Jessop may have brought upon Lockwood's own person, filled the unfortunate's soul with veritable despair.

He was confident now that up in that cupola, where the light blazed so brilliantly, was his body—his own body the flesh and blood that belonged to him! Was it not maddening to think that the vile soul of Dr. Ballington Jessop should possess that shape while *he* Fisher Lockwood, should be forced to

masquerade in the spider-like proportions of that wonderful and terrible man?

"I would kill him!" gasped the overwrought man, beating his hands against the broken cement of the house wall. "Aye! rather Fisher Lockwood's body dead than clothing such a soul as that which now inhabits it! Oh, that I might get at him!"

And in the spasm of mental agony that possessed him he smote the wall again. He stood near the corner, and his clenched hand came in contact with an iron pipe which came from the room. It was firmly fastened to the wall and contact with it gave him a sudden idea.

Fisher Lockwood had always been something of an athlete, and for the moment he forgot the exchange of bodies that had occurred. Above him, in that lighted room, he was sure his enemy was established. He laid hold of the water-leader, and like the madman he was, began to scramble up to the roof!

Fortunately the pipe was secure; but ere he had climbed many yards he found himself short of breath and almost unable to proceed. The obese body of Dr. Jessop was not used to such frightful exertions. But Lockwood cared nothing for the physical pains he suffered; he struggled doggedly on and carried the ugly physique up and up, risking life and limb in the effort.

He reached the roof, his hands torn, bleeding, and his clothing in shreds. He could barely crawl out upon the leads, and there laid panting and trembling for some minutes.

The light still shone from the cupola and finally he heard somebody moving about inside. There was a slight report, the light flashed up and died down again, and then somebody laughed—exultantly, wildly!

The sound aroused Lockwood's waning faculties. He sat up, finally got to his knees, and crawled up the slightly sloping roof to the cupola. Some of the windows were painted on the inside so that one could not see in. He climbed upon a ventilator and reached a clear sash of glass through which he could see plainly into the glaringly illuminated room.

At first glance Lockwood knew it to be the workshop of a chemist. The tables and benches were littered with bottles, retorts, glass tubes, bulbs, delicate scales, all manner of test-tubes, and at one side was an intense flame in a small forge, over which hung a pot, the contents of which boiled and bubbled, giving off little popping blisters full of steam. Over this pot hung a man, stirring, testing, dropping now and then from a long bottle into the concoction, and watching closely the effect of these additional drops.

Lockwood cleared his eyes and stared down into the laboratory. *This* could not be Dr. Jessop! He did not recognize the figure, which was back to him. Dr. Jessop was broader, if not as tall—a deal broader.

And then the man over the cauldron stood up and laughed again. He still held the long bottle, and he shook it in his hand as the violet and purple rays from the molten stuff he was watching played over his figure. It surely was *not* Jessop! Lockwood strained his eyes to see his face as he partly turned around. It was a younger and more supple figure than that of the doctor's. There was youth, energy, sheer muscular development displayed in this man's figure in its half undress.

Suddenly a new thought smote the watcher. What had he come here to find? Had he expected to find Dr. Ballington Jessop in proper person?

Indeed he had not. He glanced down at the bulging proportions of this bloated body he had now carried for a fortnight or more. *Here* was Dr. Jessop! His hated spider-like body had been thrust upon Fisher Lockwood.

Then this man in the laboratory?

He leaned farther over the sash and gazed down at the man with the bottle. The fellow was plainly excited. He snapped his fingers; he almost danced in glee. And all because of some success he had achieved!

Suddenly something gave way under Lockwood's hand. He felt himself pitching forward, while the glass crashed inward. But he flung himself by a mighty effort, back to the roof and only the broken window-frame fell into the room.

There was a scream of fear and sur-

prise from the man there. Lockwood had a swift view of him turning and looking upward. The big bottle fell with an added crash from his hand and it broke on the very edge of the pot of molten stuff.

Instantly there was a blinding flash and an explosion that rocked the house! The room in the cupola was filled with a vapor which rushed out of the broken window. For half a minute Lockwood dared not venture to look in again.

And when he did he saw the overturned pot upon the floor, its contents had exploded and overturned the forge; but it had done more, too. The force of the explosion had driven the broken bottle into the back of the chemist's head! The body of the unfortunate man lay on the floor in a pool of blood, his face all dabbled with the crimson stain; and the stamp of Death was plain upon it!

Lockwood stared down upon this horror with parting lips and bulging eyes. He knew instinctively that his enemy was dead. Dr. Ballington Jessop was no more

But it was not Jessop's body that had died. That nightmare of a body was still the hateful burden which *he* bore about. The body lying dead on the floor of the cupola room was that of Fisher Lockwood!

VI

If the soul—the essence of the Spirit of Man—can look again upon the body it has worn after Death has severed the vital connection between the two, what is the attitude of that spirit towards, what its feeling for, the clay for which it has no further use?

For bitter days and nights Fisher Lockwood had believed that he would rather see his own body lying dead before him than to know that it was inhabited by the foul creature that had despoiled him of it and given him, in its place, this bloated and bestial form he wore. But now that it was done—although the tragedy had been brought about in quite involuntary manner on Lockwood's part—he gazed in fear and terror upon the blood-be-smeared corpse

He was dead.

All that had been visible of Fisher Lockwood, all that was known to his friends, all that the mirror had revealed to him for so many years, indeed, lay dead upon the floor of that cupola room.

When the thought, eating like vitriol into his stupefied mind, finally was appreciated, the unfortunate man leaped away from the window and rushed madly to the drain pipe by which he had climbed to the roof.

He was a murderer!

He had killed himself; he had been the cause of his own death! That this should be so, and yet he be alive and be clothed in an actual and visible body, did not so much impress Fisher Lockwood at the time. Fear was his predominant feeling; and fear hounded him to escape. The body he loathed fairly sweated with terror! He stumbled down upon his knees, grasped the edge of the conduit, let himself over, and then recklessly slid down the pipe.

Ten feet from the ground he lost his grip and fell. The concussion was considerable, for he struck on his head and shoulders and lay there for some moments, quite senseless. He was dimly conscious of a shouting in the house, of the screaming of women and the running about of several people. There was a glare of light above the roof—the glare from the cupola-room.

Suppose they found him here? They would discover the dead man in the cupola and if *he* were likewise found it would be known at once that he must have something to do with the tragedy.

Or, so it seemed to Lockwood's dazed mind.

He tried to rise, but could not stand erect. So he crawled away from the house into the shrubbery. But the light followed him there. It glared all about him, flickering over the vegetation and making the underbrush as light as if a searchlight played upon it.

He crept on, and on, and still the glare of light pursued him. The shouting from the house increased. Doors and windows were flung open. By and by a horde of people came running toward The Poplars. Fisher Lockwood heard their feet pounding along the road. There was somebody seemingly trying to ring the tongue out of the

Methodist Church bell. A rush of horses' feet then clattered up to the mansion.

Dimly he realized what it meant. The old house was afire. The overturned forge in the cupola had started the conflagration, and it was spreading so rapidly that he could not crawl out of the illumination of it.

Amid the shouting and the running to and fro, the swish of the water through the hose and the puffing of a small engine brought to the scene from the village, Lockwood felt that he might escape detection—if he could only get out of the radius of the fire-light. But suddenly there came through the bushes a man who well nigh stumbled over his prostrate body.

"Hullo!" yelled this individual. "What's this? Who in tarnation be ye?"

The man stooped above the shaking Lockwood.

The latter recognized the voice and face of his partner, Silas Gumbart.

Gumbart stood up and shouted at the crowd:

"Hey, you fellers! I got somebody here that mebbe knows somethin' about this fire."

Then he gave his attention to Lockwood again. He stooped once more and rolled the injured man over on his back. The firelight glared upon his face, and Gumbart could see it plainly.

The storekeeper uttered a smothered cry and staggered up, erect and staring.

"Who's this?" he repeated, hoarsely. "My God!"

Then Lockwood drifted into insensibility. It was the final impression his distorted mind received—this exclamation of Gumbart's.

Silas Gumbart, being an entirely undemonstrative man regarding small things, showed for once the deeper reaches of his nature. He turned the upper floor of his house into a hospital, engaged a physician from the city to remain in attendance on his partner until he should be out of danger, and obtained the services of a properly certified nurse. And the nurse was Anna Sorelson.

The sick man knew none of them—not even Anna herself. He babbled continually, and when he was in the room, watching the poor tossing head upon the pillow and the thin hands picking at the coverlet, old Gumbart could make absolutely nothing of his partner's ravings. But the physician and Miss Sorelson were wiser.

Fever of the brain is a hard disease to combat, and there were some very strange things about this case. Fisher Lockwood believed himself to be another man. He talked of this mysterious transformation, of the black arts practiced upon him by Dr. Jessop, of his awful experiences of the fortnight he had been in hiding, and of the fire that had destroyed the old mansion, leaving merely the gaunt and blackened walls standing.

It was known that Jessop had been destroyed when his house was burned. His family and the servants had escaped; but they could not rescue the doctor. It was believed that the explosion that had set the building afire must have injured or killed the experimenter in his laboratory.

Anna Sorelson knew something about the doctor's investigations. She chanced upon some papers of his in the library and that had been the source of the trouble between Jessop and herself. He was a very suspicious man, and he believed that his experiments were due to startle the world in time. Perhaps he had been a little mad on that point—most inventors *are* mad to the extent that they believe that the world cannot get along without their inventions, when it has already gotten along very well without them for some thousands of years!

However, with what Anna knew as a basis, the physician was able to gain some considerable explanation of Lockwood's mental wanderings. Over and over again Lockwood declared that he was turned into the likeness of Jessop, and he repeated the incident of Anna's refusing to speak with him because he was in the guise of the wicked doctor.

The girl's quick mind supplied just the clew needed from this statement. She remembered very well the day that Fisher Lockwood had been going away, and she observed him approaching along the street towards Trummel's cottage. Or, she had first thought it was

him. But then, when she had looked again, she had seen the distasteful doctor leering at her, and she had turned her back until he was past. Then she looked for Lockwood, but no longer saw him.

"There was nobody on the street, to my surprise," she explained, "but that man who was run down and killed by the automobile—the doctor's friend."

"Who was he?" asked the physician.

"His name was Packard. He came to the doctor's house once when I was there to treat his sister. *Professor* Packard, they called him—a tall, lank-haired man, with very piercing eyes. I did not like his eyes. They seemed to bore through one."

"Did you have the same feeling on this occasion—when you thought you saw Lockwood coming, and it turned out to be Dr. Jessop?" queried the physician, with some eagerness.

"I thought that Packard was very rude to stare at me so. He stood directly across the street and fairly looked me out of countenance."

"And did you not think it strange that he did not go along with Jessop afterwards?"

"Why—it never crossed my mind. I—I was thinking of Mr. Lockwood, sir, and wondering where he had so suddenly gone," declared Anna with a gentle blush.

"Miss Sorelson, I believe you are very susceptible to mental suggestion. Despite your physical strength, your nervous temperament is very nicely balanced. In other words, you might be an easy subject for a hypnotist."

"I am," the girl returned, placidly. "It has been tried several times and I always respond."

"Humph! And Mr. Lockwood might be easily handled by an expert in that art, too. Your Professor Packard was a hypnotist. I knew of him. You have given me an idea. I shall send to New York for a man who knows more about these things than I do, and we will see if we cannot bring Mr. Lockwood back to health and to his right mind by means of auto-suggestion.

"I am convinced that this calenture of Mr. Lockwood has a basis in something beside the distorted fancy of a feverish brain. Some master mind has practised on him—and on you in a smaller degree. Lockwood actually believes that he is wearing the shape of a man whom he so intensely disliked.

"I have sounded Mr. Gumbart about it, and he tells me that there was some conversation in the store the afternoon that Lockwood was supposed to start for Maine, regarding Jessop. Lockwood expressed himself strongly—and in the hearing of Professor Packard who was, as we know, a close friend of Dr. Jessop.

"It looks to me as if a very cruel joke was perpetrated upon Lockwood. The professor gained control of his mind, suggested that he should believe that he had exchanged bodies with the man he hated, and evidently arranged matters to bear out the fantasy when it should have taken hold upon Lockwood. This, I am sure, will be proven utimately."

The physician's statement, though hard to be believed by Silas Gumbart, at least was proven true when the expert came on. Lockwood's state began to improve at once. In a week he knew his friends and realized that his whole experience had been a figment of the imagination. And *he* could then explain much that had led up to the suprising belief under which he so long had labored.

Without doubt, to pay him off for his disparaging remarks anent the doctor's physique, Jessop and his friend, Packard, had hatched the scheme. And circumstances had aided them materially. Unknown to himself, Lockwood had come under Packard's mental control. The professor had doubtless recognized him as an excellent subject at first blush, and when Lockwood entered the hotel parlor to dun Jessop for his bill, the hypnotist had taken possession of the young man's very soul!

He had willed that Lockwood should believe this impossible thing—that he had exchanged bodies with Jessop—when he arrived at the latter's house. Packard had doubtless gone ahead and prepared the trap by fixing it up with the servant. Indeed that servant was later found and told the whole story. He had said exactly what Packard told him to say when Lockwood entered the mansion.

Coming back Packard chanced upon Anna Sorelson at the very moment Lockwood hove in sight; and he had utilized his power instantly with her to the same end—he made the girl believe that it was Jessop she saw, not Lockwood.

After that, all was surmise. Packard had been killed instantly by the automobile. Undoubtedly he had intended to exercise his will upon Lockwood's mind and "bring him out of it." But Death had intervened.

Whether Jessop had suspected what might be the outcome of the so-called joke, after his friend was killed, there was no means of knowing. Jessop himself had gone to his account and could not defend himself.

But all matters were explained in full at last, as Lockwood's brain grew stronger and his health returned. He remembered finally that when the amateur photographer was taking his snapshot of the old King of Chippewenoxit and his cabin, *he* had thrust his head out of the door and dodged back again—evidently at the vital moment of the picture-taking. And, of course, his belief that he had seen his own body weltering in its blood on the floor of the cupola room was merely his imagination logically bearing out the belief that Professor Packard had imparted in his mind in the first instance.

There was another thing which gradually, but firmly, secured its hold on Fisher Lockwood as he became convalescent. That was his desire and determination to possess Anna Sorelson for his very own. And perhaps he had learned something of "auto-suggestion," too; for after he had expressed this feeling, and with increasing vehemence, several times, the beautiful Swedish girl seemed unable to oppose him.

Lockwood married her and instead of Silas Gumbart going to the county fair, the junior partner and his bride started on their honeymoon.

"Lucky I was born and dragged up before vacations got to be so derned fashionable," growled Silas. "I can wait till next year for mine, anyway. All fairs look alike to me; but I do admit that every fellow doesn't snare a partner like you, Fisher. You're a lucky boy!"

The Punishment of the Twins

By L. M. MONTGOMERY

I

BILLY CARR—nobody but Great-aunt Jane ever called him William—was waiting in the hall for Priscilla. He was ready for Sunday-school; he had a cent in one pocket for the Sunday-school collection; he carried his Bible in one hand and his Sunday-school quarterly in the other; he knew his lesson and his golden text and the catechism question. Had he not studied them perfect the whole preceding Sunday afternoon? Billy, therefore, should have been in a placid frame of mind. As a matter of fact, despite text and catechism, he was inwardly as a ravening wolf.

A defiant scowl darkened his brow as he muttered:

"I *hate* Sunday here."

Billy glanced around in terror after this outburst. Suppose the floor opened and swallowed him up for his wickedness! Or, worse still, suppose Aunt Jane heard him! But nothing happened, and after a moment Billy went on, finding a certain relief in uttering his stormy thoughts:

"I hate going to Sunday-school in Meadowby worse'n castor-oil—and I hate going to church in Meadowby worse'n poison—and I hate writing out a s'nopsis worse'n 'em both!"

The stairs creaked and Billy's heart quaked within him. Nobody appeared, but Billy thought he had had a narrow escape, and he buttoned the rest of his rebellious feelings tightly up in his soul. Certain things might be disagreeable and a fellow might have his own private opinions concerning them; but a two months' sojourn in Aunt Jane's household had convinced Billy that it was safer to keep said private opinions to himself. Aunt Jane did not believe in liberty of thought, and you did not get any pudding for dinner or anything but plain bread and milk for your tea if you persisted in claiming it. As for liberty of action, the very cat in the kitchen would have grinned at you in scorn if you mentioned it.

Presently Aunt Jane did come down the stairs, leading Priscilla by the hand. Billy glared up at both as they came. He thought he had never seen Aunt Jane grimmer or Priscilla more like the picture of the angel in the chromo over the parlor mantelpiece.

Priscilla was garbed in spotless white, crisp and fluted and ruffled. She had on white silk gloves and a lingerie hat. Her golden hair hung in a deep long fleece to her waist and her eyes were blue and limpid and innocent. A cherubic expression wreathed her delicate spiritual face. Priscilla's appearance always confused Billy's theology terribly. He could not understand how anybody could look so like an angel on the outside and be the very—well, the very opposite inside. Billy knew that the more saintly Priscilla looked the worse, as a rule, she was feeling.

"She must be mad clear through just now," he reflected.

Aunt Jane surveyed the twins over her spectacles with her usual frown.

"Now be sure you are good children," she warned them. "I can't go to church this morning because my rheumatism is troubling me. But I expect you to behave yourselves properly in every respect. Don't walk in the dust. Don't stop in the porch to talk to the other children. Don't squirm or wriggle in your places. Don't whisper. Don't forget your golden-texts. Don't forget to put in your collection. And don't forget to pay especial attention to the sermon. I shall expect you both to write out a synopsis of it as usual this afternoon and I want to see a better result than I had last Sunday."

Billy watched Priscilla's face with a fascinated gaze as they went down the garden-path. At the gate Priscilla put her quarterly up before her and twisted her countenance into such an unearthly and terrific contortion that Billy, although he knew her gifts in this respect, was honestly alarmed that she would never in the world be able to get it straightened out again. When the quarterly went down, however, there was Priscilla looking as meek and saintly as before and she comported herself with dignity as far along the road as was within view of Aunt Jane.

Billy said nothing but held his breath in a not unpleasant suspense. He knew something was coming, and as soon as they had turned the corner of the spruce-grove it came.

Not in words at first, however; words were too weak a vehicle of expression just then for Priscilla's stormy soul. In grim, deliberate silence she stepped off the green grass of the roadside ankle deep into the fine dust that four weeks of rainless weather had made on the road and marched along in it, shuffling her feet viciously until she was enveloped in a hazy cloud.

Billy watched her delightedly. He would never have dared to do it himself but it was splendid to see Priscilla doing it.

Finally, when she was dust from head to foot, Priscilla same back to the grass.

"That's the beginning," she exploded triumphantly. "And I'm going to stop in the porch and talk as long as there is anybody to talk to. I'm going to squirm and wriggle and whisper. I'm going to say I don't know the golden-text and I'm going to throw away both of my collections *right now!*"

And Priscilla hurled cent and dime over Jacob Millar's fence with a fierce gesture.

"Oh!" breathed Billy, partly in horror, partly in admiration. "And are you going to write the s'nopsis?"

"I suppose I'll have to," conceded Priscilla gloomily, "because if I don't, I daresay Aunt Jane would keep me shut up until I did. I used to love going to church at home. But how can anybody like it here when you have to write a s,nopsis? Isn't it bad enough to be shut up all the week and kept at lessons just as if it wasn't vacation and never allowed to play with a single soul without having to spend all Sunday afternoon writing a s'nopsis? It's a darned shame!"

"Oh, Priscilla, don't swear," said Billy, rather shocked but still admiring.

"'Darned' isn't swearing and I don't care much if it should be," said Priscilla recklessly. "Aunt Jane will drive me to swearing in right good earnest yet, Billy Carr. I can't imagine why father didn't send us to Aunt Nora's when she wanted us to go. And Aunt Nora is our own aunt while Aunt Jane is only father's aunt. Just think how splendid it would have been there! We wouldn't have to be respectable one minute—only on Sundays and then it would have been really nice for a change. We could wear comfortable clothes and go barefoot, and fish, and slide down the sheephouse roof and eat anything that came handy. Think of Aunt Nora's little plum-pies."

Billy groaned. It was agonizing to hear Priscilla thus recounting the delights they might have enjoyed at Aunt Nora's and contrast them with the bitter realities at Aunt Jane's.

"Instead of which," went on Priscilla witheringly, "we've got to wash our faces and brush our teeth four times a day and keep our toes in position and live on health-foods. If I thought it would be a bit of use I'd write to father and ask him to let us go to Aunt Nora's yet. But I know he wouldn't. He'd be afraid of hurting Aunt Jane's feelings. *Her* feelings! She hasn't got any."

II

A piercing whoop broke in on Priscilla's wrathful speech. Looking up Priscilla and Billy saw a row of Dixons sitting on the board-fence behind the Dixon house. Dave Dixon was there, and Pete Dixon, likewise Tommy and Adolphus Dixon. They were all freckle and snub-nosed, bareheaded and barefooted. As for clothes, they had on no more than strict decency required.

But they did look so jolly and carefree. The cockles of Priscilla's heart warmed to them as she smiled radiantly at Dave, doubly incited thereto by the fact that Aunt Jane would have been horrified if she had known it. Aunt Jane would not let Billy and Priscilla play with any of the Meadowby children, but she had sternly forbidden them even to speak to the Dixons. Therefore, Billy and Priscilla had long hankered to do it.

Dave lost his head under the dazzling influence of Priscilla's smile and could only grin sheepishly back; but Pete cheerfully demanded:

"Where are you going?"

"Sunday-school," said Billy briefly.

"We mostly goes to Sunday-school, too," said Pete, "but pa and ma's away to-day and Dave and me has to look after the baby and Tom and 'Dolphus can't go 'cause there's nobody to dress 'em. So we're just going to stay home and have a riproaring time. We're going fishing."

"Yeh'd better come, too," said Dave, suddenly recovering his powers of speech.

Billy sighed.

Alluring as the prospect was, it was scarcely a temptation, so utterly out of the question was it. Fishing and such dear joys were for happy, irresponsible creatures like the Dixons; as for him, he must tread the thorny path of respectability and synopsis.

"Thank you, we will," said Priscilla calmly.

Billy's mouth fell open and stayed open but no words came forth from it. He *could* not have heard aright. The Dixons thought so, too, and stared like four graven images of amazement.

"We can't climb over that fence, so we'll have to go up the lane and in at the gate," Priscilla went on. "You'd better meet us there because I'm afraid of your dog."

The Dixons, convinced, tumbled off the fence with a simultaneous shriek of

exultation and could be heard scampering through the yard. Priscilla walked onward, head erect.

"Priscilla, you don't really mean it?" gasped Billy, swayed betwixt hope and fear.

"I do mean it. I'm going to have a good time for once in Meadowby."

"But wont Aunt Jane be furious?"

"Of course she will. But what can she do? She doesn't believe in whipping children and I'm very sure," with superlative scorn, "we haven't any pleasures she can take from us. She'll likely give us no dinner and send us to bed, but that wont be any worse than writing a snopsis. I'm going anyhow. I haven't had a spark of fun all Summer, but there's a chance for it now. We couldn't get home from church until half-past one so we have four hours to celebrate. Yes. I'm going. You can come or not, just as you please."

"Oh, I'll come, of course," said Billy resignedly.

Secretly he felt a fearful joy. Priscilla's courage infected him and he cast dread and conscience to the winds.

"I suppose it is wrong," said Priscilla, "but I'm tired of being good. I've had to be good so long that there's an awful lot of wickedness bottled up in me. At home it used to dribble away a little every day, so it wasn't very noticeable, but now it's got to come all at once or I shall burst. Now, Billy, you take my advice and go into this thing with all your heart if you go at all. There's no use being bad if you spoil your fun by wishing you were good all the time. We'll have to repent afterwards, I suppose, but there's no use in mixing the two things together."

Dave had the gate wide open when they reached it and the four Dixons stood behind it in an admiring line as Priscilla and Billy marched through. The Dixon dog was sitting peaceably on one side and the Dixon baby was wallowing delightedly in a dust-pie on the other.

The yard was full of splendid possibilities, as Priscilla saw at a glance.

"Where are you going fishing?" she demanded.

"Down at the brook—it's just below that bush," responded Dave; "but it's awful muddy down there. You'll spoil your clothes."

"You don't suppose we're going fishing in these clothes do you?" said Priscilla scornfully. "You must lend us some of yours."

The four Dixons gasped. Tommy and Adolphus giggled, but Dave scowled at them so furiously that they stopped at once and looked preternaturally solemn instead.

"We—we can lend Billy some, of course," said Dave doubtfully, "but there aint any girls in our family and ma's dresses would be too big for you."

"What's the matter with some of yours?" said Priscilla calmly. "You've got some besides what you have on, haven't you?"

Dave whistled. Then he rose to the situation.

"Oh, o' course; you can have a suit of Pete's. I guess mine would be too big. Billy can have mine. Come into the house."

Dave led the way into the Dixon kitchen and dived into the small bedroom off of it.

Reappearing presently he gave Priscilla to understand that a suit of Pete's was laid out on the bed and she might go in and don it.

"Billy and us'll go up to the loft and change there," he said.

III

When the boys came down from the loft Priscilla was waiting for them. She wore Pete's trousers and she had discarded boots and stockings and lingerie hat. Pete's jacket was buttoned up to her neck and her golden hair fell over it.

Dave surveyed her admiringly.

"You look just as pretty in those things as in dresses," he said.

Priscilla put her hands in Pete's pockets and tossed her head.

"I'm very comfortable in them and that's the main thing," she said. "You boys don't know how well off you are, never having to fuss with skirt and frills. Billy, don't you just wish Aunt Jane could see me now? Well, we mustn't

waste any time. We've only got four hours and I'm bound to make the most of them. If we're going fishing what's the first thing to be done?"

"Go out behind the henhouse and dig wums," said Pete blithely

"Ow!"

It was a little shriek that came from Priscilla. Sex has its limitations after all. Priscilla could wear masculine garments undauntedly but her feminine soul recoiled from worms.

"I can't dig them. Billy, you'll have to dig mine."

"*I'll* dig them for you," said Dave gallantly, "and I'll put them on the hook for you, too."

"Oh, thank you," said Priscilla gratefully. "I'll look after the baby while you're digging them."

When enough worms had been dug Dave announced that they would have to draw lots to see who would take charge of the baby.

"Why can't you leave him here?" said Priscilla. "Would he cry?"

"Naw, he never cries," said Pete, "but he's a terrible crawler and he'd be sure to get into mischief if we left him. He crawled into the pigpen the other day and next day he nearly fell down the well."

"If he wont cry why don't you put him in the hen-coop?" said Priscilla.

Dave and Pete looked at each other in speechless admiration of this clever girl. Often they had tried to devise some safe disposal of the baby but no such brilliant idea as this had ever dawned upon them. With a shout Pete pounced on the hencoop and turned out the brooding hen Mrs. Dixon had incarcerated therein. The next minute the Dixon baby was shut in it, laughing and gurgling with delight.

"That's a bully place," said Dave rapturously. "He'll get lots of fresh air and he can see plenty to amuse him and nothing can get at him. If he does yell a bit it wont hurt him. Come on, now"

A glorious two hours of sport followed —fishing, wading, paddling, jumping. Priscilla might not he able to put worms on her hook but she could catch fish after they were put on. She was high-line when they stopped; and as for jumping the brook, none of them could compare with her. Billy himself was surprised at her prowess.

When the possibilities of the brook were exhausted they trooped back to the yard where the baby was fast asleep in the hencoop. They had a hilarious game of tag, and then they all climbed to the top of the barn-roof and cut their names on the ridgepole. A flat-roofed stable and a huge straw-pen beneath it gave Priscilla another exhilarating idea, and they spent a splendid hour climbing to the stable-roof and diving off it into the straw below.

Up to this point all had been peace and good will. Now trouble brewed. Dave had taken Billy around to the barn to show him a pet calf when their conference was unpleasantly interrupted by the breathless arrival of Adolphus, who burst into the barn gasping:

"Oh, Pete and Priscilla's fighting— and she's killing Pete—and come quick and stop her."

Dave and Billy set off at full speed for the straw-pen. In the center were the combatants writhing to and fro in anything but loving embrace. If the battle had, according to Adolphus, been going in Priscilla's favor the tide turned with the arrival of Billy and Dave, for just as they burst into the pen Pete got his hands on Priscilla's curls and yanked them mercilessly. Priscilla's shriek wakened the echoes.

Dave and Billy hurled themselves into the *mêlée*. Billy flung his arms around his sister and dragged her back; but Dave with one vindictive blow sent the unhappy Pete sprawling and then stood over him threateningly.

"You're a beauty, oh, aint you!" said Dave fiercely. "To be fighting with a lady and her visiting you! Oh, aint you a nice one!"

"She hit me first," vociferated Pete.

"He dropped a caterpillar down my neck," shrieked Priscilla.

"Oh, I'll settle you by and by, Pete Dixon," promised Dave.

"I only did it for fun," whimpered Pete. "She was such a sport in everythingelseIdidn'ts'poseshe'dmindthat."

"*You* s'posing!" said Dave with withering scorn.

"Anyhow, I gave him a black eye," said Priscilla triumphantly.

"Oh, *do* remember what day it is," implored Billy in agony.

"That's so," agreed Priscilla. "I dare say it isn't just the thing to be fighting on Sunday. You can let Pete up, Dave, and I'll forgive him."

Harmony being thus restored and Dave having somewhat reluctantly promised to forego vengeance on Pete, the next proposition was dinner. They all adjourned to the pantry.

The Dixons might be very low down in the Meadowby social scale but Mr. Dixon was a good "provider" and his wife an excellent cook. The pantry was well stored with pies, cakes, and preserves. To the Carr twins, who had been nourished for two months on a strictly hygienic diet, it was as a feast of fat things and they did it full justice. Priscilla pounced on a jar of pickles with a shriek of delight.

"I haven't had a pickle since I left home. Can I eat all these Dave?"

"Sure," said hospitable Dave, confident that, though such a dose of pickles would probably kill any ordinary girl, Priscilla was perfectly safe since she was no ordinary girl. Priscilla ate those pickles straight, scorning all other viands.

"Aint this bully?" sighed Billy, ecstatically tucking away doughnuts. "Aunt Jane says fried things aint healthy. Priscilla, why are the nicest things never healthy?"

"Hush—don't bother me," said Priscilla absently.

With the last pickle poised forgotten on her fork she was bending over a big book she had just discovered on a shelf.

Billy craned his neck to see what it was and was as much amazed as disgusted to find that it was a volume of sermons.

Presently Priscilla looked up with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes.

"Dave, whose book is this?"

"What—that? The Flying Roll? Oh, I guess it's ma's. She bought it from a book-agent two years ago and pa's been laughing at her ever since. He said there was two things sold in that affair—the book and ma."

"Can I have the loan of it for awhile? I'll be just as careful of it."

"Course," said Dave.

Billy gasped.

It was now time to go. Priscilla sorrowfully retreated into the bedroom and came out white and frilled and angelic again

"We've had a splendid day of it and we'll come another time if ever Aunt Jane has Sunday rheumatism again," she promised—recklessly, Billy thought, for it was unlikely Aunt Jane would trust them out of her sight the rest of the Summer? "Good-by, boys. A bit of raw meat would be just the thing for your eye, Pete. You'd better wake the baby up and take him out of the coop or he'll be sunburned in stripes. Come, Billy."

On the road home Priscilla drew a long regretful breath.

"Wasn't it jolly, Billy? I've always wanted to know if I was really able to fight with a boy and now I know I can, for sure. Of course, I've often licked you, but I was always scared you were just giving in to me because you thought it polite. Just think, if father had let us go to Aunt Nora's we could have fun like that all the week without having to break any of the commandments for it."

"And without having to settle up with Aunt Jane afterwards," said Billy mournfully.

"Aunt Jane isn't going to know a thing about it," said Priscilla triumphantly. "I've got a plan, Billy. This Flying Roll book is full of sermons. I struck a dandy one. I'm going to smuggle it into the house and we'll write a s'nopsis from it and Aunt Jane will never know the difference."

"I don't think it's fair that you should have got all the brains in our family, Priscilla," said Billy, more admiringly than enviously when he had digested the idea.

"Well, you see, I had to have some advantages to make up for being a girl," said Priscilla.

The way of those two transgressors seemed unscripturally easy.

III

Aunt Jane suspected nothing and after dinner—if you think that they ate

nothing you are vastly mistaken—they were sent to the library to write the usual report of the sermon. Billy's opinion was that writing a "s'nopsis" with the printed sermon before you was a snap. When Aunt Jane came in they were ready for her, and she took the unusually copious sheets with a grim smile.

Alas, very speedily that smile was changed to a frown.

"Surely—surely Mr. Thorne never preached such stuff as this!"

"What's the matter with it?" Priscilla gasped.

"Matter? It's heresy—rank heresy. Why, the man must be a second adventist. I never read such doctrines."

Aunt Jane rushed out of the room in burning indignation.

"What do you suppose was wrong?" whispered Billy miserably.

"I'm sure I can't imagine," said Priscilla dejectedly. "The text was out of the Bible all right enough and goodness knows the sermon seemed awfully religious. It said all the wicked were to be burned up in a thousand years, too. What would you call orthodox doctrine if that isn't? But nevermind," brightening up, "it's Mr. Thorne she's angry with, not us. Maybe she'll forget all about it before she sees him."

Alas for delusive hopes! Mr. Thorne, hearing of Miss Carr's rheumatic indisposition, called the very next afternoon and was shown into the library where that excellent lady was drilling her charges in dictation and spelling. Billy's cold hand reached over and clutched Priscilla's under the table.

"She'll be sure to pitch into him—and he'll say he didn't preach it—and it'll all come out. She'll be madder than if we had owned right up that we hadn't been to church. What will we do?" he whispered agitatedly.

"Hush! Sit still and say nothing," was Priscilla's advice.

Miss Carr cut Mr. Thorne's suave inquiries after her health severely short.

"Yes, I was prevented from going to church, Mr. Thorne, and I very much regret it, for I should certainly not have allowed such doctrines as you preached yesterday to pass without a protest. I cannot express how amazed I am to discover that you hold such and would dare to proclaim them in a Presbyterian pulpit."

"I—I don't understand you, Miss Carr," exclaimed the unfortunate young man.

"Will you deny that you made the statements contained in my grandniece's report of your sermon?" demanded Miss Carr. She produced the incriminating manuscript from the table drawer. "Is the whole substance of your sermon expressed in the simple if somewhat disconnected words of an innocent child?"

Mr. Thorne took the paper and glanced over it. His lips twitched a little. Then he raised his hand and looked across the room at the two scared, appealing faces, with guilt written on their every lineaments. Mr. Thorne had called at the Dixons before coming to Miss Carr's and the putting of two and two together is by no means a hard arithmetical problem.

He coolly folded up the "s'nopsis" and put it in his pocket.

"I—I am sorry I have incurred your displeasure, Miss Carr," he said solemnly. "I—ahem—promise you that I shall never preach such a sermon—again."

"That will not alter the fact that you hold such doctrine," said Miss Carr inexorably. "I must tell you plainly that I can no longer countenance you as my minister, Mr. Thorne. In future you may spare yourself the trouble of calling here."

Mr. Thorne rose. He was quite pale and he did not glance at the children; but his voice was quiet and steady.

"I am sorry, Miss Carr. Good-afternoon," and bowed himself out.

Aunt Jane watched him down the path grimly.

"That settles it. Not another penny do I pay to the salary-fund as long as that man contaminates the Meadowby pulpit," she said decisively, as she went out.

"Aint he a brick? He never told!" whispered Billy exultantly.

But Priscilla's face was white and tragic.

"A brick! He's a *Christian*, Billy

Carr! And to think we've got him in such a scrape! Well, we can get him out again."

"What scrape? What difference does it make if Aunt Jane is mad at him?"

"Billy Carr, didn't you hear her say she wouldn't pay another cent to his salary? Don't you understand what that means? I know all about it. The church here is dreadfully weak. Aunt Jane pays as much as all the rest put together. If she stops, Mr. Thorne can't stay here. And he's going to marry that sweet Miss Sinclair—Dovie Nicholson told me so. If he has to leave here goodness knows when he can be married. Billy Carr, we've just got to go and own up the whole thing to Aunt Jane."

"Oh, I'd never dare," protested Billy. "If she'd ever had forgiven us for running away to play with the Dixons she'll never forgive us for fooling her with a fake-sermon and getting her into a fuss with the minister. Let things alone. Maybe she'll find out from someone else that he didn't preach it."

"She never will. You know she never associates with anybody in Meadowby. She'll just tell the collector that Mr. Thorne doesn't preach sound doctrine and she wont condescend to explain anything about it. It's got to be done, Billy. I can't have the minister suffering for my faults. I'm going straight to her now. But you needn't come if you are scared."

"I'm scared but I'm coming. You don't suppose I'm going to leave you do it alone, do you?" said Billy chivalrously.

IV

Half an hour later the twins were sitting on the floor of an unfurnished upstairs room. The fatal interview was over and it had not been a pleasant one, to state it mildly. Aunt Jane had ordered them to the north room, there to stay until she had decided on their punishment. She also added that they had disgraced their father's name and that it was a judgment on him for marrying beneath him.

"What do you suppose she'll do to us?" said Billy. The subject had a grewsome facsination.

"I don't know," snapped Priscilla wrathfully, "but I do know one thing: she'd dearly love to whip us if it wasn't against her principles. She'll likely keep us shut up here and feed us on bread and milk for a week. She hasn't enough imagination to invent anything else. Did you hear what she said about father? I guess our mother was ten times better than she is and anyway she's dead and I'm not going to stand having things said about her. I just gave Aunt Jane a *look* when she said that."

It was nearly dark when Aunt Jane came to pass sentence on the culprits of the north room. Billy tried to look as defiant as Priscilla did. Standing before them, a rigid figure of outraged majesty, Aunt Jane pronounced the doom of fate.

"When your father was summoned abroad he talked of sending you to your Aunt Nora's. I did not feel like assuming the responsibility of your guidance and training but I considered it my duty to do so. I did it for your sakes. I knew you would be unhappy at your Aunt Nora's. She is a poor woman with a small house and a family of romping, inconsiderate children. Her scanty table and lack of conveniences would have seemed unbearable to you after the luxuries and dainty appointments to which you have been accustomed. I wished to save you from such discomforts. I was mistaken in this. You needed just such discipline to teach you to appreciate your blessings. I have reflected much concerning the punishment best suited to your scandalous conduct. It seemed to me that no ordinary measures would be severe enough. I have finally decided—"

Aunt Jane paused, to give due weight to her decree.

Billy and Priscilla held tight to each other.

Billy was quaking.

What fiendish punishment had Aunt Jane devised?

Even Priscilla lost a little of her dauntless bearing.

"I have decided," concluded Aunt Jane, "to send you both straightway to your Aunt Nora's."

Meum and Tuum

By EDITH FULLERTON SCOTT

I

THE work of months was concluded. John Lawrence Shaffer drew from the typewriter the last sheet of his novel and added it to the pile neatly stacked on one end of his long writing-table. This was at variance with his usual custom. He was wont to linger lovingly over the final page, and to sign his name at the foot of it before he left it. Mechanically he noted this omission, and took up his pen, but quickly, as if it burned him, let it fall again. Always before, when he had a manuscript ready for the publishers, Shaffer had felt a mental exaltation, but to-day, though he knew that this was his masterpiece, he was conscious only of physical relief, unaccompanied even by a sense of self-satisfaction.

He had worked hard. His theme had absorbed him. He had lived in it, soul and body, so that his characters were real flesh and blood, clothed with the attributes of breathing men and women and not mere skeletons on which he had hung the garments of his fancy. According to all precedent he should now be experiencing the warm, generous glow of a creator, but instead, he eyed this most favored of his brain-children with growing distaste, as if it were a changeling, or an alien come to usurp his most cherished privileges.

He sat staring at it, at once fascinated and repelled by it. His mind traveled back to that evening, a year ago, when young Clayton Souter had given him an outline of the story that he intended some day to write. Souter was a reporter. He had a nose for news, and a rather clever knack of writing it up, but he had not tried his hand at a serious effort. He had confided to Shaffer, though, that it was his ambition eventually to give up newspaper-work, and to make literature his profession, and then it was that he gave a synopsis of the book that should one day bring him fame and fortune. The plot of it was unique. It had fired Shaffer's imagination. Again and again his thoughts reverted to it, to the exclusion of everything else, though he sternly tried to prevent their encroaching on another's preserves. At last, so completely did it take possession of him, he had no alternative but to wave his scruples aside and let it take shape on paper. The germ sown in a chance conversation had landed on fertile soil and was destined to bloom into a radiant flower.

It was this story—Souter's—that was filling Shaffer with such conflicting emotions. The artist in him cried out that it would have been sacrilege to allow so rare a story to be marred in the telling, as might have happened had Souter attempted to elaborate it. It required careful treatment, such as Shaffer with his superior knowledge and experience had been able to give it. Would Souter's apprentice-hand have achieved the touch of the master? Shaffer's reputation was world-wide. Some men would consider it an honor to have him incorporate in book form an idea of theirs. But would Souter? Shaffer recalled the young fellow's enthusiasm, the light in his eyes as he unfolded the plot, and his gratified expression when

his listener, carried out of himself, had praised it in the highest terms. There are only two things in this world that can bring that look into a man's face. They are his pride in the fruit of his body, and in the fruit of his mind. And as, to a father, there can come no greater sorrow than to have his children torn from him, so, to an author, there is no more poignant grief than to find that another, consciously or unconsciously, has stolen a thought that he considered essentially his own, No! Souter would never willingly part with the precious fabric of his dreams, nor would he allow anyone else a share in it. The fact that Shaffer could display it to better advantage would influence him not a whit. Does the average parent relinquish his claim on his child and entrust it to another's keeping, because the other is able, perhaps, to provide it with luxurious surroundings while he can barely find a subsistence for it? Souter would hardly be content with any partner proposition. He would be insulted had Shaffer the temerity to lay it before him, and would not regard it as a concession that his name appear on the title page as collaborator. What is a mess of pottage compared with one's birthright? Shaffer was confronted by a knotty problem and despaired of solving it.

He put on his hat and went out. He felt as if he had sandbagged a friend and robbed him of all he had. It was an unpleasant feeling, and he wanted to shake it off.

The clear Autumnal air acted as a stimulant. Except for his meals, eaten at irregular hours, he had not been away from his bachelor-apartment for a week or more. Suddenly it occurred to him that he had had no luncheon, and no breakfast worthy of the name, so he stopped in at Jack's and had a steak and some coffee. Thus fortified, he continued on his way up-town and presently found himself at the entrance to his club. Within its doors there was sure to be someone he knew. He craved companionship. Somewhere he remembered having read that the bad desire the company of others but avoid their own. He entered, and directed his steps upstairs to his favorite nook.

He was greeted cordially by the group in the chimney-corner.

II

"Well, Shaffer, you're quite a stranger. You've given us the go-by for so long that we expect the best yet from your pen," said Paul Walton, emerging from the depths of his easy chair and pulling forward another for the new-comer. "When your pen gets busy, that means work for mine, you know," he added laughingly.

Shaffer threw up his hands in mock consternation.

"Don't say you have been lying in wait for me! Even though Winter be upon us, I cannot calmly contemplate being roasted by you. I'd rather be—an author, a harassed struggling author, than a blood-thirsty critic. And yet, you seem to thrive at your trade, Walton. I believe you enjoy seeing people writhe under your barbed thrusts. Talk about the sharpness of a serpent's tooth! It is blunt, compared with your criticisms."

"Thanks! Thank you kindly," responded Walton gayly. "Have you any more bouquets to throw at me? I'll gather them up and store them in the greenhouse of my memory. So sweet it is to be appreciated! It has ever been my aim to make my mark in the world, and your words give me hopes that I may need no other monument. By the way," he broke off, dropping his bantering tone for a sober one, "isn't it too bad about Clayton Souter?"

"What about him?" Shaffer asked sharply, irritated that his name, of all others, should be brought into the conversation.

"Dead! Died last week! Appendicitis!"

Shaffer started.

"What! Clayton Souter?'

"Yes! Hadn't you heard?"

"No. I hadn't heard anything about him, or, for the matter of that, about much else for some time. I've had one of my writing-fits on," he explained, "and while it lasts I'm oblivious to the world. Tell me about him."

"Well, it's one of the saddest cases

that I have come across. After having a hard row to hoe for years, last week he was made night-editor of his paper, and there was a prospect of his forging right ahead. He was happy as a lark! But only three days later he was stricken with appendicitis, was operated upon, and died the next morning."

"You don't say so! As sudden as that!"

"Pretty rough, isn't it? He was full of promise, and undoubtedly had a career before him."

"He had considerable ability,"agreed Shaffer, haltingly.

He was a man of kindly instincts, and of a sympathetic nature, and he hated himself now because he did not feel the regret that he should upon hearing such a piece of news. It was horrible to find himself mentally exulting while outwardly trying to appear deeply concerned. Instead of being decently depressed, it was as if he had gotten rid of a crushing burden. He need no longer hesitate about sending his novel to his publishers. There was no one now to challenge his right to do so.

"I'm never so sorry for those that are taken as for those that are left," he dimly heard Walton go on. "In this instance, it is the widow with one young child, and a second soon to come, that I pity most. Mrs. Souter is a delicate little woman, and I don't see how she is going to get along."

Shaffer roused himself.

"Didn't he leave her provided for?"

"He had nothing but what he earned and that went as fast as it came in, I fancy. What with doctors' bills for his wife, and one thing and another, he did well to make both ends meet. He had a little life-insurance, just enough to cover his funeral expenses, and a few hundreds extra, which will about tide Mrs. Souter over her illness. But then what will become of her?"

"Can't his friends take up a collection for her?" suggested Shaffer. "I'll gladly—gladly—head the list with a thousand."

"That's just like you, Shaffer," commented Walton, heartily. "You'll die in the poor-house yourself, if you're not careful. But you're almost a stranger to Mrs. Souter, and she is too proud to accept aid. You see I know her rather well. The thought does you credit, though, old man," he concluded, clapping a friendly hand on his shoulder.

Shaffer winced.

"It's nothing at all, Walton," he protested awkwardly. "It would make me feel a deal more comfortable—I mean, I'd never miss it, and the offer holds good whenever you can induce her to avail herself of it."

It was devilish to be praised for goodness of motive when in his heart all was blackness. He was not as yet sufficiently calloused to be inured to the pricks. But they were deadened by the ecstasy of the knowledge that his labor was not to come to naught. It was his book, and his alone. His book! But all at once a thought struck him, and it was of so tremendous import that his pulses stood still. A question, a vital one, trembled on his tongue, but it was some moments before he could trust himself to put it indifferently enough. Then he asked, with apparent interest in the widow's affairs.

"Is it not possible that Souter may have left some saleable manuscripts?"

He waited breathlessly for an answer. What if Souter had written down his story, after all?

Walton had turned away to look at an impromptu sketch drawn by an artist acquaintance, and Shaffer grew impatient until he again had his undivided attention.

"What was that, John? Oh! No, not an unpublished line could a search among his papers bring to light. I had hoped there might be some stuff, but there wasn't. What! Must you go?"

Shaffer muttered something about an engagement, nodded good-by to the rest, and hurriedly left the building. A powerful magnet drew him back to his own rooms.

Once the manuscript was handed over to the publishers, his bridges would be burnt behind him. Then he would have the will power to banish it entirely. Already its hold on him was relaxing. He did not pause until he had reached his apartment and had seated himself in his working-chair. There at his elbow lay the fair white pile of typewritten sheets.

Should he make of it an altar on which to immolate himself, or should it be a tower to perpetuate the memory of its builder?

Putting aside such vexatious questionings, he selected a cigar from his pocket-case, lighted it, and, impartially as any reviewer, went over the manuscript. Cigar after cigar he smoked, and the night wore on, but when at last he finished reading the story, and laid it down, the fatigue of his close, critical attention, was quite overbalanced by the jubilant realization that here indeed was a literary achievement.

It was sure to meet with immediate recognition and success. He would be content with the fame of being its author. Whatever money it might bring him, he would give away. All of it! To Mrs. Souter, if he could convey it anonymously, or at any rate to some charity. Not one penny of it would he reserve for himself. Even his own conscience should be able to stigmatize him as sordid. In the morning he would send it forth to win his fresh laurels. He did not desire gold. It was only a wreath of green leaves that he wanted. His self-administered judgment had a soothing influence and he went to bed and slept soundly.

III

When he awoke, it was long past his usual hour for rising. But it did not matter. He would make holiday to-day. He would do no harder work than the wrapping up of his novel and getting it off by messenger. He dressed leisurely. His mind reverted to Mrs. Souter. His fancy pictured her surprise and relief when she should receive a communication from a law-firm signifying that they had on deposit for her a considerable sum of money placed with them by a client, whose name was withheld, but who took this method to show his appreciation of a service rendered to him in times past by her husband. Shaffer had decided that this would be the most delicate and graceful way to conduct the affair. The rôle of benefactor was a most agreeable one.

He sauntered into his study and picked up the mail the man had left on the table for him. On top there was a long, somewhat bulky envelope addressed to him in unfamiliar handwriting, but he passed that over until he had glanced through his other letters. Then he opened this one, meaning merely to learn the name of his correspondent. From its size, it probably contained some would-be author's essay into literature, sent him for his opinion and advice, and he was not in the mood to read it. A hasty peep satisfied him that its contents were as he supposed, so he pulled out the note enclosed with it.

The signature had an astounding effect upon him. It shook him out of his composure, drove the blood away from his heart, and sent it throbbing into his temporal arteries. For a minute he sat in stony silence, then, gazing furtively around him, he walked with stealthy step to the hall door and bolted it. The fire smouldered on the hearth. He poked it into a vigorous blaze, and added another log. There was a sudden chill in the air—besides, it is sometimes convenient to have a fire. It is a discreet confidant, a safe repository for weighty secrets.

He crept back to the table and stood fingering the note which he had not read, but which had so disturbed him. He forced himself to look once more at the ending of it. There was no mistaking the superscription. Written in the blackest of ink, perfectly legible, it projected itself convincingly upon his reluctant vision.

"Clayton Souter."

He tried to be calm, but his brain was like a telegraph-operator, who, suddenly gone mad, keeps the wires hot with one senseless message. A vast amount of clicking went on, but all it resolved into was: "Clayton Souter! Clayton Souter! Clayton Souter!"

Shaffer did not require to be told why Souter had written to him. And he had felt so safe! Well, wasn't he still safe? Who could prove that he had ever received these damnable papers? The flames crackled merrily. Little red imps grinned at him, beckoned to him, then darted up the chimney. But there were myriads left, and they all called to him enticingly. Soon they should have the

fuel they coveted. First, though, he would read the letter—after he had steadied his nerves. He filled a wine-glass with whisky, drank it at a gulp, and fixed his eyes resolutely on the open sheet.

The letter was dated the day of Souter's operation, the sixth inst., and was as follows:

MY DEAR MR. SHAFFER:

This afternoon I am to go under the surgeon's knife. If this letter ever reaches you, you will know that the operation resulted fatally, as only in the event of my death is my wife to forward this to you. I would like to live for two great reasons, and many minor ones. Of the two, the first is that my family needs me, the second, that I am anxious to write the book which I think you will recollect my telling you about at the Author's Dinner.

And it is because of these reasons that I write to you. I cannot leave a suitable provision for my wife, so I make you this proposition:

You were interested in my plot. Do you want it? If you have no use for it, then will you do me the kindness to dispose of it to the highest bidder? Somebody wants a plot. I want money. It is a fair exchange, a perfectly legitimate business transaction. I enclose a rough draft of my story—a mere outline of its salient features, but enough to refresh your memory, or to serve as a guide, a working basis, to whoever purchases it.

This is my one valuable asset. I had hoped to have it make a name for me, but I have a premonition that my opportunity is gone, and so I pass it on.

Pardon my abruptness. My time is short, and I am in great pain.

Hoping that you will not be put to too much trouble by this request of mine—it is because of the profound esteem that I have for you that I venture thus to intrude my affairs upon you—I am,

Yours very sincerely,
CLAYTON SOUTER.

John Lawrence read and reread the dead man's appeal. With every reading he saw more clearly. The shutters of his soul opened and revealed to him how shameless a thing, for the sake of his art, he had been willing to make of himself. There are misers of all sorts. There are those that would become thieves even, so that they add to their hoards. And then their horrid gloating which had been but a despicable vice, harmful to themselves but to no one else, changes into an active menace to their fellows. They are outcasts and criminals.

This, and more, saw John Lawrence Shaffer.

He shivered.

"God! what a narrow escape!" was wrung from him.

He sat down at his desk, dashed off a short note, put it into an envelope, sealed, addressed and stamped it, then wrote to his publishers:

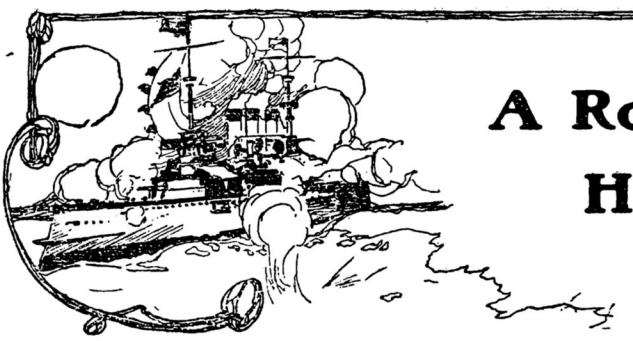
MESSRS. THORN & WESTON,
GENTLEMAN:

I hope that you will be as pleased, as I am, with the accompanying manuscript. Its author, Mr. Clayton Souter, died recently, and the bigger the sales—you see I am counting on your accepting and booming this remarkable story—the better it will be for his widow and children, who are almost destitute. Mr. Souter died suddenly, before he had revised his book, so I licked it into shape. I mention this fact to you, because you may detect traces of my hand. The unobservant public need not share this confidence. I have written Mrs. Souter that I am sending this story to you. It was her husband's wish that I represent him in this matter, so kindly address all communications to me, and I will forward them to her.

Yours very truly,
JOHN LAWRENCE SHAFFER.

This letter he put with his manuscript and wrapped them together. Having tied the package securely, he locked it in his safe for a month's rest. It takes time to polish a book-manuscript. He reached for Souter's outline. He did not read it, for his memory needed no refreshing, but he held it as one might clasp the hand of a friend, and paced the floor reflectively. Then, reverently, he laid it on the logs.

The scarlet devils had their promised feast, but it had the flavor of a sacrifice. They slunk away, and the flame-goddess tenderly gathered up the offering and bore it from sight.



A Rope-Yarn Holiday

By D. E. DERMODY

THE cup of the world, draped in the gauze of a Chinese Summer, was filled with a liquor of light, at the bottom of which the glitteringly white cruiser, *Alameda*, lay, like a pearl in its shell, in the harbor of Chefoo.

It was the afternoon of a field-day, and no work was in progress on the man-of-war. Seaman Jack O'Grane, lolling in the shade of the forward turret, abstractedly rolled a cigaret and tucked it under the outside band of his white hat; whereupon, boatswain's-mate Burley winked at Coxswain Tim Crawley. The cached cigaret signified that Jack had something to say of such tiresome length that he would require the solace of a smoke at the close. His opening remark, however, was brief enough. With the air of one throwing a great light in the path of a long darkling world, he announced:

"Woman is deep; no deep-sea lead can fathom her; and beware of the perils of the deep."

Then he fell silent and cogitative.

"Bosh!" Crawley goaded him. "She's shallow; as shallow as Chiriquí lagoon, which waters you've steamed over."

O'Grane cast a malevolent glance at the disputant with his left eye, while the right remained fixed in melancholy retrospection on an iron deckplate. His ability to do this was one of many minor accomplishments that entered into the making up of his generally notable personality.

"Rats, O'Grane! Go on and tell us about her, if it's not a chestnut we've heard before," interposed Burley. "It's about one of the *señoritas*, of course. If we've got to listen to it, why let's have it and have over with it."

So saying, he put himself into a comfortable position to listen to the story which he affected to anticipate as a bore. For, as stated, O'Grane was a notable nondescript.

According to his own statement, the better part of his youth had been spent in South America, in one of the revolutionary republics of which his father, a former Chicagoan, had sought peace in affluence, incidentally escaping the persecutions of certain alleged reformers at home, who had hounded him out of his country because he had incurred their displeasure on several occasions by doing favors for a celebrated political boss—something in the line of getting votes in a doubtful district. O'Grane claimed to speak Spanish as fluently as he did English, which was claiming a doubtful accomplishment. One Pete Allways, an iconoclast of the continuous service type, contemptuously asserted that all Jack knew of Spanish was some conversational idioms gleaned from a phrase-book, kept in his ditty-box; and that his residence in South America was limited to overnight liberties in ports touched by American warships. Be that as it may, whenever the vessel to which he happened to belong visited such ports, Jack O'Grane seldom failed to become involved in some intrigue of a romantic nature; and at least one of these imbroglios had concerned persons of such consequence as to require adjustment by the diplomats. His shipmates, while affecting to scorn these escapades, secretly de-

lighted in hearing about them, especially when related by the oblique-eyed escapee himself.

He now took off his hat, felt leisurely around the outer band until he had found a more capacious opening, into which he transferred the reserve cigaret, replaced the hat on his head, folded his arms about his up-drawn knees adn corrugated his bronzed brow in earnest sifting of his memory.

"I was on the trainin'-ship *Alert* then, and we'll say it was at Highkicker —Iquique, if you likee speaka proper— and the *señorita*, God bless her! was all right; they all are. I didn't never mean no harm to that little girl, and she knowed I didn't. It come out all right in the end, so far's I know; and she give me an imper'shable keepsake to remember her by—this trick I've got of lookin' twice at once when I'm in a hurry."

He raised his drooped head a second to fix an attentively listening apprentice-boy with a baleful glare from one eye and to wink idiotically at Burley with the other.

"She broke a chord or somethin', in my left headlight, which allows me to do what I like with that one independent of the other one. That was when she minced up my face with a hairpin *cuchilla* and threw pulverized red-pepper into my eyes. She was high-grade, this little lady; the daughter of a hundred *dons*, granddaughter of a *grandee* who was down on his grandeur, and *sobrina* of a mighty *soldado*—a high-strung, erratic *muchacha*, and I've admired her more since I aint never seen her again than I did in the agitatin' tumult of the moment when she was tryin' to find the peepholes in my mask —it all happened at a masquerade *baile* —with her pepper squirt-gun. That I, while yet blinded and bleedin', was the means of savin' her life from a howlin', roaring, squealing, crowd of *hidalgos*, who considered one hundred to one the squarest deal ever, has always been a comfort to my conscience when I feel I've been violatin' the regulations again. But I'm gettin' south of my course.

"Highkicker, you're aware, is famous for saltpetre and windjammer beachcombers. But the time the *Alert* went in there for fire-room fodder, it was essentially famous for bein' the cote of that cooin' dove of the Cordilleras, the *Señorita* Inez Opaga, the said marvelous *muchacha* who remodeled my eyes later on into the aspect they now see you."

Each of the listeners squirmed and grinned as the elastic-nerved optics in question seemed to glint devilishly and separately at each of them simultaneously.

"No sooner our trim little trainin'-ship got in there than the *alcalde* and his fellow patriots had the tub dappled with handbills in *Español*, settin' forth that the *Americano marinas* were warmly invited to witness a bull-fight got up in their honor. The sailors were given front seats and a banana each, and, bein' mostly apprentice-boys, enjoyed the affair hugely. Soon's we all got seated, along comes this *Señorita* Opaga, in company with the *alcalde* and her *tio general;* and the *alcalde* said a few words to us in pigeon Californese, and, what was more eloquent, the *señorita* smiled. That was when I was younger; I immediately concluded that that smile was intended exclusively for me. But anyway, even as a general proposition, a smile from them darklin' moons of paradise would put a flutter into any man's system that was a man, and not a coxswain in the navy. They were a more harrowin' menace than I can screw into those twisted windows of mine when observin' one of said coxswains this minute."

"Blow your eyes!" bellowed the baited Crawley. "Cut 'em out, and go on with your pack of lies."

"All right," agreed the Prairie avenue Ulysses with surprising meekness, fixing a reproachful eye on the critic, while the other languidly followed a gull swimming in the remote blue. "But in that case, of course, there wont be any yarn, for it was along of her tryin' to cut 'em out that the eppysode transpired."

"Take a reef in the eyes and let 'em blink, if you want to," temporized Burley, "but dish them dago-words. Talk United States, or even Michigan, if you want to; but forget the *habla.*"

The insult having been thus passed on to Pete Allways, the pessimist, who hailed from Ypsilanti, O'Grane was appeased.

"It so happened that this delirious, rather dark-complected angel sat on the row of seats that I did, so close we might easily have chewed the rag together had mine been the unspeakable bliss to be on speakin' acquaintance with her. Bein', as I suggested, at the age when every youngster is a idiot and can't help it, and wouldn't believe it if he found it out, I directed my then normal and attractive eyes at her until she tossed her beauteous head on high and tickled the dotish old *tio* in the ear, whisperin' to him, I suspect now, that the *Americano* sailors were a drove of ugly young pigs, while the flamin' banners of youth and loveliness waved and flashed in her satin cheeks. Gee, but she was a dream! a drink of *aguardiente*, or anything allurin' that makes men go dippy. I felt that if she didn't look at me again, no matter whether in kindness or in scorn, I'd surely bust up dynamitic, which I reckon I did later on, allephorically speakin'. To win that look I would gladly have gone down and thrown myself under the hoofs and horns of the superannuated old cows that were bellowin' over the bull-ring fence, like they was tryin' to coax the *matador* to kill 'em quick, 'fore they starved to death.

"The bulls were let into the ring one at a time, but they wouldn't fight, wouldn't hardly try to run away. They just mo-oed and gazed reproachful at the *picadors*, whose fiery steeds had a weakness of wantin' to go to sleep at critical moments, with their heads between their fore-hoofs. The bulls looked at the steeds sort of sympathizin', and altogether there wasn't much doin'. But finally they got a middle-aged longhorn that had a little life left in him, and him they chased *rapido*, posin' and pirouettin' in their yellow and red furb'lows to give you a nightmare. I wasn't at all interested, but an idea occurred to me whereby to make my cold goddess look at me, and it succeeded amazin'ly. The *matador* dodged the lumberin' ox in one of his sasshays, stuck a frill in its shoulder, and salaamed right and left with his hand on his heart, the crowd a bravo-in' boisterous.

"'*Payaso!*' I hooted.

"It's a good Castilian word, that peons don't use much; and Oh, bliss! she looked at me. The look had some respect in it, just enough to give proper poison to the hate of it, but I didn't care; I'd just then rather have a look of hate from her than to be called honeyboy by a belle of the big town, such was my onhuman infatuation.

"'*Mono!*' I whooped again, soon's she looked away; and again those glorious eyes burned into me in two flames, that turned into icicles on my chest. And, *santa ora!*—those lips of rubies, such as never Ruben saw, parted and she spoke to me, whisperin' soft and hissin'ly:

"'*Cobarde!*'

"'*Señorita, mi corazon se despedaza,*' I coos back at her, pleadin' but bold, and thankin' heaven that her uncle, the general, was watchin' the performance four-eyed, leanin' on his staff with his head poked for'ard.

"'*Si, cobarde en todo y por todo,*' she taunted; and, with a maddenin' droop of her long, black lashes, she lifted a tiny, gloved hand just clear of her *serape*, lyin' in her lap, and pointed a slim forefinger at the bullring. '*Porque no usted, señor?*'"

"Cut it out!" strangled Burley, angrily straightening up from his recumbent position against the turret. "Cut out the dago. What's the use of tellin' us a yarn in a lingo we don't savvy?"

"Of course I had to accept that challenge," monotoned O'Grane, subjugating Burley with a look from both eyes at once, unnerving by reason of its unnatural naturalness. "Havin' no eyes nor ears for anybody but this siren, I wasn't aware at the time, but heard afterwards, that my insultin' epithets aimed at the *matador* had created quite a foorore among the assemblage of *tamale*-makers, and there was some growin' excitement that might have resulted unfortunate to me if I hadn't a-made *pronto* good and plenty.

"I went down the tiers of seats six at a time, over *señoras*, *señors* and sailormen, kissin' my hand backwards to the enticin' one, with my flat-hat in my left hand, which, when I had reached the bottom row, I sailed majestic over the fence. Accurate jugglin' in that line is one of my star stunts. This time I beat my record by landin' the hat square on the bull's off horn, where it caught fair and stayed.

"That really woke the animal up. It did a few didos that sent the tri-colored *picadors* and *matador* flutterin' around like confetti at a *fiesta*, and that was my chance. One of my accomplishments learned down that way, is ridin' steers; and when the flat-hatted bundle of bones rushed at me, I took hold of his horns easy like and swung astraddle of him, facin' astern, and reached over and got hold of his tail, with which I proceeded to steer him about in a seaman-like manner, as the navigator so frequently remarks.

"He rampaged around most exhilaratin' for awhile, the bullfighters meantime retirin' from the ring in a dignified hurry, leavin' the field, as a matter of courtesy, to the visitin' stranger. When the bull found out I wasn't tryin' to stick nothin' in him, he quieted down and looked around at me on his back kind of puzzled, mo-oed sociable to see if it was so, and rubbed his slavery jaws on my pant-leg. Then I got down, took him by the forelock, led him to the gate and give him a shove out. When I turned around everybody was standin' up screamin', and I grinned till I seen my *doncellita* tiptoein' and wavin' her *serape* pictoriously. Then I did the courteous, bowin' and massagin' my heart with my left hand, while the other made semaphore-signals in the air with my rescued flat-hat.

"Modesty," glowered the story-teller, menacing any incipient sarcasm which this assertion might have called forth, "persuades me from tellin' what happened next. It's enough to say that when I vaulted back over the palin's, I was caught up on the shoulders of an admirin' prolytaryit, and, with the kissed fingertips of lovely women, includin' her whom I'd skylarked to conquer, recedin' in the background, the triumphal procession begun, lackin' in chariots and tigers, but effulgent with go-carts and donkeys. I wound up that night an honored guest in the home of the general and the phantom of delight that lured me, whom I wooed assiduous in ways that are known to such as she.

"I wasn't surprised much when I learned that that false alarm of a *matador* was her *amador*. But early in the evenin's confidences she intimated to me that she would be his'n nevermore. And here's where it comes in that I assert woman's deep—or shallow, if you're shallow enough to believe it.

"'At the *baile* to-morrow night,' she purrs to me in swoonin' Castilian, 'the *Señor* Papa knows that I am to come as from the harem, wearing many veils. But now, never to him again will I speak.' *Señor* Papa was the cowkiller, and his name means spuds. Inez' eyes glistened like those of *la vibora* as she spoke it. 'Yet—' and mark you now whether this was deep or shallow—'yet much would I like to know what to-night he would have said to me, that I might make sweeter my hate of him by a better knowledge of his vileness.'

"After a soulfullest kind of pause, she murmured coyly: 'You are small of hand and graceful of form, *Señor* Juan; with the mask and the many veils none would question you in the *vestido de mujer;* and you speak the language not as the *extranjero.*'

"It didn't need even her stiletto eyes to drive that hint into me. The night of the *baile*, an *incognito* of the Sultan's harem accompanied Uncle General to the festal *casa*, and, will you believe me, even he didn't know but that it was his adorable niece who minced beside him.

"I left my sailor-togs in the rose-garden where the real young lady had put me wise to make the shift. I entered the hall, of course, belle of the ball by previous popular acclamation—undisputedly *el flor del fandango.*"

O'Grane rolled each Spanish word in his mouth like a savory morsel, and his aggravating eyes sparkled with delight at Burley's suppressed rage. Failing to strain his shipmate's temper to the be aking point by this method, however, he now adopted another plan.

Having been for sometime utilizing his finger-nails to fashion a match into a toothpick, he now began picking his teeth with an air of deep abstraction, while gazing pensively with one eye at the foreign quarter of Chefoo and studying Target Range Island in the offing with the other.

His audience writhed. Pride forbade his shipmates to acknowledge that they were interested in his story. Some of them pretended to be asleep, furtively watching the wag from beneath the arms that were thrown with exaggerated lassitude over their reclining heads. The marine sentry on post on the forecastle, who had momently shortened his beat by a pace at each end, until he had finally arrived at a gaping standstill, moved on again; but only far enough to get out of the range of Jack's disheartening eyes, where he stood with his back to the group, listening expectantly.

The strained situation was relieved by an inexperienced apprentice-boy who sat watching the *raconteur*, big-eyed and breathless, in a rapt condition approximating that which, a little earlier in his career, was wont to hold him rigid at the more critical stages of Deadwood Dick's deadly peril.

He snapped the tension now by vociferating:

"Aw, go on Jack!"

"Aw, go on Jack!" mimicked Pete, the pessimist. "If I've got to have a tooth pulled, I want it yanked out quick."

O'Grane beamed gratefully at the boy. To be implored to go on was to him as a victory in arms.

"That Inez girl was somethin' more than beautiful. She was convent educated and spoke three languages; and she knew more about *Señor* George Washington and *Don* Julius Cæsar than I did. That was how it happened she left me guessin'.

"She'd told me to look for a night of the middle ages. Assumin' that twelve o'clock was the middle age of the night, I sidelooked around under my nifty uncle's wing, thinkin' it would be a long time before midnight for nothing to happen. I had just come to the conclusion that there must be another meanin' to her instructions, when uncle pointed out to me a remarkable individual with an upset coal-scuttle over his head, sayin', 'There's your Richard *Core-de-Lay-on;* he seeks you, my child.'

"And sure enough the said Richard come hoverin' like a moth around the flame of my *serape*, liftin' it off my shoulders with the tips of his fingers at arms-length, in a manner so tender and devoted I right away begun to feel that demure-like and delicate I feared maybe I might lose footholds and float upwards any minute.

"'Are you a night of the middle ages?' I asked this apparition, mufflin' my mouth with my hand to disguise my voice.

"'*Si* Sultana,' he bows.

"And then I knowed he was *Señor* Papa and was on my guard.

"Hauteur was my play, and I skittished with my cavalier real uppish, glidin' along a little front and averted from him, with my dainty head cocked up and sideways—said head bein' luckily obscured and nonprofiled by the many veils, with the addition of a snowy white, silken flour-bag, which come down to my shoulders, and which, I take it, is the real thing in merry-widow hats of the harem.

"I'm that graceful and beguilin' in my movements, it was no trouble to fool the *señor* that way, but I had to be careful with my voice, which is no girlish treble. But do you know, the third time I spoke to him, which was simply to say 'No,' when he asked me to dance, I nearly threw him into spasmodics? The presumptuous ladykiller, also cows, surmised that I—that is, Miss Opaga—was sulkin' over his inglorious performance at the bull-fight; and when I croaked 'No,' like the quartermaster does through a megaphone, he decided I was hoarse with emotion, weepin' and universal woe, and immediately begun to grovel, figuresquely speakin'.

"'*O, queridita—queridita!*' he muches, all shot to pieces. 'My miracle among the *angeles*—joy of heaven and of High-kicker! Thou art angry with thy beloved. O princess!—heart of my—'

"Somethin' more interestin' caused me to skiddoo at that point, leavin' him

moonin' to a festooned kerosene-lamp in a notch in the '*dobe* wall, back of where I had been standin'.

"I had seen a sailor, a pig of an American bluejacket; and I came within a chain-link of singin' out to him, 'Hello, Jack! where's your gang and how the smoke did you get here?' For there weren't no sailors supposed to be there; it wasn't their affair. There weren't no liberty given that night on purpose to keep us clear of this revelry. I'd come by the anchor-chain and *casco* route myself, prepared to pay the price at the mast when I got back. A smile from Inez would be overpay for anything the old man could hand out to me.

"That sailor wore a mask, of course; a helmet, coverin' his head up fore and aft, same's mine was, I learned afterward it was supposed to represent a crusader, his name, translated, bein' Godfrey Beef-tea. His helmet, same as Richard of the Lion Heart's, was to protect him from swords, not sun—people in them times, when they was all middle-aged, wearin' armor themselves instead of boltin' it on the waterline of their ships.

Now a crusader's head fastened on a Yankee bluejacket's body is a lugubrious spectacle, and on this occasion there were added elements of mournfulness about the incongruous spook. For instance, he carried himself wrong side front; that is to say, his iron face of cardpaper was toward me and all the rest of him was headed the other way, walkin' backwards, except his toes, which pointed the same way his nose did. I mayn't be speakin' very lucid, but you'll understand that the hind collar of his blue blouse was floppin' down over his chest, and the front flap of his trousers was buttoned on the other side of him.

"'Jack,' I snarls softly, sailin' down on him in my kimono and meal sack, Richard the Bull-Hearted at my heels, 'what for you want to come here to make trouble? If you've been drinkin', you better go hit the scuttle-butt and soak your false head. If you really wanted to costume yourself, and you're who I think you are, you only had to come natural and pass for a albino Hottentot.'

"You see, I thought he was Pete there," digressed the narrator at this point, indicating the pessimist with the eye that was not studying the lye-stains under his finger-nails.

"Forgive me, Oh Light of the Harem!" beseeched Pete, and threw a spit-kid at him.

The projectile missed the target and skidded along the deck until it struck the heels of the statuesque marine sentry, emptying its cargo of cigaret butts on his dazzlingly shining shoes.

"Who threw that?" asked the sentry angrily, wheeling about.

"*Señorita* Inez Opaga," averred Pete.

"A albino Hottentot," O'Grane parried quickly.

"Aw, go on Jack," purred the apprentice-boy.

"I was remarkin' that, seein' this sailorman was a slouch and a barbarian, I supposed, of course, it was Pete there.

"'Pete,' I said, 'what do you want to act this way for? You could a-done somethin' better'n puttin' them on backwards to hide your homeliness.'

"'*Asi me estoy, Señor Jack*,' shyly whispered this sailor, meanin' it was all alike to her which way she put on them kind of garments."

"Oo-ooh!" gasped the apprentice.

"'*Señorita*,' I gloated, bowin' and tearin' half a yard of lace off my meal sack, tryin' to tip my hat, forgettin' in my intoxication that I was a lady and didn't wear one. '*Señorita*, I perish with joy; the American Navy is honored beyond the dream of rice *sake*. Fain would I fall down, or lower myself gently, and adore you. Them raiments shall be kept religious forever in a special silver-mounted ditty-box, in happy remembrance of the beauteous bein' whom to-night they adorn—meanin' who adorns them. Dear Lady, may I dare to inquire what happy hero of the antic' ages—happy from now on, since you have elected to represent him—that cast-iron face you're wearin' reverse to your other disfigurements is intended to look like?'

"'I am *Godfrey de Bouillion*,' she explained, which I took it meant that man that invented beef-broth. But I was wary and didn't give myself away.

"'Tell me, fair one,' I pleaded, as we strolled off arm in arm, the sinecures of every eye, more especially the off-eye of Richard *Torero*—'tell me, fair one, what did this Godfrey do, thus to win your favor? For I fain would do likewise.'

"'He was Captain of the Christian Knights,' she explained, 'who gave battle to the Mahometan heathens. But think not on martial matters to-night, Señor O'Grane. It is I that play the warrior for this merry hour; you are the fair lady whom I have rescued from the infidel horde. Heard you not the old song of your *Inglese?* I will sing for you in your rude language.'

"And while she leaned lovin'ly on my arm, she turned her beautiful—I mean triple steel—face close toward mine, and sang in dulcet undertones:

> "The King of Spain is a foul Paynim
> And 'lieveth on Mahound;
> And shame it were for a maiden fair
> To wed with a heathen hound."

"Them lines is easy to recollect; they sing themselves over and over inside you after the first hearin', but I never could make much sense out of the words. The only ones that had any meanin' for me were 'maiden fair' and 'heathen hound.' Them four sounded like United States talk and were very touchin'. I couldn't savvy why she was so hard on the King of Spain, or how a foul come to pain him. But my lady's tones of liquid melody flowed right into my finger-tips, and I wanted to howl and punch holes into somethin', just to prove my passionate affection.

"'Show me,' I sobbed—yes, sir; blame me! I was cryin'—'show me, *queridita*, flame of my soul! show me that heathen hound.' Me a doublin' up my fists in a most unladylike manner. There weren't no enemy in sight, and Inez, innocent little girl, wasn't tryin' to egg me on to anybody at all. But somehow that heathen hound lullaby made a noise like the alarm of general quarters to me, and I fair ached to tear somebody limb from limb for this little girl's delight. And what, of course, but Richard *Torero*—which means a bullfighter after his horse had throwed him—must come smooth-glidin' up to us just when the barometer is indicatin' squalls, the demon of green jealousy sparklin' through the eyes of his mask."

"Wow!" wept the apprentice-boy.

"He spread out his arms with his hands open-front, and dislocated himself at the hips, bendin' toward me, right at my side, makin' himself thereby appear in an attitude of sick'nin' apology, and whispered into my pink little ear."

"Rats!" blurted Pete; and got up and walked away in glaring disgust, disappearing around the turret, which he three-quarter circled before settling himself in another comfortable spot, where he could hear without being seen.

O'Grane's diverging glance explored each side of the turret at once; but not being able to locate his insulter, he brought both fateful optics to bear in questioning reproach on the apprentice. The apprentice grinned conciliatingly.

"'Come away, *Señorita*,' this armor-belted languisher whispers to me. 'Consort not with this sailor; he is of low origin; he is—

"'Pig!' I hisses, with a haughty toss of my dainty, but invisible, head, 'leave me.' And I turns confidin'ly to my misfitted sailor-siren-knight, claspin' her hands, the littlest, whitest hands I ever saw on a sailor.

"With that Mr. Papa stepped up in front of her sort of truculent, throwin' off his mask, so to speak, though he still kept it on.

"'Toad!' he stutters, pointin' a tragic finger toward the door, 'go; your company is not wanted here.'

"Inez crowded closer to me, her hot little hands quiverin' in mine. The poor little girl, behind her paper-mash face and front-behind blouse, was pantinf with fright, and it made me feel out o' humor and peevish.

"'Go!' gurgles this rejected and infuriated suitor again, and grabs her by her blouse collar, which, as stated, hung down erroneously in front of her, and jerks her out of my grasp and away from my protectin' presence.

"It was hard luck for him to mistake his sweetheart for his rival while he was in that excited and offensive frame

of mind; and harder luck still for him that said rival was standin' there unbeknown to him, takin' it all in. For when I saw him lay violent hands on the little lady, naturally I saw blood, first in my brain and then on the *Señor's* gilgoyle vest, for I smashed in his alleged steel headpiece so's his nose come through and spurted over his armor-belt bib, him a lyin' stretched out on the ball-room floor and all the chivalry of Highkicker and the adjacent rural townships gathered round, gazin' in speechless wonder at me—me, to their unseein' eyes, the prize-fightin' flower of all the harems that ever disported harum-scarum through boodwoirs of beauty.

"Inez screamed, but in the widespread and original brand of excitement then prevailin' nobody paid any attention to the phenomenon of an American bluejacket squeakin' like a rusty ammunition hoist. Their individual and undivided attention was given to that prostrate hero and the extraordinary heroine who had prostrated him. I was some interested in that hero myself when I saw him gettin' up with a baby-sword in his hand.

"He looked real low and devilish to me, when I saw him doin' a cakewalk toward Inez again, bent at the knees and liftin' his feet high and settin' them down easy, like he was walkin' on breakable cargo; me not able to keep in my head that he thought it was me he was makin' his cat movements at, thinkin' Inez was me. I don't know what he thought about bein' knocked sky-low by his inamorata, but he was man enough not to hit back at a woman. There was some comfort in knowin' I was safe from his *cuchilla*, but it would have been better for all concerned if he had flourished it at me sure enough. I felt pale comprehendin' what deadly peril that little girl was in, and consequently was relentless when I clinched his knife-wrist and commenced hammerin' him—the crowd bein', of course, too chivalrous to interfere with a lady who was chastisin' the man that had insulted her.

"It was maybe not fair for me to take advantage of his not fightin' back; but anyway, I got mine; for it was at this stage of the drammy that Inez come out strong and proved true to her first love in his adversity, which now that I can look back calmly on that night of hot lemons, I can admire her for.

"Seems she'd come prepared with a trusty little blade of her own, abetted by a pepper airgun, to give that *amador* of hers his earnin's for lettin' me outpoint him in his little game of tag with the cows; but when she found a champion who undertook to do the job for her, seemed she grew remorseful and made good by turnin' them truly femininine and spitfire weapons on her defender. I suppose she just had to relieve her feelin's one way or another.

"While I was enjoyin' myself makin' believe *Señor* Papa was a heathen hound, this lovely serpent winds herself around me and commences peckin' with a sharp, shiny little thing that went through my false face, puttin' the sight out of one of my eyes and waterloggin' the other with Yankee blood.

"I ducked my head and wrestled around tryin' to push her away. Next thing I knowed she was jerked away, clingin' and clutchin', reluctant to let go her unlovin' embrace; and when the blood dripped out of my eyes enough for me to see a little, there she was, two of her, bein' pull-hauled about no ways tenderly by a squad of middle-aged night-men, each with two heads and four arms. You understand I was seein' double and quadruple along with the affliction of my eyes, whereby to this day I am enabled to look back on the mistakes and sorrows of the past and simultaneously see troubles ahead.

"Inez, both of her, was screechin' and writhin' to get loose, when I perceived that perseverin' cowsticker, him double, too, reelin' at her again with two knives circlin' over his head. Everything I was lookin' at was twins and wavery; but, swimmin' in delusions as I was, I flung myself at him again, bein' in a most distressin' fret for fear that little girl would get hurt. And that was right when said girl, bein' unable to free herself from the tumultuous, four-armed interferers holdin' her, managed to wriggle her arms loose and open fire with the pepper shooter, stingin' my

streamin', strainin' eyes with fiery *chili*. Oh! but she was splendid, that little woman. I weep to remember her."

The narrator faltered and hung his head, apparently overcome by the recollection of that painful hour of a dubious past.

But disconcerted at eliciting no further protests from his comrades, he looked up again indignantly.

"I'm not weepin' for myself. You never heard me kick, did you? I've always stood my watches like a man, haven't I? I'm mournin' for what they did to that spirited little girl. What would you folks do to a Greaser from Guatemala, if he come uninvited to your social gatherin' and pumped a handful of pulverized red pepper into the eyes of the fair young idol of the eleet? That's how it looked to them—a dog of an American sailor had stabbed, choked, and finally blinded the rose of Iquique; and they did exactly what you'd a-done—just rolled over him in a body, like a tidal wave, and trampled on him; that is, on her, the lovely, the matchless Inez Opaga.

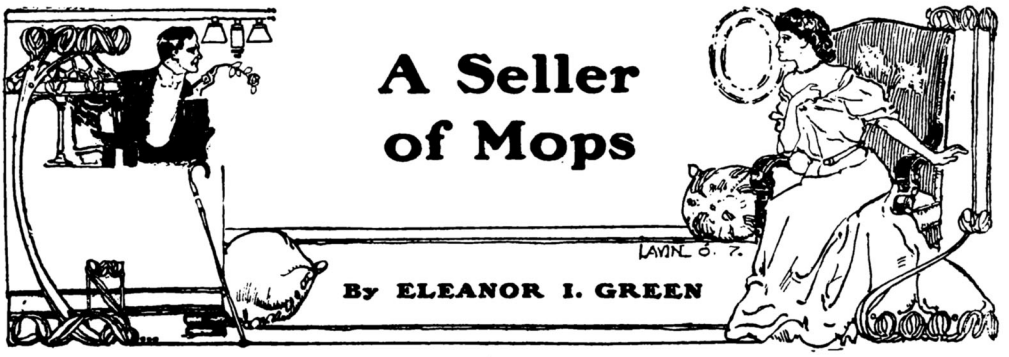
"I'm only sayin' they started to. For when I saw that heart-rendin' spectacle, the heart was rended right out of me, and all the rest of my inwards with it; there wasn't nothin' left but just a solid mass of bone and muscle as I center-rushed that bunch, knockin' them over like ninepins—all of them, at least, except what weren't too spifficated and spellbound to get out of the way, which as gentlemen they was bound to do, seein' I was a lady. And the sublime spectacle of the bleedin' and blinded, but always beautiful, *Señorita* Inez Opaga staggerin' from that ballroom and out into the night, bearin' in her soople young arms the unconscious form of a trouble-breedin' American bluejacket, is talked about to this day with wonder and admiration from Panama to Patagonia, and, so be it, the seagulls shriek about it above the frozen silences of the dim South Pole. No joshin', that was the warmest social affair I ever attended."

As this was O'Grane's customary peroration, the listeners relaxed from their attitudes of attention, but were immediately recalled.

"She kissed me," drooled O'Grane wistfully. "Whatever repugnant memories may cling around that night of middle-aged madness, the divine knowledge that she kissed me makes me glad it happened. When, still in my furb'lows and lingerie, but with my lacerated harem night-cap off, I hung by the fingertips from a window-sill of the Opaga palace, lookin' up for the last time at her sweet, pityin' face as she was whisperin' farewell, we mutually forgivin', her red lips were redder than ever before from dabblin' in the blood that bathed my poor, divorced, but still adorin' eyes. Before I dropped—"

An awful uproar suddenly broke in on the braggart's tale. It began with a rapid, sonorous clanging of the big ship's bell forward of the flying bridge, which was followed by hoarse, methodic blasts of whistles and sirens, bugle flourishes and beat of drums, the piping of boatswain's mates on the open decks and the ominous slamming of iron hatches and sounding of two-second gongs in the bowels of the ship. The loungers leaped to their feet like mechanical toys, whirled as if on connected heels and darted in all directions. The fire alarm had sounded, and the rope-yarn holiday was ended.

The apprentice-boy ran limping to his station for fire-drill with the aspect of a man who has been killed in battle and wakes up to find it isn't so.



A Seller of Mops

By ELEANOR I. GREEN

IT IS pathetically funny, this third-rate castle. I arrived last night, and I was travel-soiled, but Mrs. Tibbs, the landlady, insisted with charming candor:

"Come right down to dinner when the bell rings; Mr. James is usin' the bath tub." So I dabbled a bit in a pale blue bowl just large enough to permit of a chicken's ablutions, and when the clanging bell summoned me, I descended to the dining-room, but I hated Mr. James for his selfishness.

I am grateful for one thing. Our dining-room is pleasant. The floor is clothed in clean, cool matting, and the windows are dressed in fresh white curtains, their starchy edges looped back that we may look out upon a bright patch of our neighbor's lawn.

I wore my best frock. It is a much beflounced gown, designed that particular way for reasons which none but the remnant clerk could possibly suspect. Mrs. Tibbs fluttered over my chair when I entered, and introduced me with a grand wave of a blue-bejeweled hand as:

"Boarders, this is Miss Geraldine Foster, late arrived from the country. Make her feel to home."

I find that Mrs. Tibbs always lumps us in that way and speaks of us with a capital "B" in her voice.

We have but one table in the dining-room, where the "lion may sit down with the lamb"— only I think there are no lions. Down the center of this long table there yawns a great row of open-mouth bottles which no one seems to touch. Our lisping maid's artistic sense of table-adornment is quite as faulty as her "s's."

"At the head of us" sits a clerical looking gentleman in solemn and rusty broadcloth, with spiked tails to his coat, and elbows that so persistently crave a peep at the world that they have almost attained it. He says grace with many "Ah-s," making us "one family under one dear sheltering and divine roof," as Mrs. Tibbs very forcibly phrases it by way of inducement to newcomers.

Beside the clerical man, who, by the way, glues labels all day long in a pasteboard box-factory, little Tommy Lanson spreads out large hands which dangle from crooked arms. He juggles his silver in most remarkable acrobatic fashion.

Tommy's mother, a pale person in a flowered gown, with much lace at its neck, sits next her offspring, and she is most patient when Tommy's elbows poke dents in her ribs.

The family provider has the next chair, and beside him sits a chirping widow in trailing gray.

Mr. James came in late. The bath *I* should have had evidently detained him. His name was tartly pronounced in formal introductoin by Elizabeth, the lisping maid, and he came around the table almost nonchalantly and seated himself at my right hand. On the other side of me sits a callow youth who asks curious questions when my profile looks promising and bluff Mr. Jones, chromo-like in his plaid vest-front and gay cravats, in his own parlance "bawls

him out" when I snub the saffron-tinted bread earner.

Everyone stared so! Curiously enough I felt no antagonism towards these simple people; I rather envied them their calm matter-of-factness, and I felt so alone in the midst of them that little tinges of homesickness ran up and down in my throat and finally gathered in a great knot which I could neither swallow nor force down with the bits of bread I was trying to eat. I was toppling on the dizzy height of a mountain of tears and rebellion when I thought of a baby-copy of verses which father had written when life was dark for him. Godfather had tucked the book away in my traveling case when, at the last moment, he had caught up a bit of jagged pencil and printed on its tissue paper covering: "Be a Stoic." But being a "stoic" was fast getting to be the hardest thing I had ever tried. By the time the coffee came, I had ceased, in part, to be a curiosity, and I could feel on my cheeks warm splashes which must have escaped my blinking lids.

Mr. James gave me one swift glance and then he began hurriedly telling a dialect story which attracted the attention of everyone about the table. And someway the features of everyone became quite clear, and they ceased to float round through tears.

Mr. James has the manners of a gentleman. I wonder if he is another of Fate's victims. He is clean-cut, and his shoulders are broad. He is clear-eyed, and there is a mischievous droop to the corners of a well-shaped mouth. He carries his gray and black head proudly defiant. But—he's only a third-rate boarder and—so am I.

JUNE TWENTIETH

I have been with Mrs. Tibbs twenty days, and the dining-room is the only place wherein I meet the "Boarders." I am busy all day long in a horrid, ill-smelling commission-house, where I wrestle with queer little dots and dashes and curleymaques which, when deciphered, stand for words with meaning to them.

In the office there stands a clock, and when I am late it looks as large as the town-clock in the village near home. I have a number—I am branded like all the calves in the branding-pen on the ranch, only the red-hot iron has entered my soul, I think, in place of taking a bit of skin from my side—I have to push a corresponding number on the face of this clock and it registers the very minute I arrive. If the time is later than it should be, I have only to glance at the crinkley lines across the bald forehead of the man who dictates the upside-down characters, to know the terrible truth. If I am ahead of time, he says in an early-bird-catches-the-worm tone: "Just bring your book at once, Miss Foster." He speaks grudgingly until he begins to dictate, and then the words come so fast that I turn cold with fear, and my fingers grow crampy. He is here so early that I think he must not go home each night, but stays to sleep on the flat-topped desk in his room. Maybe he rolls over on the penrack to make all the wrinkles across his brow.

This morning a clinging tendril of fuzzy green peeped in at my window. It had slipped away from the mother-vine below and was making a morning-call. I took it up gently in my hand, and it curled its slender body round my fingers and nestled so tightly that I had to shake the baby-thing loose. To-night it lies in my room, severed forever by a harsh executioner—the window-ledge—from its mother-vine below. Why did it come to peep in at my window? I feel like the baby-vine to-night only *I* am compelled to peep in at the great window of life a little longer. My executioner stays his hand.

JUNE TWENTY-NINTH

Last night after dinner Mr. James asked me to walk with him. Glorious Lake Michigan is not many squares away. We strolled to the edge of the lake—there are no breakwaters—and the water came in soft frou-frou up to the toes of my boots. We skipped pebbles quite like little children, and I am not sure that it wasn't the moonlight dropping, dropping softly through leafy thicknesses about us which made me decide that I should like this third-rate boarder for a friend.

We sat on a bench in a quiet spot, and he told me quite simply that he is only one of Fate's victims. That, however, is just my way of putting it down. He gave me his card, and I read it by the aid of the moonbeans. Here is the awful truth. He is an agent for mops! Plain, cheap, scrubby mops! Oh, shades of my splendid ancestors!

I fought hard with a bit of snobbishness, but Geraldine Foster, reduced-to-third-rate-boarder, won a victory over Geraldine Foster, once-aristocrat, proud of her blue blood and her long tapering fingers and slender throat—mere outward-signs-apparent of the good blood which coursed beneath. Blue blood *versus* Mops! And Mops won the day. I need a friend such as William Howard James. His name looks frightfully incongruous in comparison with the simple little "Mops" printed beneath.

JULY TENTH

I have been in the city more than a month, and yesterday I received my first check as a wage-earner. This has made up for all the terrible days before —days when I would come home to my little room burdened with the effort of counting my pennies over and over in a foolish attempt to stretch them out to the magnitude of dollars. At sight of that thin piece of paper, with its moderate sum written beneath my name, all the silly humiliation of my changed circumstances died out. I was overpoweringly proud of that check. I am glad, glad, glad through every inch of me that I had pride enough to refuse the humble pie which my relatives offered me. The plain brown bread and butter earned through the labor of my own useless looking hands is a royal spread in comparison.

And oh, how I throbbed with pleasure and satisfaction when I counted out tinkling coins into Mrs. Tibbs' fat hand.

I told Mops about it. He has come to be Mops because of the incongruity of his name and calling. What do you think he said?

"I, too, am proud of you, Girl! You are brave and good and great."

His voice was all capitals and exclamation-points. A queer little tingle of self-gratification ran through me, and just for a moment I felt that I should like to be "brave and good and great" enough to forgive Mops his calling.

To-morrow will be Saturday, and Mops and I are going out to the park to play golf. Isn't it fine that I have Saturday afternoon away from the upside-down characters and curleymaques and fruit? And isn't it finer yet that Mops can play golf? I wonder how his inevitable scrubby business has spared him long enough to learn?

JULY TWELFTH

How gloriously lovely it all seemed yesterday.

I came down with my golf-sticks—remnant of prosperous days—to find the man in soft silk shirt and genteel gray clothes and with a golf bag swung over his shoulder—doubtless remnants also of his left-behind days.

We started merrily. I was actually humming away with a heart as light—well lighter than at anytime for a month. Down to the railway station we blithely trudged. An express-train was about to leave, and I flew down the steps calling out over my shoulder:

"Hurry, hurry, don't waste this day!"

When we entered the train I snuggled in beside a very fat man with a basket tucked away between two rusty-clad feet. Mops hung to a strap quite near me. I looked at his broad shoulders then up at the square, firm jaw, and I thought—but just at that instant he smiled down upon me, and then I knew that sometimes things are topsy-turvy in this world.

On every side were prosaic persons buried in their newspapers, oblivious of the wondrously lovely lake we were paralleling. True, every little while a suburban-train rushed by to obscure everything save its pathway of smoke and cinders, but in scarcely a second splendid Lake Michigan came again into view.

The waves played over the breakwater, chasing each other as delightfully as irresponsible youth. The lake was placid, good-humored and smiling. The white of a sail, clear-cut against the

pastel shades of the sky, brought a keen appreciation of the exquisite turquoise of the water beneath. The air was fresh and good.

Turning sharply to the left, the railway rounded out a full square of ground to where a stretch of beach was studded with child-bathers, picturesque in dashes of color. We were hurried past, until turning quite suddenly from the lake, our train whirled us up beside the platform nearest our destination.

Mops plays golf almost too well. Once only—and that when he gracefully swung a golf-stick to make his first whirring drive—did I think of those other terrible sticks with which he barters away his days.

Ah! but it ended, as all good and glorious—and somber things as well—do end, but the afterglow will warm my heart for days and days and weeks interminable.

JULY NINETEENTH

How good it seems to be alive to-day! The air is balmy as one of our glorious South-land Spring days. Mops and I sat long in our sheltered nook this wonderful Sabbath day, and I read aloud. Presently, we went down to the water's edge and dipped our fingers in the lake to give some pebbles a bath. The water was warm as a mother's heart, and it was good to be alive.

My hateful snobbishness almost spoiled this wonderful afternoon. In coming home together, just as we turned to cross a curving driveway, a girl with a pink face and with nodding plumes in her hat, leaned a little towards us and bowed from a perfectly appointed trap as two prancing horses dashed her away. It was Margaret Lee whose grandfather and mine were born on adjoining plantations. I thought there was haughtiness in her bow, and I shivered and drew back against the man. Could she have divined that I was contentedly strolling with a man who dealt in mops? Just for a moment I hated this topsy-turvy world, and I hated myself for caring, then I looked at the way he carried his head, and I knew that even a dealer in mops could be a gentleman.

JULY THIRTHIETH

I am afraid I have been very foolish and weak. Last night I came home with a headache, and I stumbled up-stairs heartsick and heart-heavy as well. All day long I had fought with myself, and I knew to-night that I should always hate this grinding away out of my sphere. But I knew that I wouldn't give up. I knew I should go on refusing the humble-pie and earning the brown bread and butter.

Tears of self-pity—the worst tears of all—blinded me. I hurried to the door of my room, and I flung it wide with all the pent-up rebellion of days. There was Mops with a great bunch of sweet peas, crowding them into a vase with curving sides. I rushed into that room and caught those flowers away from him, and I held them tight to my breast not trying to check the tears that came in great unloosed tides of feeling.

The man was stealing away. Impulsively I put back the flowers, and I turned and gave both my hands to him. My heart opened wide, and suddenly wide enough to let the last of his miserable mops slip out and Tender Understanding of this man slip in.

"Jerry," he said very softly, using the old nickname for the first time, "has the day been hard?"

The touch of his hand upon mine was so human, so full of genuine feeling and sympathy that I turned away with a sob in my throat. I could not help it if I outraged every atom of pride within me. I *wanted* this dealer in mops for a friend.

My little room with its absurd wall-paper, its faded hangings and make-believe splendor, suddenly grew wondrously bright and "homey," and I looked again at the man, and this time I smiled through my tears.

AUGUST SIXTH

I have never lost the grip on my courage that those sweet peas gave me one week ago.

Yesterday, after the day had quite ended, Mops and I stole away together. I was restless and nervous, and the man too, seemed a bit unstrung.

We walked in silence towards the lake, then he spoke, oh, so feelingly:

"It has come to me, Jerry, to-night," he said, "that a girl has broken into my heart. I know now that I have loved you a very long time. I have cared, I think, since that evening when a limp little Jerry with a brave face sat beside me at table for the first time."

My heart grew heavy with pity. I should have to wound this great tender man. We had come to the end of our journey. It was here—the very end of it all, here in this spot where he had told me of the wretched mops, weeks and weeks ago. We halted beside "our" bench, almost hidden by trailing greenery, and he put out his hand and took mine.

"Do you care enough, Jerry?" he asked simply.

I wanted to speak, to cry out against this law which my ancestors had made but my voice stuck tight in my throat.

"Jerry," his strong yet gentle voice went on, "let me make you feel that I love you for what you are—the bravest, truest little woman in the world."

"Oh, Man," my heart cried out, "I'm not any of that! I'm selfish and cowardly. I can't marry you. I can't be a weight around your neck. Don't you see—can't you know that I would make you miserable?"

"No, Jerry," he answered in just the "littlest" voice in the world—and then the mother instinct came up in my throat and choked me. I wanted to throw my arms about him and shield him from my frivolous, unmasked selfishness.

Then I gathered up strength enough to tell him how self-absorbed and dependent upon the material things my life had always been, how bitter and hard the struggle had become. I told him of the beautiful home which I had been forced to leave—motherless, fatherless—a pitiful, impoverished girl.

"I came away, dear man," I went on to the end, "a spoiled, pampered, useless girl. Don't you see that I can't understand poverty, that I would make your life a burden? I know absolutely no way to help a poor man. I could not help—Oh, I could not—"

I think I cried aloud, for I could scarcely bear to lose this one friend in the great and lonely city. Ah, he was tender and good, and he struggled hard to be just the same dear companion, but I know, I know to-night that I have lost him.

SEPTEMBER SIXTH

Four long drawn-out weeks have gone. I haven't seen him since that night. He told our landlady that he was ill and must go away for a change. Dear Mops! Why should it have to end this way?

Don Macey from home lives in Chicago now. I met him three days ago on the street, and he came for me that night in his car—here, to my third-rate boarding-house, and he didn't seem to mind.

For one night Geraldine Foster, the aristocrat, strutted proudly about. In poor third-rate Jerry's frayed-out garments, she descended the stairs, went out into the street with her head held high, and stepped lightly and happily into the automobile which stood, most grandly, at the curb. Oh, I shall never, never forget the splendor of that drive. I laughed as I haven't laughed since poor Mops went out of my life. I was a child again with all a child's happy outlook. I sat in the tonneau, and then I must sit in the front beside my gallant chauffeur, and I must drive the car, sending it spinning through the crowded streets. Oh, it was one glad, happy evening, but under it all my heart kept crying out: "Why did you send him away? Is this sort of thing worth the heart of a Man and of a Woman?"

It was late when we returned, but the loyal little maid came towards me through the shadows of the darkened corridor.

"Hereth's a letter, Mith Fothster," she said.

The writing danced straight to my heart, and I caught Elizabeth in a glad whirl which took her off her surprised little feet. I kissed the poor loveless girl, and I left her standing there with eyes as bright as my own. Once inside my room, I turned the light high and broke the seal of my letter:

Dear Jerry:

Little Jerry, I want you to know how to find me. A letter sent here will reach me

anytime within the next year. If you should ever feel that you need the protection of a strong man's arms, come into the shelter of mine. Were you right, Jerry Girl, to weigh Love in the same scale with Riches? I am not impoverished in love, Jerry. Of that I have more than enough. Let me come to you, dear, brave Lady. I cannot think of you as down-town, striking all the rough edges of Life. I can only think of you as you come to me to-night—a beautiful girl with a white face in which flashes of color run like wine. A great lady's pearls cannot gleam as do your teeth when you smile. Your hair is black as Poe's dark night when the raven came a-tapping. Your hands are slender and shapely, with fingers tapering to nails of delicate pink. But best of all, Jerry, the girl of my dream to-night has a soul, a soul too great for petty things. Under all her disguise I know her. She is only acting a part, and notwithstanding all she says, love is to her "the greatest thing in the world." She could take up the burden of life away from the flare of the city—in just a bit of greenness where Love is the Factor Supreme. Will you send me a word, Jerry?

SEPTEMBER SEVENTH

Last night I wanted to think, to think hard and to look myself in the face. I longed to be strong enough to say: "Geraldine Foster, you are a snob no longer; you are brave and good and just. What matters it if everyone of his *ancestors* peddled mops? Why should yours be any better because they rode in tournaments and carried knots of ribbon instead?"

But had I the right to do this thing? Children would come to us, and I could not hand down a heritage of just mops. I could not do it. Days upon days of existence with a man who ekes out a living in mops? I walked the floor all night, but I could not send him word; it would have to be a cruel word that would hurt, and silence, I think, will be better. After all, could a seller of mops understand—quite?

DECEMBER THIRTY-FIRST

More than three months have come and gone since last I wrote in you, little book. I have watched the trailing greenery wither and die, its life snapped out with the cold. "Our" bench is a lonely spot of brown covered with dashing spray from the lake. Once only have I gone there to dream alone of a face with tender brown eyes looking out at me.

Success has come to me in a meager way. I have mastered the art of the curleymaques and the upside-down characters and I have won a smile of appreciation from the man with the frowning brows. In the office parlance, I have had "a raise," and a title has been bestowed upon me. I am free now to go from the third-rate castle with its human crudities. To-morrow I leave it all behind and go to a higher plane of living. My boxes are packed, and the lisping maid has shed a tear for each nail that the house-man has driven in. Mrs. Tibbs has accepted her last check from me and her first one from my successor, who moves in to-morrow.

I am trying desperately hard to keep back the tears as I write, but there comes to me a "voice and melody, and my heart is stirred."

JANUARY TENTH

I felt very grand just at first in this lovely room. But there is so much of grasping for prestige all around me. There is so much of illusion and tinsel and paste. There are women here as clear and brilliant and flawless to the eye as beautiful unset jewels which scintillate in the sun's rays. Here, there are men who, one thinks, would have to look up the definition of "mops," but I wonder if all the glitter and sparkle makes up for the soft, tender voice of a man who can say just right: "Little Jerry, has the day been hard?"

At night I listen for the quiet footsteps of lisping Elizabeth, but no faltering "Good-night, Mith Fothster," comes to me through chink or crevice. I miss the wonderful kites of Tommy Lanson, whose great awkward hands work so deftly with his precious scraps of cord and bits of sticks. I miss them, everyone, from that "other half of the world." I wonder if it is not smoother, after all, "under one dear sheltering and divine roof?"

My sitting-room here is bright with its sputtering toy grate, its miniature drops of electricity gathered under a glistening chandelier, which has supplanted a smoking lamp. A rickety

stand in its gala attire of crocheted rose centerpiece has given way to a polished table with tasteful *bric-à-brac*. The books in the corner case are not of the yellow-backed variety, but, instead, are dear companions. These chairs are soft and easy, not at all like the straight-backed, uncushioned seats placed stiffly about that other room. How can I be homesick for the discomforts of an attic. How can I long for the glimpse of an unpainted bench half covered with down-hanging green?

My heart is full of gratitude, of thankfulness that life is easier. I am proud of the desperate struggle that has lifted me above the squalor of a third-rate home, and yet—to-night I want—oh, how my face is burning with shame—to-night I really want to go back—yes, back to that dingy third-rate castle where life is simple and natural, where everything is *human*—where there might come to the door some day a man with a mop on his shoulder, a man who would carry me away with him, through every step of the remainder of life

Would my courage wane, I wonder, at the sight of the scrubby end of the mop?

JUNE FIRST

One year ago to-day I found my little corner of the world. It was only a dingy boarding-house where the odor of cooking cabbage drifted over a broken transom. Its flowering shrubs in the rear were budding onion-tops, flanked on either side with rows of broken bottles and ragged bricks. "The lady of the manor" was only a third-rate castle-keeper, and the "royal guests within" were toilers of the street; but there smile was met with smile and heartache was healed with tenderness, and weariness was soothed with love. Rebellion has died within this year of training-school, and I know that the wisdom of my heart is best.

And after a long battle again with myself, this is the note I have sent. Shall I have to wait long for the answer?

> Man—Dear Man: Come to me. The days have been endless without you. Mere wealth cannot be weighed in the precious scale of Love.

JUNE FIFTH

Last night we were married, and to-day we go to the "bit of green" together. It is good to live within the protecting shadows of a strong man's love.

SEPTEMBER TENTH

Dear faithful diary, I shall not write in you after to-night. You are to be laid away, tied in the ribbons that came about his sweet peas that night in the past when life was flickering out.

One evening in June, just as the day dropped into twilight, the Man and I found a weather-worn bench half covered with drooping vines. There, where life had budded into promise, it blossomed into hope fulfilled. *He has never been a seller of mops*, little book; that was only a fiction!

The Man had grown tired of just riches. In his world women married in recklessness and gave their souls just for the sake of wealth. He grew weary enough of it all to go out into that other sphere where human motives ruled. When he came to care for me, he wanted to be sure, more than ever before, that Love alone was strong enough to lift a woman over the rough places in the road and put her gently down on the other side of the ruts.

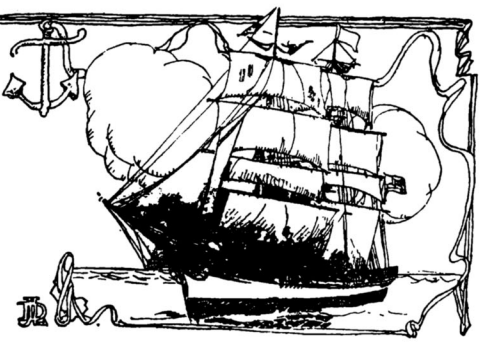
The "bit of green" is my dear old Southern home. In the months when my selfishness and doubt had bound and held me coward, the Man was gathering up my scattered treasures to give them one day into my keeping. I am sitting now beneath the flowering catalpas, on a homely bench of rustic make, more beautiful to us than burnished gold, and my own little chestnut, Dixie, whinnies to me from over the fence.

The Man is coming across the terrace and I must say farewell to you.

I know now that I could have walked through life hand in hand with him, offering mops myself from door to door, and I could have smiled with pity for the paltry human beings who scorned our life—simple and sweet together.

The Man is the same Dear Man, not more to me or less, but it *is* good to know that our children will have more for their birthright than just mops!

A Captain's Log



By SINGLETON CAREW

CAPTAIN DICKS, usually a modest man, had just one inordinate ambition. He wanted to capture a battleship single handed even if he had to fight the whole blessed fleet to get it. Did he succeed? It's well worth reading to find out just what one man could do when pushed to it. The readers of THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE *are appreciating the entertainment furnished them in these complete stories of a doughty sea-captain's experience, and some write that they are the best sea-tales they have ever read.*—THE EDITORS.

No. VI.—THE CAPTURE OF THE BATTLESHIP

UPON my word, I'm really getting tired of this liner business! Out and home, home and out, all the year round with your company manners and your best clothes on all day long. I positively long for the old excitement of nursing a leaky ship or kicking sense into an all-nation crew; but I'm getting too old for that. I've got a decent little bit of money put away: why shouldn't I retire while I'm still hale and hearty and enjoy myself with the missis! By Jove! that's just what I will do."

Captain Robert Dicks had run the *Britannia* for some six years, greatly to the satisfaction and profit of the White Funnel Company, and now as he stood on the bridge one day, he gave vent to the thoughts which are expressed above. Thus it befell that, when he reached Liverpool, he made his way to the company's office and formally tendered his resignation, which was accepted with many regrets.

Dicks decided to settle upon a breezy down on the Kentish shore of the Thames estuary, overlooking the water and the ever-moving panorama of shipping. There, turning architect for the nonce, he designed and had built the cosiest, quaintest little bungalow imaginable, and laid out a garden around it.

But very soon the salt in his blood began to move; the wavelets that lapped at the foot of the sandy cliff below his house seemed to call him; and the next item added to the stock-in-trade of his retirement was a stoutly built little yacht, which he could manage himself if necessary.

Mrs. Dicks secretly hated the yacht, which had been named the *Spray*, and would gladly have kept her husband ashore, for she feared that after braving successfully the manifold perils of the deep water, he might succumb to some petty accident in a Thames-side creek; but she realized that it kept him healthy and happy, and so, like a wise little woman, she held her peace.

One fine morning Dicks started for a cruise round to Ramsgate, to see an old friend.

"It looks as if we might have a bit of a breeze later," said the captain as he bid farewell to his wife; "but if it gets bad I'll tie up at Ramsgate till the weather mends."

For a time the wind was light and

baffling, and the yacht made slow progress, but soon a regular gale arose and the *Spray* was leaping and rolling on a high, confused sea, while the clouds grew blacker and blacker. The captain began to wish he had stopped at home, or at least brought an assistant.

Presently the storm burst upon him in all its fury. From the ink-black clouds overhead flashes of lightning zigzagged across the heavens, the thunder crashed continuously, and the wind came in hurricane gusts, lashing the sea to boiling fury and blotting out everything in clouds of driving spray-smoke.

Wildly the yacht plunged and staggered, and Dicks expected to be engulfed any moment.

"I'm thinking old Preston wont see see me to-day," he muttered, as he stared anxiously forward at the waste of raging waters. "I've simply got to drive before it till it blows itself out. Jove! here's a steamer."

Sure enough, a great, bluff-bowed collier hove up directly ahead, wallowing in the teeth of the gale. Dicks shoved his helm down hard, caught one glimpse of wave-washed decks and oilskin-clad figures gazing astounded at him; then the little *Spray* rushed past on the top of a hissing wave.

"If I can only get out into deep water, off these confounded shallows, things may be more comfortable," soliloquized the captain disgustedly. "I want to get in somewhere to-night, or else the missis will be getting anxious; and she's prejudiced enough against the old boat as it is."

Somehow or other by dint of good seamanship and the inherent qualities of his yacht, Dicks rode the gale out, though not till he was wet through and chilled to the bone, and the *Spray* half full of water.

When, late in the evening, he was at last able to bring her round and steer some sort of a course for the land, he was far out of sight of the coast, with only a hazy notion of his whereabouts.

Nevertheless, with his pipe between his teeth, and the yacht making pretty good progress over a still angry sea, he felt decidedly happier.

"I'm heading landwards, at any rate," he told himself "and I'm bound to pick up a light soon that'll give me my bearings."

The night was clear, but dark, and the wind still blew strongly. Dicks was driving the yacht hard, anxious to get ashore and wire to his wife, when of a sudden he felt the *Spray* half stop in her buoyant lift and then slide forward again. Simultaneously he heard a grating sound somewhere alongside.

"Jupiter!" he cried in alarm. "What was that? Lump of wreckage, I expect. Wonder if its done any harm?"

With quick fingers he lashed his tiller, then he dived down into the cabin and tore up the floor-boards to ascertain if the yacht had sustained any injury.

The first glance revealed a pool of water swishing to and fro, deepening momentarily. With a growl he thrust his arm down. There was a hole through the bottom, and, worse still, the seams were gaping wide.

"Phew!" he whistled, and leapt to his feet. "Looks to me as if she hadn't got much longer to float. Why the dickens did I want to choose just the bit of water that infernal wreck was in? I'll try plugging, but it wont be any good."

Seizing the cushions and what other likely articles he could find he wedged them into the breach and braced them as best he could, although in his heart knew that the little craft was doomed. Then he went back on deck, resumed his place at the tiller, and hauled his mainsheet a little tighter, meanwhile staring anxiously ahead for some signs of land, a lightship, or any other vessel.

But everywhere blackness met his gaze; he seemed alone on an angry sea.

"The missis will say: 'I told you so!'" muttered the captain grimly. "She always vowed this boat would be the death of me. Gad! she's getting waterlogged already, poor little craft. I wish to goodness I could see something; it isn't dignified for a blue-water man to be drowned on a mud-flat."

Momentarily the yacht rose more sluggishly to the waves; momentarily the water, already eddying about Dick's ankles, grew deeper, and still nothing came into view.

With a sigh the captain removed his oilskins in preparation for the plunge

that he knew must come full soon, and he placed close to hand some loose floorboards and things that might serve to keep him afloat for a while. But he realized that unless help came almost at once he was doomed; he could not survive prolonged immersion in the choppy, ice-cold water.

Suddenly, from somewhere ahead, a faint sound smote on the captain's ear —a creak like that of a straining cable-chain.

"Jove! what's that?" he breathed huskily. "Can't see any ship. Is it a buoy?"

Rising to his feet, he strained his eyes to pierce the gloom, and as he did so the sound fell upon his ears again. Looking in its direction it seemed to him that he could distinguish a vague, shapeless mass—a blacker blot against the darkness, and soon he heard the familiar wash of water against a ship's side.

Slackening off his sheet a little, he ran closer in, with the yacht now almost water-logged.

"It's a ship of some sort," murmured the captain. "Ah! there's her masthead lights. Why, Great Scott! It's a battleship!"

With new hope in his breast, he urged the sinking *Spray* forward till he could plainly see the hull, squat masts, and fighting-tops of a great battleship looming strangely dark and silent through the night.

"Not much sign of life about her," observed Dicks, as he ran alongside.

"Wonder if her ladder's down? On deck there! The battleship ahoy! Heave me a rope; my boat's sinking!"

Several times he repeated the shout, but there came no response from the ship above him.

"That's a nice state of things on a British warship!" growled Dicks in a rage. "I'd like to have the court-martialing of the officer of the watch, hanged if I wouldn't! Ahoy, there, you lubbers, where the dickens are you? Gad! she's going."

As he spoke the *Spray* gave a sudden lurch towards the battleship; her topmast struck the war-vessels side, and, catching there, held her motionless for an instant. Then, very slowly, she slid beneath the water. But Dicks had seized his opportunity. A flying leap took him to a narrow ledge, and from there his strong, clutching fingers dragged him slowly up the side till he crawled, breathless and exhausted, over the bulwarks. When he looked back the *Spray* had vanished.

"Ahoy on deck!" roared the captain, mystified by the silence and gloom. "Is there anyone about?"

He took one step forward to investigate; then in the dense gloom his head came into violent contact with some projecting metalwork and he dropped senseless to the deck.

When Captain Dicks opened his eyes again it was broad daylight, and he thought at first he was in one of the stages of a particularly vivid nightmare. He felt weak, cold and hungry; his clothes were bedraggled and stiff with sea-salt, he had a dull pain across the temples, and a bump on the back of his head as big as an egg. But strangest of all was the scene, for he found himself lying on the spacious, spotlessly clean deck of a warship. No one else was in sight.

Dicks stared around him for some moments in bewilderment; then very slowly, the remembrance of the previous night's adventures came back to him.

"Geewhillikins!" he said at last. "This is a queer start! Here I have been lying on deck all night, and no one has tumbled across me. When I see the skipper of this little barkie I'll give him my candid opinion of his men's watch-keeping."

Slowly and painfully he rose to his feet, glaring malevolently at the gun-shield against which he had struck his head so disastrously.

"Who'd expect to find a thing like that under the bulwarks?" he demanded sulkily. "Gad! I could do with some breakfast. When on earth is someone going to discover me?"

Finding nobody on the main-deck, he climbed the ladders first to the boat-deck, and then to the lofty bridge; but to his amazement discovered no signs of officers or men.

Looking around, he beheld on the far horizon the motionless shapes of two or

three large battleships, while here and there, round about, were the the squat hulls of torpedo-boats. No other craft was in sight.

"Where the dickens *are* the people?" cried the captain, thoroughly puzzled now. "Surely the British Navy doesn't leave ten-thousand-ton battleships knocking about on their own?"

He was passing a small compartment with a glazed window, when he fancied he saw the dim outline of a figure inside.

"Inside there!" he cried. "I've been looking for someone—Well, I'm *jiggered!* What's the meaning of this?"

There before him, hard by a table, was a figure, right enough; but it was of wood, a dummy carved with just enough detail to convey an indication of an officer!

Dicks surveyed the motionless effigy with starting eyes.

"I wish you could speak, Woodenhead," he said, "and tell me what the meaning of this business is. Is the whole thing a sort of Chinese scarecrow, just meant to impress folks? It seems to me I've captured a first-class battleship all off my own bat; but I think I'd prefer a tug-boat, with a decent breakfast aboard."

Leaving the compartment, he ran hither and thither about the ship, seeking in vain for any living thing. Sometimes he encountered more dummies—officers or men, placed in gun-casements—empty of weapons, however—or in other positions. But nowhere, on deck or below, could he find a human being.

Once more he went up on the bridge and surveyed the distant flotilla, and then, gradually, the meaning of it all dawned upon him.

"Good Heavens!" he cried huskily. "This must be the boat I was reading about last week—the old battleship *Thunderous*, which was to be fired upon by other vessels under war conditions, to test armor and projectiles. I've been and landed myself aboard a floating target!"

For a moment he was silent; then he burst out again, with an anxious glance toward the horizon.

"But when is the show going to commence? It seems to me I'd better get up some sort of a signal, or else—My God!"

From one of the leviathans, perhaps six miles away, a puff of pale blue smoke arose, followed after a distinct interval by a muffled report. Then something came shrieking and hissing through the air while Dicks watched petrified with horror.

A din as of ten thousand monster hammers striking ten thousand anvils, a blaze of fire, an acrid, choking odor of gases, and where the fore-barbette had been there yawned a gaping, smoke-shrouded chasm strewn with twisted girders and shattered plates.

"Jupiter!" stammered Dicks, deafened and blinded. "They've begun already! Was ever a man in such a pickle?"

Another puff of smoke, another report, and the captain, ducking his head instinctively, fled from the bridge to the deck below, Well for him was it that he did so, for a moment later the two funnels and the upper bridge went crashing overside amid an inferno of flame and thunder.

The captain was a man of iron nerve, as his behavior in many a tight corner had proved, but this rain of screeching sheels was something beyond his experience.

Crash! came another projectile, striking somewhere amidships, hurling a shower of fiery splinters over the crouching man and numbing his brain with the dim of its impact.

"I—I can't stand any more of this!" he gasped, for the poisonous fumes made breathing difficult; "I must get below somewhere. Perhaps they'll only fire a few shots and then come over to see what damage they've done."

Trembling in every limb, he groped his way down below till be judged that he was safe beneath the water-line. There he sat himself down against a bulkhead, with his hands over his ears to shut out the sound of the explosions.

Somewhere above him he heard again that awful clanging sound and felt the ship stagger as if she had received her death-blow. Once more choking fumes assailed him, biting at his eyes and throat savagely.

Even in this hour of peril the man's

quaint humor did not altogether desert him.

"If this is what a naval battle's like I'm glad I'm not a fighter," he muttered. "What a good thing it is the missis doesn't know the little picnic I've walked into. Jove! there's another!"

And now the impact of shells upon the ship's armor-plates grew more frequent; it was evident that the attacking vessels were aiming at her citadel. She staggered under the hail of blows, and still the carnival of destruction went on, while below in the depths crouched Dicks, half-maddened by the pandemonium of sound, his brain reeling under the awful strain. He lost all count of time.

The thudding of steel upon steel, the crash of splintered metal, blended into a continuous medley of thunderous uproar to which he seemed to have been listening for ages.

He caught himself wishing that a shell would pitch into his hiding-place and end his torture.

Then, with a great effort, he pulled himself together.

"I guess it would have been better to drown," he told himself in a whisper. "Jove! what's that?"

In a momentary cessation of the firing he heard a crackling sound, and soon the smell of burning wood came to his nostrils.

"On fire now, is she?" he muttered. "I'm not surprised. But I can't stop here to be burnt. I'd sooner face the music on deck than that."

Unsteadily he rose to his feet and made towards the steel ladder which led to the deck above. Just then another shell struck the warship's side, pitching the captain in a heap, while the stricken vessel seemed to lift up bodily. The crashing and rending of riven plates followed, but this time, as it seemed, from below. Dicks picked himself up with a groan.

"That took her somewhere about the water-line surely," he muttered feebly. "Yes, it did; I can hear the water rushing in. Lord! what a deuce of a mess!"

Nerved by the proximity of two perils—death by fire and by sinking with the ship—the captain almost forgot the third danger, the shells which were still hurrying athwart the waves on their errand of destruction.

With smoke-grimed face he fought his way through the fumes up on deck, gazing despairingly around him. What a scene met his eyes!

Forward, nothing but smoking masses of distorted, fire-blackened iron-work were to be seen, with the great steel mast lying athwart-ship, split from top to bottom. The funnels and the bridges were gone; a great smoking hole, vomiting flames, yawned in their place.

Aft, the main-mast still stood, though its stays were gone. The ship was settling fast; already she had a list to port and her head was suspiciously low in the water.

"I've got to get a signal up that main-mast," Dicks told himself. "But the problem's going to be how to get there. Talk about a battleship! It looks more like an ironworks that has been struck by a hurricane and then dynamited!"

With one apprehensive glance at the distant warships, he started at a run to reach the mast aft, but had scarcely proceeded a dozen feet when another shrieking iron monster struck the vessel.

Down in a heap went Dicks again, with showers of splinters hurtling all around him. When he staggered up once more blood was streaming down his haggard face, and he was well-nigh delirious; but one purpose was burnt deep into his tortured brain—to get a signal up the mast before it was too late.

Somehow or other—to his dying day he will never be able to explain how—he groped his way through the shattered plates and girders, often falling, often burning himself, until, exhausted and trembling from weakness, he stood under the mast, already swaying dangerously. There, with fumbling fingers, he drew off his scorched and splinter-torn coat, knotted its sleeves to the signal-halyards, and hoisted desperately, for that sorry rag was his last hope.

"We're making rattling good practice, sir," observed the fire-observation officer of the flagship *Lord Nelson*, as he stood beside the Admiral in the control-station. "See how that last ten inch

shell took her? She wont stand much more, I'm afraid, and"—his glass went to his eye—"Good Heavens! Am I dreaming, sir, or is that something going up to her masthead?"

Startled, the Admiral snatched up his own glass and focused the sorry wreck on the horizon.

"Great Scott! You're right!" he cried, his face paling. "It—it looks like a coat. Surely there isn't anyone on board?"

For an instant the two men gazed at one another blankly, an awful nameless fear at their hearts. Then, with a muttered exclamation, the Admiral darted away, and a moment later the "Cease fire" signal was fluttering up to the flagship's mast, to be followed by another that sent half-a-dozen torpedo-boats racing at top-speed toward the sinking target.

The leading boat swung smartly round alongside, and the young lieutenant in command was just preparing to board, when a weird-looking figure, covered with blood, his clothing scorched and torn, climbed painfully over the bulwarks and dropped down on to the little craft's deck.

"There's only me!" he cried hoarsely. "Sheer away, sir; she's just going down!"

Then he collapsed even as the wondering lieutenant drove his boat forward again. Another couple of minutes, and all that was left of the *Thunderous* settled quietly down upon the sand-bank a few feet below her keel, leaving only her tottering main-mast showing above water, that odd coat-signal still flying in the breeze.

With all speed the unconscious Dicks was taken off to the flagship, where the surgeon took him in hand at once. His injuries, fortunately, were not serious.

He came round some hours later, and his first words were:

"My lad," he said sharply to the orderly who sat watching him, "give me a pencil and paper; I want to send a telegram to my wife."

When, from the port-hole above his bunk, he saw a stream-pinnace tearing shorewards with the wire, he felt vastly relieved. The solitary eye visible under his bandages twinkled, and he consented to receive the Admiral and the captain of the ship,

"I'm heartily glad to see you able to sit up, sir," cried the Admiral, as he grasped Dicks' hand. "How on earth did you come to be aboard? It's a miracle you've escaped with your life."

"I know it," returned the captain grimly. Then he told his story, from his shipwreck to the coming of the rescuing torpedo-boat.

"It's wonderful how you survived it all!" said the Admiral, when he had finished. "You could hardly have chosen a worse landing-place, could you? We towed the old battleship out to her moorings on the Kentish Knock yesterday morning, before the storm broke, and after making everything ship-shape, left her there in readiness for to-day's practice, concerning which you may have seen something in the papers last week. I had eleven torpedo-boats out all night and this morning, forming a cordon to keep shipping off, but your little craft must have slipped past them unnoticed in the gloom. You have had a terrible experience, Captain Dicks—an experience such as falls to the lot of but few men—and we must be thankful that you are alive to tell of it."

They kept him on board, an honored invalid guest, until the *Lord Nelson* steamed back to Sheerness that evening at the head of the flotilla. The very first person to rush on board when the big ship berthed was Mrs. Dicks, tears of gladness in her eyes. The naval authorities had apprised her of the time of the flagship's return.

"Oh, Bob, Bob!" she cried, half-laughing and half-crying as she flung herself into his arms. "I told you what would happen; I told you that wretched boat would be the death of you."

"There! I knew she'd say that!" declared the captain triumphantly. "Well, dear, you very nearly proved a true prophet; you've got that satisfaction. Only it wasn't the boat—it was my ambition. I tried to capture a battleship single-handed, and had to fight the whole blessed fleet for her, though I went down with my colors—or my coat, rather—still flying. But I'm getting too old for big-gunning, little woman; in future I'll stop at home with you and see if we can't win a few prizes at the flower-shows."

A Japanese Enchantment

By

MAUDE WOODRUFF NEWELL

ALEXANDER SANDERSON, JR., registered in Haruna's tea-house as hailing from "America," rose up very suddenly from the tangled grass beside the road where he had dropped for a rest, after a morning's long tramp, and choked back a boyish whistle.

Behind him a little path wandered inward toward a high stone wall; and in the garden wilderness beyond that a figure moved.

He was a tall fellow, but it was only by virtue of the rising ground where he stood that he could look over the massive gray barrier into Paradise.

The figure came toward him until he could see it plainly, see the inky black hair piled high upon a royal little head, and decorated with tiny fans and quaint pins, see the unusual snowy whiteness of the small neck, even the large, dark eye, almond shaped.

She was as gorgeous as a tropical butterfly, under the brilliant Japanese sky and the wonderful wistaria trellises. Her long kimona was scarlet. The obi was scarlet also with flying birds embroidered upon it in heavy yellow silk.

She came dancing between the wistaria, singing softly, her little painted face as vivid as a flower.

Alexander watched her breathlessly. He had been in Japan over a month now, traveling easily from place to place as the fancy led him, and he had been in countless tea-houses, but none of the geisha girls had looked like this girl: he had brought letters to many of the higher dignitaries—for Alexander Sanderson, Sr., the "copper man" was known outside of his own country; but none of the high-class Japanese women he had met had looked like this girl. Their dark little faces had held no attraction for him. He was not especially fond of girls anyway. The modern girl was too mannish, too strenuous to suit his ideas; besides she bored him. Copper was much more interesting.

But this bizarre figure!

He stretched his neck fascinated. She stopped suddenly, swaying on her tiny toes like a flower on a stem, and smelled a drooping bit of wistaria. It lay softly against her face.

Alexander, balancing himself on the treacherous grassy knoll, watched her wonderingly. How very beautiful she was.

Then, even as he hung there, she lifted her head and looked directly at him. Her little song died quickly in her throat. She faced him open-eyed, shrinking a little.

Alexander, caught vulgarly spying, stared back stupidly, too much surprised to move or speak.

After a second she smiled shyly. Then she moved hesitatingly toward the wall and peered over it. Her chin just tilted above the gray stone.

Alexander balanced himself desperately on the green peak and smiled back, his frank, smooth shaven young face flushing. He tried to remember a Japanese greeting but his mind was a blank.

He nearly said "Hello!" in his embarrassment.

She watched him curiously for a second, then she spoke first:

"You Engleesh? I spek Engleesh," she said brokenly in a soft adorable little voice.

"Oh," said Alexander, "I must beg your pardon for my rudeness in staring over into your beautiful garden, but it is such a pretty place, I—I—"

He stopped lamely, wondering if she understood, or if he had spoken too fast, but she nodded laughing:

"Your augustness lak it, mooch?"

"It is just like a picture, and you are part of it."

She courtesied, crossing her arms, and drooping her head until he could see the stately sweep of the hair at the nape of her neck and the fair slope of her shoulders.

"Youmeklaughatme," shesaidshyly.

"No, indeed. You are just like a flower."

Alexander was surprised at his own gallantry. Such fluency to a girl was astonishing.

She laughed.

"I am flower. My name San Choo."

"My name is ugly—Alexander Sanderson; can you say it?"

"Alex'der Sanseron," she repeated proudly.

"I am not English, either. I am an American."

"Oh," her childish eyes widened. "So—far?" she whispered, stretching out her arms until the beautiful sleeves shone like a scarlet sea in the dazzling sunshine.

"Come here," she said, after a second, patting the gray wall authoritatively with a tiny hand.

Alexander came obediently, and stood close to it so that their eyes were on a level across its flat top.

"My honorable fadder gone to Tokio, my poor maid so ill. Would your august sir lak mebbe to come over and veesit my garden, vaery leetle while?"

Alexander's hesitation lasted a brief second only. He pinched himself to see if, possibly, this were a bit of Japanese enchantment, or if he had fallen asleep and was dreaming. He wondered what would happen if the "honorable fadder" should come home sooner than was expected. He imagined, privately, that his head would not look especially attractive stuck on the "honorable fadder's" gate-post.

Then he leaped the wall and came down into the garden beside her.

A wonderful hour flew by, as she showed him the beauties of the place. It was a bewildering spot. There were dozens and dozens of pine trees dwarfed and trimmed into odd shapes. There were grand cedars, larger than any he had ever seen. There were elaborate little grottoes, two miniature pagodas, an artificial lake with a fantastic bridge across it, and everywhere trellises and arbors green with vines and heavy with wistaria. The house, a quaint one-storied building was set far, far back, and half hid by shrubbery.

She had a shy pride in each new thing as they came to it. He watched her, his heart beating quickly. How sweet she was. Her broken speech was a delight.

Alexander had always thought girls silly. Money and power, as represented by copper, were the game. He had played it well under Alexander, Sr.'s careful training. Of course a few social amenities were a necessity, but he had kept these occasions down to a small fraction. This creature, however, with her satin skin and her childish eyes, and her sharp little speeches was entrancing.

"You stay long in Japan, mebbe?" she questioned curiously.

"A week or two longer, probably."

"Oh, you—you people here? Your august fadder or mother, or—or mebbe your wife?"

"No, I am all alone here, and I have no wife."

She giggled suddenly.

"So funny, see you with beeg 'Merican girl," she explained.

"What do you know about American girls," he laughed.

"I see two, three, sometimes," confidently. "I see beeg, beeg girl, beeg shoe, beeghat, leetle waist. She walk so," taking a stride that almost upset her. "She talk loud, oh, so noise. You lak 'Merican girl?"

Alexander laughed again.

San Choo's disgusted little face unscrewed itself and she laughed with him.

"No," he said honestly. "I've never seen one yet that precisely suited me. I think you are the prettiest girl I have ever met."

"Oh, your augustness, you flatter, mebbe. What you think?"

The sun was getting low. Their hour

was almost gone. They were facing each other, there by the wall. The girl's eyes drooped suddenly before his.

"No, San Choo," he said, "I mean it."

She listened, her head on one side alertly.

"I guess, mebbe, you better go now," she whispered. "There is bell ringing. My honorable fadder is returned. I fly."

He put out his hand.

"But—I come again, perhaps tomorrow?"

"No, my honorable fadder hate Enggleeshman. Mebbe he keel us. You nice augustness. I lak you," she sighed. "*Sayonara.*"

She put out her hand suddenly and he kissed it. Then she was gone, flying up the long path toward the hidden one-storied house.

Alexander went slowly back over the wall, out of Paradise.

He waited awhile, outside, wandering aimlessly about; the garden remained deserted. The air grew chill, for the sun was quite gone now, and with a last look he turned his back upon it and plodded up the road toward the tea-house where he was staying. It was a long, long walk, but he scarcely noticed it. His brain was in a crazy whirl. What a strange thing it was to have happened to him, of all people, prosaic and copper-bred. He smiled to himself. Perhaps copper was a pretty good thing after all. It kept a fellow level-headed and out of mischief.

He wondered who she might be. Her father must be wealthy and of high rank. He made a few cautious inquiries when he got in for supper, but no one seemed to know what he meant, or perhaps their ignorance was intentional, so he let it drop. She was San Choo, plum blossom, that was enough to know. How brown were her eyes, how satin her skin, how small her childish hands and feet.

He smoked two cigars that night. He wondered if he had not better go on to Tokio, himself, in the morning and settle that little business matter, and then pike along toward home. He had been idle long enough. He was getting fanciful now.

He resolved finally that he would, and went to bed with his mind made up accordingly; but he changed it first thing in the morning.

The weather was partly to blame for that. He slid back the bamboo screen early. The sky was a deep blue. In the distance he could just see the sacred volcano, Fujuyami, a white mystery reaching up into the clouds that hover ever about its massive peak.

A little party of Japanese men were plodding up the long white road, past the tea-house. They were dressed entirely in white, with long loose sleeves and immense hats. They were evidently pilgrims on their slow way to visit the sacred volcano. Their small, brown faces were turned eagerly toward the mountain heights.

Alexander watched them out of sight. What a strange people these were. He thought perhaps he had better stay a few days longer, at least. He might never be able to come again and it was a most interesting country.

He therefore unpacked his trunk, and went down to breakfast.

At sight of him two little Japanese waitresses hastened to do his bidding. As he ate he searched their smiling faces curiously but there was no beauty there, no charm even, except that of good nature and scrupulous cleanliness. Small of stature, they were yet like well developed school-girls. San Choo had been small, too—he remembered her tiny foot in its odd black-lacquered sandal—but she was not like these.

He wandered aimlessly about the place through the long morning. As soon as the mid-day lunch was over he engaged a gay little jinrikisha and started up the road he had traveled on foot the day before. The little brown runner was swift of foot but it seemed to Alexander that he crawled.

With a caution that was new to him, he bade the man wait by the side of the road long before the house was even in sight, and walked on alone the last mile.

His heart was strangely tumultuous as he wandered carelessly in from the road, down the pretty green path, to the high stone wall. He stepped eagerly upon the grassy knoll and stretching his neck, gazed over into Paradise.

It was quite deserted. He could see the ripples on the little artificial lake,

the swaying clusters of the gorgeous wistaria, but no San Choo.

He was instantly ashamed of his keen disappointment. What had he expected?

"I'm an ass," he said sadly.

Yet he lingered on. She might come soon. He tried to remember just how she had looked the day before, the shining amber of her eyes, the silken sweep of her inky black lashes. What if he should not ever see them again? Why had he not found out more about her, her whole name, her father's position, the day before. Japan was not America. He might never find her now.

Then an odd fancy caught him. That surely was a cluster of wistaria, lying loose and detached upon the top of the wall. Yet he imagined that sometimes it moved. It would hang almost over the gray stone edge toward him, then mysteriously, it would draw slowly back, until it almost vanished from sight. That was a strange thing.

Alexander stepped carefully down from the knoll and crept up to it. He raised on tiptoe and stretching his long arm over the wall's flat top grasped a hand, small and soft as a child's.

Someone laughed, and the hand struggled, but he held on.

"Who is there?" he asked low.

"You guess," someone whispered back.

"I would rather come over and see."

There was a small hesitation. The hand still struggled. Then San Choo straightened herself, and looked over at him, breathless and laughing:

"I hide myself mosta hour," she said reproachfully. "You awful lade 'Merican man."

"I'd have come this morning if I had dared," said Alexander honestly. "I was afraid you would not be able to be here, even now."

"Me too, same 'fraid," she sighed. "Honorable fadder hang 'round, and hang 'round."

They laughed together.

"Then you come, hoarry, hoarry," she puffed in imitation of Alexander's haste. "You get up on grassy place, and look over and look over," she stretched up her slender neck comically, "then you say, 'I'm an ass.'"

Her tones and expressions were uproariously funny. Alexander laughed until he was as red as her obi.

"Your—augustness leave go my hand—mebbe—you can come over."

He vaulted the wall in an instant.

"Such hoarry," she said scornfully "Never seen ladies before?"

Her little nose tilted in dignity, but her eyes were laughing.

"Not like you," Alexander said truthfully, and there was something in his eyes that seemed to suddenly startle her.

"Tell me about 'Merica," she said hastily.

"What 'Merican lady say when 'Merican man come over the wall?"

"I don't know," laughed Alexander. "I usually go in at the front door and sit in the parlor"

"Oh," she stopped. "Your augustness go in, sid in my parlor, my honorable fadder gr-r, gr-r, gr-r-r."

She drew one slim brown finger across her gurgling throat with a horrible gesture. Then she laughed.

"Come see vaery fine new pagoda."

Like a child with a rare treasure, she showed him the new miniature pagoda in a far corner of the garden. It was a delicate little thing, as perfect in design as a large one. Then there was a new shrub to see, just planted that morning, and the fish in the lake to feed, and a thousand things to talk about.

Her education was a wonder to Alexander.

"Where have you learned so much?" he asked curiously.

"Sometimes I go with honorable fadder," she said evasively. "He tells me vaery mooch, and I read, oh, so beeg books in Japanese and French and leetle in Engleesh—mek my head ache. Nod now, long time ago, when vaery young."

"You are only a child now."

"Thangs, I lady now, most twenty."

She strutted proudly, her head thrown back, her wide sleeved arms folded.

"I am twenty-eight," said Alexander.

She exclaimed:

"So old. Time die now?"

"Not a bit of it. I'm going on through Germany and France, and to Italy. Then I am going back to America and make a lot more money."

"What for?"

Alexander stopped and thought.

"Oh, because it's fun to make and fun to spend it."

"Got money plendy buy something to eat, something to wear, buy place to live in?"

"Plenty," he laughed.

"What more money good for?"

"I don't just know," he confessed after a minute. "Guess it's a habit—money-making, over in my country."

"Oh. So funny, you 'Mericans."

She laughed.

"We just lak be happy. That habit, here, my country, be happy."

She stopped suddenly and listened. Her smile vanished.

"Honorable fadder," she whispered and peered between the trellises.

Then her little brown hand groped for Alexander's as she turned.

"Run," she said, and went like the wind back down the path, Alexander racing beside her. They darted in and out between the dwarfed trees until they reached the farthest end of the garden.

"Now, go quick, augustness," she whispered breathlessly. "Awful fear if honorable fadder comes."

"He will not hurt you?"

"No, no, nod me. Please, dear augustness, go vaery fast."

His eyes held hers for an instant. She did not look away. He could see the flecks of color deep, deep in their brown, see the inky shade of her long curling lashes, and the swift beat of the pulse in her temples.

Alexander held on to himself sternly.

"To-morrow, little one?" he whispered, and kissed her little brown hand gently.

"Mebbe, to-mollow," she whispered back.

Then he went quickly over the wall, and she flew back up the path toward the house.

Alexander had a very bad time with himself the rest of that day. Being an American young gentleman with all his faculties he could no longer deceive himself as to the reason for his staying on there in Haruna.

He packed his trunk twice and then as rapidly unpacked it again. He was a fool. This was nothing serious. In a day or two she would bore him, in all probability, and then he would go on to Germany. She was nothing but a child. She would forget. To her it was just t' charm of the unknown.

Yet he had a sneaking suspicion that she was not going to bore him. She was very lovely but there was wit and intelligence, besides, in her round little head. Her little face with its wonderful eyes and red slip of a mouth haunted him. He could shut his eyes and see her peering shyly at him over the high, gray wall, see the scarlet of her obi, the sheen of her soft, black perfumed hair, even feel the touch of her tiny hands as she had raced down the path with him.

"Copper isn't in it at all," he reflected as he sat on the hotel-porch through the long evening and smoked.

He smiled feebly to himself as he imagined his father's derision and his mother's horror if they could read his thoughts. Yet, if they knew her they would understand. What if he should marry her and take her home with him!

The next morning he rallied his wits and tried to be sensible. He went for a long ride in a quite opposite direction than he had gone the days before

He saw wonderful sacred gates galore, charming littleb ridges with gayly dressed throngs crossing and recrossing them, gaudy lacquered pagodas and horrible faced gods sitting impassive before their gorgeous temples.

It was all very interesting, but Alexander's clean shaven young face showed no enthusiasm. A picture of San Choo wandering desolately about the big garden haunted him. There was a surprising ache in his throat, that was quite new to him, as he imagined her childish eyes watching over the flat top of the high gray wall for his coming. What was this that, in a day, had so possessed him?

He ate his lunch drearily at a teahouse fairly hidden by the wonderful wistaria. It was nearly dark when he returned to the hotel.

The thought of the long evening tormented him. There were only four English speaking people there—a trader, a a lean man with the dyspepsia, and two frumpy English women. Alexander could find no comfort with any of them.

It was quite dark when, the evening meal over, he went out and doggedly hired a jinrikisha again. He didn't try to explain himself now.

At the familiar turn of the road he bade the man wait and walked on hurriedly into the darkness. He went quickly up the little path, breathing fast, his hat in his hand, the sticky branches of the shrubs brushing his hot face as he passed them.

The garden as he came upon it lay silent and mysterious. Red paper lanterns burned here and there among the wistaria blossoms like monster rubies. The long one-storied house in the distance was ablaze with lights through the thick shrubbery.

Alexander stood silently by the wall. How strange it was for him to be here, in far away Japan, waiting by a clumsy wall for the sight of a girl, and a foreign girl at that, in a strange costume, and with strange little ways and words that were not at all of his world or kind.

The minutes dragged by. No one came. A wind sprang up freshly.

Then suddenly a small figure, shadowy and faint stood before him, on the other side of the wall. She was not laughing, nor dancing now. Her face, in the pale light, looked white.

"Your augustness come?" she whispered.

"I couldn't come before," he said. "I'm horribly sorry. May I come over?"

"No," she said. "Too lade, now. Honorable fadder vaery near. *Sayonara.*"

"Oh, little one. I couldn't come before."

"Why couldn't come?"

Alexander hesitated.

"Augustness tired. Augustness, mebbe, nod want to come?" she persisted in level tones.

"I wanted to come too much," said Alexander honestly. "You, you don't understand, San Choo, but I thought perhaps it would be better if I did not come again, at all."

"Then change mind again?" she taunted.

"Yes, I just had to come."

She laughed suddenly.

"You 'Mericans such funny ones, lak leetle babies," drolly.

"Are you glad I came, finally?"

She reflected gravely for a second.

"You glad?" she queried.

"Very," said Alexander with a long breath.

"All right. Same glad you got."

It seemed a short while to Alexander that they talked together there, yet it was very late when he roused the jinrikisha man who was sleeping lightly by the side of the road.

Alexander Sanderson, Sr., found it difficult to comprehend his son's reasons for staying on in Haruna the next few months. Alexander, Jr. was not to blame for that, however. They were really the best reasons he could find, under the circumstances.

Copper had faded entirely from Alexander, Jr.'s view. He ate and slept mechanically. His hours were all San Choo's to do with as she pleased. He came and went at her bidding. When he could not see her he sat and hated himself until he could.

Romance had never appealed to Alexander's practical temperament, and it did not now. It was not the situation that fascinated him: It was the girl.

The long happy afternoons in the big garden were like a dream to him as they slipped by. Down in a far corner, by the wall, hedged in by dwarfed pines and green trellises, she had spread a heavy rug. There they would sit, hour after hour and she would tell him old legends of Japan, strange tales of the days of the Shoguns, stories of the different gods.

In turn, he would tell her of his own people and country, and what he had seen in this year of travel.

She had adorable little ways. Alexander never tired of her droll speeches, and the little mimic cries with which they were adorned.

It was surprising how much time she could arrange for them to be together.

"My honorable fadder go way Tokio soo mooch," she would explain evasively.

It puzzled Alexander. So much freedom for a girl was more American than Japanese. She also distinctly declined to tell who her father was, his name or his station.

"I am San Choo. It is enough," she

insisted and made him promise not to inquire further.

Alexander promised, of course. He could have cut off both legs and gone around on wooden legs if she had so requested. America was very far away. Copper had become a shadowy, prehistoric thing that only fools fought over.

The wistaria faded and went and other blossoms came, and had their day and went also, but Alexander still stayed on at the little tea-house, to the intense curiosity of the proprietor.

Alexander wondered how all this was going to end. He felt a stubborn desire to settle it, to marry her and take her home and fight it out afterward. There was never an American girl like her.

She had a shy little way of touching his eyes with the tips of her fingers that drove him crazy. Sometimes he had half frightened her with his rough wooing, for she was still a child in so many ways. Even yet he had kept from kissing her, although he always wondered how on earth he ever did it.

August brought the lotus flowers. The artificial lake in the garden was pink and white with their beauty.

"Your augustness should see liddle lotus lake in mountains, by Nikko," sighed San Choo, one afternoon as they sat idly on the big rug.

"Let us go," said Alexander promptly.

"Long way," demurred San Choo.

"Go in 'rikisha?"

She nodded, thinking.

"I go, what you call disguise. Take maid Yuki, go early in afternoon, ged back, mebbe, leetle after dark."

"I'll be here directly after lunch," agreed Alexander.

"Take Yuki," insisted San Choo.

"Oh, sure," said Alexander heavily. "Thank goodness, she don't understand English."

"Tank goodness," echoed San Choo demurely.

Their eyes met and she giggled.

"That will be fine," said Alexander happily. "A whole afternoon and evening together."

"Somethin' new?" she queried ingeniously.

Alexander flushed and laughed.

"Very new. I've only been here twice all Summer."

He lied extravagantly.

She shook her head rising slowly to her tiny feet.

"I think your augustness god liddle mistake," she said solemnly. "What you thing?"

Then she ran from him toward the house, and Alexander hastened back to the tea-house to make preparations for the trip.

He was the first at the wall after lunch, but in a second or two San Choo came.

Her lips and cheeks were scarlet with excitement, as she lifted her heavy veil for an instant. Her kimono was pale blue, with wonderful embroiderings upon it of the long stemmed iris, in its myriad, iridescent shades. Her obi was of changeable silk, blue and lavender, and gold, with heavy fringed ends.

"Yuki mooch 'fraid," she said scornfully, "but I mek her come, me."

He lifted her over the wall, holding her close for a blessed second. The perfume of her shining hair took his breath away. Her shy eyes were very large and dark. Still the reverence of her sweet childishness kept him from kissing her tiny slip of a mouth.

"Put me down, augustness," she whispered.

He put her down gently.

Then he lifted the maid over. Poor Yuki was shaking like a leaf. She seemed to have a horror of the "griffin" (foreigner). Her face was shrouded in a heavy scarf, and she was large and clumsy.

He brought them to the edge of the path, where he whistled shrilly to the 'rikisha men, who were waiting a little way up the road.

They came quickly and he bundled poor Yuki hastily in one, and then tucked San Choo and himself in the other

They reached the little lotus pool in a little over an hour, and for two blessed hours they prowled about the place. San Choo was a surprising walker. Poor Yuki waddled on behind like a walrus. They had tea in a little *chaya*, (tea-house), served in tiny cups by a pretty little geisha, and San Choo and Yuki

ate delightedly of shrimps, and figs, and rice cakes.

A great many people were there, but it was a cosmopolitan crowd, and they attracted little attention in their quiet corner. Even Yuki's misery was not noticed.

Afterward they went on further up the mountain to a little temple. They passed through a magnificent bronze Torii, or gateway, and all three knelt at the little fountain beneath it, and washed their hands and mouths before going into the sacred shrine.

There, Yuki prostrated herself at the feet of a serene faced Buddha while San Choo and Alexander explored the place. She explained the various sacred objects and statues with a quaint reverence.

"You have one God. We have many Gods. All same," she declared happily.

It was an afternoon of enchantment, gone all too soon.

They were standing by the gateway looking off at the surrounding hills where the daylight yet lingered, loath to go, when, suddenly the clouds, black and threatening came up from nowhere, and in an instant almost blotted out the last of light, and piled up in inky heaviness above them.

"It's beeg storm," gasped San Choo. "Oh, hoarry home, quick."

Alexander protested that they would much better wait there until it was safely over, but San Choo was in a frenzy of fear.

"Oh, augustness, please mek hoarry. Mebbe honorable fadder keel us, we so late."

A thin little peal of thunder sounded over them. A tiny drop of rain fell on Alexander's troubled face.

He hastily found their 'rikisha and two runners and bundling San Choo in, started for home.

The fresh wind rushed past their faces smelling of rain, as they flew along. The roads were full of merrymakers, on foot and in jinrikishas, hurrying before the storm.

San Choo, a little bundle of fright,sat huddled up to him, mute. Every peal of thunder made her shrink. Once a vivid lightning-flash showed him her face, small and piteous and colorless.

"It's all right, plum blossom, it wont hurt you," he comforted, his heart beating like a trip-hammer at her sweet nearness.

She looked at him silently.

Then something conquered Alexander, Jr.

"I love you, tiny one," he said softly.

"Vaery mooch?" she whispered back.

Alexander's mighty arms strained her to him, almost crushing her fragile bones.

He shut his lips tightly for an instant, in the darkness; then he crossed the Rubicon:

"So much that you have got to marry me and come back to America with me, to live."

He could feel her catch her breath.

"I marry with you?" she whispered.

"Yes, will you?"

"Mebbe I nod so nize Japanese girl you thing. Mebbe low caste, and no money, and nod honorable fadder?"

"It's you, plum blossom, not your caste, nor your money, nor your father."

"Mebbe, I just be plaything liddle while, then throw 'way. That way with west-ocean men, with pink faces, sometimes."

"No," said Alexander. "You will learn American ways. You are as bright as any of those American girls. You will be a plaything, and a companion, too."

She trembled.

"Thad nize," she said in a strange little satisfied voice.

The rain came now, beating in upon them. Her black hair hung in wet strands against his face.

"Is it a promise, little moon-goddess?"

She put a small wet hand to his face, shyly

"Yaas, mebbe."

Then he crushed her to him, kissing her gently.

"I—I have lub to you," she said, and clung to him, crying.

After that there was silence.

The brown runners were almost exhausted as they came to the familiar road, and dropped panting in the soft mud.

Alexander lifted San Choo and carried her to the wall

"You arenot very wet," hecomforted.

"Can you get in all right, or shall I come in now, and see your honorable father, and have it over."

"Oh, no!"

She was visibly frightened. She seemed about to cry again.

"To-mollow," she whispered.

Then her gaze wandered back of him to the road-way.

"Why, where's Yuki?"

Their startled glances met.

"Yuki?" he stammered, trying to remember.

There was a second of deathly silence.

"Great Joseph!" he exclaimed horrified.

"I forgot her. We left her in the temple."

San Choo giggled suddenly.

"Yuki 'fraid of life in beeg storm. What do now?"

"Get other runners and go back," said Alexander heavily.

After a minute the ludicrousness of the situation struck them and they laughed together helplessly, there in the dark, in the rain, with the heavy thunder traveling over their heads, and the occasional swift streaks of lightning showing them each other's faces and the black, deserted garden beyond.

"I must hurry," said Alexander. "I deserve a flogging for forgetting her."

He kissed San Choo's trembling lips again, and putting her carefully over the wall watched her safely up the path toward the house.

The two runners protested that they were able to do a part of the return-trip, so they started at once. At the first tea-house by the way he paid them off and obtained two others.

It was very late when he came again to Nikko and the temple. A single lantern burned in the dim interior. By the shrine of Buddha huddled Yuki, prone on her face.

He explained as best he could what had happened, but his Japanese was not very intelligible, and it is doubtful if she understood a word.

He had difficulty in getting her to go back in the jinrikisha with him at all, but at last he bundled her in. It was a quick return-trip, and a silent one. When he put her over the wall, however, she spoke sharply and continuously. He could hear her as she went up the path out of sight, but it was just as well that he did not understand it. He would probably have remained and interviewed the honorable father then if he had.

He deliberately avoided all thoughts of home and people that night. He was not especially worried about money, for he had plenty of his own, and he knew how to make more, but he had always been a shining star in the home-circle and he dreaded the eclipse that was before him. He slept uneasily and awoke early. He was scarcely dressed however, when a smiling servant brought him a note. It looked quite civilized, like a home-product, and he opened it perplexedly.

It read:

> My Dear Mr. Sanderson:
>
> Will you do me the honor of coming to see me as early as convenient. If you can come back with my man, so much the better. If not, tell your runner the "Japanese Bungalow." He will know where that is.
>
> Yours very truly,
> H. J. Lambert.

Alexander knew no Mr. Lambert, and he had had no breakfast; but he followed the man down to the waiting jinrikisha and got in.

The runner went up a familiar road, past a familiar side-path and a high gray wall, and on, on, up to the wide stone entrance of the big one-storied bungalow that belonged to San Choo's garden.

Alexander got out and went up the path. He felt decidedly uneasy. Had yesterday's escapade and the late return brought harm to San Choo, and fearful international complications too awful to contemplate, or why was an American, Mr. Lambert, interfering.

A polite Japanese servant conducted him to a small library and left him.

The gentleman who came forward, there, to greet him, was middle-aged, very straight, and immaculate.

"I am Mr. Lambert," he said, his stern, high-bred face relaxing a trifle, as he met Alexander's frank young eyes and saw the clean, almost boyish face.

"I am Alexander Sanderson, Jr.," replied Alexander, formally and waited.

"Will you sit down."

He wheeled a big chair forward and Alexander was very glad to sit down. His knees bothered him strangely.

"I am an American, like yourself," began the older gentleman hurriedly. "I was Professor of Archæology at Cambridge for nearly twenty years. My wife died there, twelve years ago. I have traveled much since then, with my daughter, who is now twenty. For six years we have made our home here. We are both very fond of Japan."

He took a long breath. Alexander, puzzled, waited courteously.

"A sister of mine has been practically the only woman who has had any care of my daughter since her mother died, and that has been only for a month or two each year when she has come to visit us. I have attended to her education myself. The result you may imagine. She is bright, to me she is delightful, but of modern social life she is as ignorant as a child. I tell you all this to explain, as best I may, the extraordinary manner in which she has behaved toward you—this Summer."

"San Choo!" gasped Alexander.

Mr. Lambert smiled a little.

"Yes. I came home earlier than was expected last night and found her gone, and the place deserted but for the cook, and my man, Jim. My anxiety you may imagine. She came in, later, drenched, and defiant. She would not tell me anything. But her maid, Yuki, turned traitor."

Alexander remembered the string of Japanese with which Yuki had comforted herself the night before as she waddled up the path to the house, and understood its purport very well now.

"It was very childish of her, all of it. You have been most chivalrous, most honest. I know your father and your people. I think, no doubt, he remembers me. I am happy to meet his son, but I only wish that this occasion had not come through my daughter's foolishness."

He sighed heavily.

"She should have staid in America where some good woman could have given her proper training, some woman who knows the modern world. An old professor of archæology should not have attempted to bring up a woman-child."

Alexander wet his dry lips.

"Did you know that I asked her, last night, to marry me?"

"Yes. She told me so."

He hesitated.

"Of course, now it is different. There is no San Choo. The proposal is therefore forgotten. We are in Japan, the land of lotus dreaming, and you are young; but the charm of novelty is gone now. It was but a trick. Go back and marry one of your own, up-to-date American girls. For yourself I have not the least objection. You are the picture of your father, and I liked him well: but it was a fancy, the glamour of the place; Helene will probably soon fade for you. She understands, too. There is no blame attached to you, none."

"May I see her," asked Alexander, Jr.

Mr. Lambert hesitated a second.

"Yes, for a few minutes only. I will find her."

As Alexander waited there, alone, his anger grew. All her little expressions and droll tricks had been but part of the masquerade, even her name, her very speech, had been pretense. How she must have been laughing at him. How easily he had been fooled. He flushed hotly thinking of it.

At last she came, and stood, trembling, in the doorway. Her dress was a thin blue lawn, made American fashion, with ruffled elbow sleeves, and dainty ruffled skirt. Her hair was high upon her head. Her tiny lacquered sandals were no more. Her slippers were patent leather with silver buckles. Her eyes were very red with crying, and her mutinous little mouth drew down piteously at the corners.

"Oh, San Choo," whispered Alexander. "I—I was such a fool not to know."

"How could you have known," she said scornfully. "My eyes slant, and I have lived here so long I feel Japanese. I speak it half the time without knowing it, and I love the kimonos. Only, you were so good, and—I wanted to tell you myself, finally, who I was, and I didn't dare. Oh, I'm so ashamed."

Her voice broke.

Then Alexander put out his big arms and gathered her into them.

"I don't see that it makes much difference anyway," he said. "In fact, it makes it rather better all around."

"You don't think it was the obi, then, or the Japanese-English—I can talk it all the time, just as well as not. What you think?"

"No," said Alexander, raising her face until he could look deep into her wet eyes. "No, little moon-goddess, I guess it was just you."

He kissed her gently, the scarlet satin of her cheeks, the long inky black lashes of her eyelids, the shining waves of her black hair.

"That's nice," she sighed. "Father said you would certainly not want me now."

They laughed together, looking at each other foolishly.

"It was such fun, sometimes," she sighed, "but maybe it's just as well I'm not real Japanese."

"Yes," acknowledged Alexander. "I was always deathly afraid that I should find out that you ate raw fish. I couldn't have stood for that."

She laughed happily.

"And San Choo Sanderson sounds like a tooth powder of some kind. Helene Sanderson is very much better. How—how soon do you want me?"

That Makes the World Go Round

By OLIVER SIDNEY READ

THE girl knocked softly on the door. A voice said, "Come!"

She went in.

The scene was no strange one to her; the man stooping over the bed; the board on the bed; the tin rails with the tiny engine on the board. The washstand was not more familiar; nor the dresser; nor the confusion of the figures and sketchings penciled on the walls.

The girl sat up on a corner of the dresser, as from a whimsical custom, like a small child. The man had taken no further notice than to turn and nod; and now bent again, in complete abstraction, over his toy.

She watched him, observing the fevered motion of his hand, the compression of his lips, the lines on his brow.

That she would find him so, she had known from his first greeting, before entering. Sometimes this would be, "Come in, little girl, come in!" and she would be met with a smile and waved to her seat. Then she would sit and listen while he spoke of perpetual motion.

He believed he had discovered this secret of secrets. His instrument was electricity. He would expound it in theory; with diagrams proven by the compass and figures whose relations were a law. He demonstrated it in practice, setting in motion by invisible means his little tin toy; and, as he unfolded the limitless and astounding possibilities of his discovery, linked to invention, something of the spell that bound him was cast over his companion. Perpetual motion, man had said, was as preposterous as the existence of the philosopher's stone. And he—*he*—had attained it!—all but one little thing.

Sometimes, as on this night, the greeting would be curt and brief; and she would say to herself with a sigh, "The one little thing still eludes my poor friend!"

But never had she seen him so utterly disheartened. Presently he folded up the miniature track and put it with board and engine under the bed, then asked her what the world outside had been doing that day, and how she had fared among them.

Little enough he knew of the world, she told herself, shut up here with his strange toys, like a child in a nursery. But what glorious dreams he had! Oh that she were not so very practical, that so she might share them with him! But then, trimming hats for a livelihood will tend to make a girl—a homeless girl—that way. The popularity of æroplanes a few years hence occupied her thoughts less than the present problem of how far eight dollars a week might be made to go.

Yet she helped him in a hundred ways. Drawn together in their loneliness, their acquaintance, formed a few weeks since, had grown till he looked every night for her coming, and was disappointed when he failed to hear her step at his door. She rented a room on the same story—the top one—of the house.

After she had told him what there was of her humdrum day, she asked him if he had eaten supper. To his plea of a poor appetite she turned a stubborn ear, and making him put on his coat and arrange his hair to look presentable she took him out to a certain restaurant of which she knew.

Potent little engine put from sight, it was curious how easily she controlled him—leading him to talk of other things—things that could give no exercise of his scientific fancy, that were not reducible to decimals nor to be expressed in any but homely terms. And when he had confessed his weakness for lemon-cream pie and explained his dislike for more than three pieces of sugar and admired the hat that her own ten fingers had trimmed, she would take him, supper at an end, away from the city, and bring to life again, as they walked, something of the boyish spirit that the little tin engine had subdued—till the return to the house would still his laughter and her chatter and they would climb the stairs in silence to their rooms.

But this night nothing could drive the little locomotive from his brain. Coming once more to their lodgings, he left her at the door without a word. She took off her hat and tidied her hair and went on the few steps up the passage to his room.

Deep in his work already she found him; but not displeased with the prospect of her company. With a woman's art she began to humor him.

Frowning prettily over his shoulder she said:

"Wont you explain to me once more just how it's done; and where it's wrong? Perhaps I can help you."

Perhaps she could.

So he stopped drawing those meaningless signs, which he called putting his inspirations to paper; and the little tin engine, track, road, and all was pulled out into the light with divers other strange things.

She was rather proud of her knowledge of these. Among them was a vertical engine that reminded her of a Dutch windmill, and which she delighted to set agoing as if it never would stop. Then there was a queer squat bottle in a tin coat, with no neck but plenty of mouth, that she had learned to call a Leyden jar. And something even more mysterious than these, in a casket, that gave her thrills.

Taking up the engine he said:

"You see this small spring, like the mainspring of a very little clock? You see this attachment on the axle? You see this device here up under the front? Now watch! I place her on the track. With a touch of the finger on this button over the wheel I wind the spring—it is so small. See; that sets her going. The spring runs down but the wheels continue to revolve, speed undimished. Strange!"

He stepped back from the bed with a smile as she clapped her hands. Then he picked up the model again and said:

"It is like the story of the old woman and 'the pig that wouldn't go home that night.' The spring gives the first impulse to the wheels, the wheels react on the dynamo or generator here, the generator on the motor, and the motor, again, on the wheels; and so on, force creating force, in an endless circle."

She clapped hands again, exclaiming:

"Oh! How simple!"

He did not reply.

And when she spoke again, he still sat lost, to all appearances, in an abstruse calculation, whose solution, perhaps, might supply the one little thing, so

elusive and so necessary, that should crown research and experiment with a glorious success.

She studied the windmill with an experimental air for nearly a minute; diverted herself with a thrill or two; poked her finger into the jar; then stole from the room. When, a little later, she returned to bid him good-night, he had fallen asleep with his head on the dresser. Under his hand a sheet of paper bore the superscription, "Dear Father." Below this the mind of the writer had wandered away in a jumble of words.

She took the pen from his fingers and woke him gently. She chided him as she turned from the room; and before closing the door softly, she turned and shook her finger at him again.

"'First room top of the stairs.' That's what the old lady says."

The stranger knocked but received no response; then having pushed the door open a little, out of further politeness, and hearing nothing, he went in.

A lady slept here. So much was plain. He retreated with a grunt and took off his hat to consider; then clumped on up the dim passage to the adjoining room. Nobody in there, too. So he turned into the one remaining.

The close air of the passage mingled with the smell of the sick-room. A girl sat by the bed. On the needlework in her lap her fingers lay idle.

The stranger took a seat stealthily over by the window. Nurse and patient slept. With hat crushed against his breast he leaned forward; and his hand, ugly with toil, trembled on the pillow. Lightly as a woman's it brushed back the hair from the fevered brow.

"Gosh!" was all he said.

He took a letter from his homely person and spelled it out.

It ran:

DEAR SIR,
Come at once, your son is sick.
Respectfully,
NINA WEIR.
MR. PETER JEBBELTHWAITE.

He folded it away again.

When he looked up, the eyes of the girl were fixed upon him.

He said:

"Nina Weir?"

She nodded.

"Or Mrs. Jebbelthwaite?"

She moved her hand from the other on the coverlet, and reasserted:

"Nina Weir."

Mr. Jebbelthwaite glanced at his son and grunted suggestively. Then he sat down, crossed one leg over another and tried to stare her down.

Miss Weir met his gaze steadily, just a bit of rare color heightening the pallor of her cheeks.

Mr. Jebbelthwaite glanced at the boy again.

She took up her needle.

"He was my neighbor," she said.

"Better than he was," she went on, as the other softened his regard and took his son's hand in both of his with a silent question.

And she told him the story, stitching as she went. How the boy had been stricken down with brain-fever; how she had written at once to his far-off home; how, then, she had nursed him—her neighbor. That was all. Much more the man learned for himself, before the darkness fell, as they sat and watched together. Why had she hidden away certain queer toys, and covered up with pictures those mysterious pencilings on the walls. And she must needs continue to stitch when her eyes ached for sleep and her fingers moved so stiff and weary.

Toward night, while she was fallen asleep again, the doctor came. He left his directions with the father and turned back a moment at the door to say:

"You love your son?"

The man answered: "God bless you, sir!" And his farmer's hands went up over his eyes.

"Don't thank *me*," said the doctor brusquely.

One evening, while the old man and the girl were together as usual in the sickroom, the doctor made his call. Two days and two nights the black shadow of Death had been over their vigil. But now the fever had abated, and the sufferer slept as restfully as the girl, reclining on the floor by the old man's chair, with his arms about her and her head on his knees.

She got up as the doctor came in; and the patient, too, awoke.

Her companion bent over him and cried his name, but no answering recognition brightened the sunken eyes.

"He don't know me," cried the old man. "Oh God, he don't know me!" and turned the wasted face to his in piteous appeal.

"Donal'! Oh, Donal' boy! Don't you know me, son? Don't you know your old dad? Sure, you do!....Think way back, Don....There was a farm—horses and cattle and things—you remember! Look at my hat. There! Like the old straw stack you was used to sit atop of, so it is! and watch the cows way to the creek—you mind the creek? —and dream and dream, so you would, stead of fetching 'em home. Don't you remember, Don?....Your mother—you mind your good mother? How she cried and blessed you when you went away to make your fortune? See, up on the wall there, Don. That's her picture! Don't you mind *her*, son? Don't you know me?—Oh, Donal'! Donal'!"

The doctor did his duties in his brisk and cheery manner; then beckoned to the girl.

She left the old man, who sat mumbling to himself, with his eyes on his son, distracted.

"It is all right," the doctor said. "The boy will pull through, but you must not excite him. This lapse of memory is provident. If his mind, in its present state were to recur to his recent mania—"

The doctor tapped his forehead significantly, wrung the girl's hand, and went from the room.

It was a little after dawn of the following morning that the patient woke to consciousness again. He looked about him with gathering intelligence in his eyes. There sat the girl—asleep. There sat the bowed figure of a man.

The light grew.

The boy stirred and moved his lips. The next moment he was in his father's arms.

The girl parted them gently, putting the old man from the room. She shook up the pillows and smothered the coverlet and bade the patient sleep.

He lay awhile with his eyes closed obediently. Presently he begged her, as was his wont, for her hand. He took it in both his own, and stroked the coarsened fingers.

"I was never a good son to him," he finally said.

She pressed his hand in reply.

He went on stroking her fingers, watching her face, very thoughtfully.

"Little girl, I guess—I guess I've found it," he said hesitatingly after another pause.

She started and bent over him with quick tears of pity, telling him that he must go to sleep or she would quit the room.

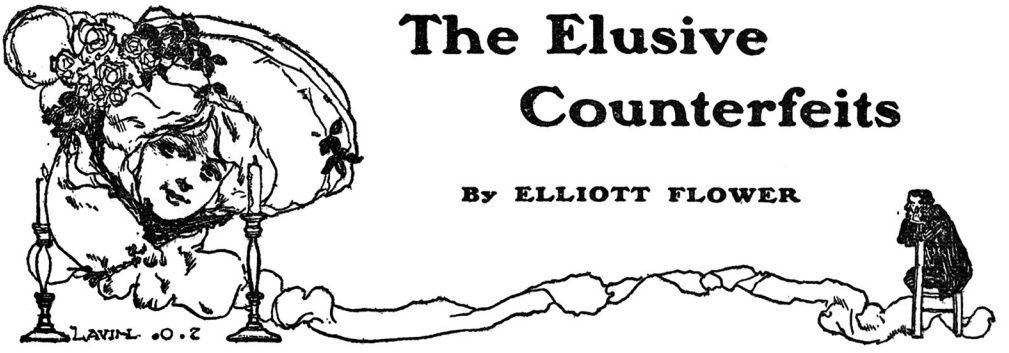
This threat had always produced submission, but now he held fast to her hand and whispered again that he had, in truth, discovered the agent of perpetual motion.

She thought of the doctor's words. And all that she had suffered and felt and stifled in the past few days broke from her overcharged heart in a rush of sobs.

He drew her head down on the pillow, and loosed her hair so that the dark tresses fell over him.

"Found it, little girl!" he whispered gently. "Don't you know what it is? It makes the world go round!"

And he drew up her face and laid her lips on his.



The Elusive Counterfeits

By ELLIOTT FLOWER

I WAS awakened by a glare of light and found myself blinking into the bright end of a dark lantern. At first I was too startled and bewildered to move; then I recovered my scattered wits sufficiently to realize that it was unwise to move. The man behind the lantern had every advantage: he could see me clearly, while the light so blinded me that I could see nothing but a shadowy form and the barrel of a pistol; he was fully awake and I was not yet complete master of my faculties; he was on his feet and I was prone on my back and somewhat entangled in the bedclothes. It was surely a moment when discretion was the better part of valor.

Yet, muddled as I was by the shock of this awakening, I noted two things: *the revolver was very small and the* hand that held it was unsteady. There was small consolation in this, however, for the revolver was certainly big enough to finish me at close range and the unsteady hand indicated a nervousness that might result in an unpremeditated pressing of the trigger. Evidently, I was dealing with a novice at the business.

"What do you want?" I finally managed to ask.

"The money," was the reply, and, if possible, I was more startled and bewildered than before. The voice was feminine.

"Good Lord!" I exclaimed, "you're a woman!"

"If you cry out like that," the shadowy form returned, "you are likely to be shot. It startles me."

I realized that the caution was justified, so I lay quite still and endeavored to speak quietly, soothingly. My wits were coming back, and I was able to think. "It is somewhat startling to me," I said, "to find a woman with a dark lantern and a pistol in my room. For I know you are a woman. I can't see you while you keep that light shining in my face, but no man ever had such a voice and no man in your business ever carried such a small weapon."

"This is not my business!" There was indignation in the tone. "And it doesn't make any difference whether I'm a man or not: I'm just as determined and desperate as if I were one."

"And more dangerous," I added, my fascinated gaze still on the wavering pistol-barrel.

"*I never did anything like this* before," she persisted defensively; "it's not my business at all."

"Then why do it now?"

"Because—because—" A moment of hesitation, and then the wavering pistol steadied suddenly. "I didn't come here to talk; I came to get the money."

"My watch and money are in my clothes," I said.

"Not that money." She was recovering her nerve as I regained my wits. "I want the five thousand dollars."

"What five thousand dollars?"

"You know perfectly well, and I'm in no humor for trifling."

I did know perfectly well—at least, I knew that I had that much money in the little safe in my room. I frequently had to keep considerable sums there over night. I was treasurer of a fraternal

organization, and dues and fees paid at the meetings could not be deposited in bank until the next day. Then, my own business occasionally left me with a good deal of cash after banking hours. Indeed, so often had I had a thousand dollars or more in my little safe that the personal guardianship of it had ceased to trouble me. This night, however, I had more than usual. And my visitor evidently knew it.

I had no idea of giving it up without a struggle, but, for the moment, I could parley and watch for a chance to disarm her.

"But I can't do anything while you keep me here," I urged. "And that light is blinding."

"I mean it to be," she returned. "I'm not afraid of a blind man."

"Nevertheless," I said, "you'll have to let me up if you want to get the money. I don't imagine that you are a safe-breaker."

She backed away a little, so that she would be quite beyond my reach. "Sit up!" she ordered. I did so. "Now, get up, and be careful you don't touch the pillow!" As her evident suspicion that I had a revolver under the pillow was wholly unfounded, I had no desire to disobey this injunction.

Even in that moment I was conscious of the fact that a man in his pajamas, facing a woman with a dark-lantern and a revolver, must present a sorry spectacle, but my mind was too busy with other things to give this more than a fleeting thought.

"May I turn on the light?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered, after a moment of hesitation, "but don't try any tricks!"

I dared try none; I felt that safety lay only in moving with the utmost deliberation. I don't think I feared that she would deliberately shoot me so much as I feared that she would do so unintentionally if I made any move that startled her. Anyhow, I was very slow, in my movements in turning on the electric-light.

"That's better," she said. "The lantern confused me, but now I can give my whole attention to the pistol—and you."

I saw then that she wore a half-mask, covering her eyes and nose, but I was sure she was pretty. Her mouth and chin, so much of her hair as the hat she wore did not conceal, and her figure all bespoke a young and attractive woman—not the coarse type that one would expect to see in such circumstances, but something more delicate and essentially feminine. It occurred to me that it was very silly to be afraid of such a girl. Nevertheless that little revolver covered me in a most unpleasant way.

"I can't believe that you are a burglar," I said.

"I'm not," she declared.

"You're acting suspiciously like one," I suggested.

"There are reasons for this," she maintained.

"There are reasons for every robbery," I retorted.

"You'll get it back—sometime." She seemed strangely resentful of a term that was certainly justified. "It's only a loan."

"I don't like your security," I said, but neither of us smiled at the attempted witticism, being too deeply occupied in the serious phases of the situation.

"We're wasting time," she said shortly; "I want the money—five thousand dollars."

"If I refuse to open the safe?"

"I'll shoot you."

She tried to say it bravely, but her voice trembled, and I was encouraged in my belief that she would never intentionally use her pistol. It was only necessary, I reasoned, to display a little nerve, so I advanced a step or two toward her.

"Stop!" she ordered.

"Oh, you wouldn't shoot anybody," I said confidently, advancing again.

"Stop! stop!" she cried. "You don't know what you're saying! Can't you see that I have staked my life on this already—that I've counted the cost—that I'll kill myself rather than be caught! If you come another step nearer I'll shoot you and then myself!"

I was convinced she would do it, too—at least, she would try to do it, and, at such close quarters, there was every likelihood that she would succeed. Her tone and manner showed her despera-

tion, and her whole appearance bespoke a woman who was actuated by other than merely mercenary motives. What they were, I could not even surmise, but it was quite impossible that a woman to whom disgrace would mean so much should risk everything in life, even life itself, for a mere monetary reward.

"If you will explain the situation," I said, "perhaps I might help you—might be willing to help you without all this fuss."

"It's not a matter to be explained," she returned, "and I mean that you shall help me. Open the safe, please."

"Don't you think," I argued, "that you'd better retire from this nasty business now, before you get into it any deeper?"

"You are very dull," she complained. "I tell you, this is so important to me that I have staked my life on it. If I have to shoot you, I shall have to kill myself—I know perfectly well that I couldn't get away from here, and I wouldn't want to, then—but I'll do this rather than leave without the money." She glanced at the clock over the fire-place. "You can open the safe in three minutes easily, and that's all the time I'll give you. But don't make any quick moves."

There was a determined tightening of the lips, and the flash of her eyes through the mask was further evidence that I had misjudged her: she would do exactly as she said. I moved over to the safe and fumbled with the combination knob. She came up behind me, so that she could look over me, as I stooped to get the numbers, and see just what I was doing. My position now was as helpless as when I lay in bed. I dared not even turn my head.

She counted the minutes, one, two; then I swung the door open.

"Now, the money," she ordered; "nothing else."

My revolver, if she had only known it, was in the top bureau drawer; I did not lock it up in the safe. But she was taking no chances.

Something very like an inspiration came to me as I opened the money-drawer, and, after taking the cash from that, I drew some bills from another compartment.

"Have you got it all?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Shut the safe." I did so. "Is there more than five thousand dollars?"

"Yes."

"Five thousand is all I need. Count out that much so that I can see, and lay it on top of the safe. Then go back to bed."

I obeyed, merely casting one longing look at the top bureau drawer. She caught the glance, stepped to the bureau, found the revolver, confiscated it, and put it in a little hand-bag that I had not before noticed. It was lying on a table, and attached to it was a strap by which it could be swung from the shoulder. Evidently she had divested herself of this, to give her greater freedom, before awakening me, and I was much surprised at this evidence of coolness in view of her extreme nervousness during the early part of our interview. She had planned carefully, at least, and even her nervousness had largely disappeared when she found how completely she was mistress of the situation—that is, after the safe was opened. She was self-possessed and confident now.

"Put the bed-clothes over your head," she ordered, "and keep them there until the clock strikes. That will be only ten minutes."

I was wholly tamed now, and followed instructions promptly. I heard her moving softly, and I heard the click as she closed the handbag, evidently upon the cash; then there was a dead silence. After waiting a moment, I moved one of my hands slightly. Instantly came the order to "Stop that!" coupled with the warning that another move would bring a shot.

I don't know when she left the room; I shall have to admit that I did not move even a finger again until the clock struck. I knew she would be gone before that, and I told myself that she would not shoot anyway. But, somehow, the darkness of the bed-clothes made me timid. Courage lies largely in eyesight, I find: the danger that you cannot see is always the most fear-inspiring.

Even when I finally heard the clock strike, I made no sudden movement, but drew the bed-clothes down cautious-

ly. She was gone, of course. My first impulse was to give the alarm, but I decided against that and merely sought to discover how she had entered and left the house. I was a little ashamed of the fact that I had been held up in my own room by a girl; I was sure that another in my place would have given no better account of himself, but that would not save me from the gibes of my friends. Besides, I had a much better way of discovering the identity of this extraordinary thief, for she had taken away with her five $100 counterfeit banknotes.

The idea of including these counterfeits with the good money had come to me as an inspiration while I knelt in front of the safe. They had been left with me by Dick Bassett, a friend who had been instrumental in breaking up a gang of counterfeiters, and it had been merely necessary to take them from the compartment in which they lay and add them to the contents of the money-drawer. Then, of course, I had taken pains to see that they were a part of the $5,000 that she made me count out for her.

They were fair counterfeits, but no more than fair, and it was a practical certainty that there would be trouble the moment she tried to use one of them. It was extremely unlikely that she would discover their spuriousness —the circumstances under which she got them would make her unsuspicious of anything of that sort—but I was sure it would be detected by the first business man to whom one was offered. One hundred dollar bills are far from uncommon, but they are large enough to call for rather close inspection in the business world, especially in the retail business world.

But how was I to know when she tried to put one in circulation? It might or might not get into the papers; the affair might or might not be reported to the police or the government secret service. If offered to a merchant, there was a possibility that he might merely refuse the bill and say nothing about it. But, I reasoned, it was probable that he would make some report, even if he did not seek to have the one tendering the bill arrested; the suppression of counterfeiting was something in which every business man was interested.

"The secret service or the police will hear about it," I decided, "the moment an attempt is made to put any of those bills in circulation, and Bassett ought to be able to get any report that is made to them. I'll see Bassett the first thing in the morning."

This I did, but I saw no reason for telling him the whole story, so I merely said that some one had entered the house in the night and stolen the counterfeits with the good money.

"How did he get in?" asked Bassett.

"I don't know," I answered, and in this I spoke the truth. "He left by the front door, for I found it unlocked, but I am sure he couldn't have come in that way, for there is a chain and a bolt on it. However, I found all the other doors and windows locked."

"You didn't get a glimpse of him?" he queried.

"I didn't wake up," I replied, lying cheerfully to save my dignity.

"Anybody else in the house?"

"Only the cook, and she sleeps on the top floor. They're all away for the Summer, you know."

"What do you want me to do?" Bassett is always direct in his methods.

"Well," I said, "the fact that you were of considerable assistance in uncovering the gang that made these counterfeits ought to give you the inside track with the authorities, and I'd like to hear of it the moment one of these bills appears."

"That's easy," he declared. "I can do even better than that, for I'll tip it off that the bills are again in circulation, and they'll be on the watch for your man."

Somehow, this did not exactly please me. Of course I wanted to recover my money, and I knew that an arrest must follow the discovery of the malefactor, but I preferred to be consulted before such action was taken. I found it difficult to explain this feeling of reluctance, but I had it; the girl certainly had committed a serious crime, deliberately, boldly, and with premeditation, but the circumstances were so extraordinary as to interest me in the girl herself. Her nervousness, her evident despera-

tion, her appearance, her refusal to take more than five thousand dollars, everything, in fact, showed that she was a novice at the business and made her decidedly a mystery. Her assertion that it was only a loan was silly, of course—merely an attempt to justify herself to herself, I thought—but it served to add to my curiosity and interest. I wished that I could know more about her and her motives before an arrest was made, but my anxiety to recover my money outweighed all other considerations. So I told Bassett to go ahead.

It was the only thing to do, but I was uncomfortable all day. Again and again I told myself that the girl was no more than a common, sordid thief, entitled to no consideration whatever, but always the facts arose to refute this theory. I had no difficulty in justifying my course, but I simply could not help regretting that it was necessary. In brief, my mind was kept busy contradicting itself on all points connected with the case.

It was afternoon of the second day when Bassett came to me with news.

"I have found the counterfeits," he announced.

"All of them?" I asked, noting his use of the plural.

"All of them."

"Hurrah!" I was naturally jubilant, but— "Any arrests?" I asked quickly.

"Not yet, and, frankly, I don't see where you're any better off than you were before."

This cooled my enthusiasm somewhat. "Where did they turn up?" I inquired.

"In the vaults of the Central Title and Trust Company."

"What!"

"In the vaults of the Central Title and Trust Company."

"You've sprung a puzzle that needs a diagram," I suggested.

"The best I can do is to give you the facts," he replied. "They were in the cash-box when it was taken from the vault this morning. The cashier says there were no such bills when he closed up last night, but they were there this morning."

"The cashier must be mistaken," I said. "Somebody passed them on him yesterday."

"The cashier says that his cash was disturbed in other ways," pursued Bassett. "Including these counterfeits, the cash balanced exactly, but he insists that there were fewer large bills and more small bills in the box this morning than there were when he counted up last night."

"What do you make of it?" I asked bewildered.

"I can't make anything out of it," he answered. "The cashier is an experienced man, and it seems impossible that he could have been fooled by those counterfeits. Moreover, he himself called attention to them the moment he opened his cash-box this morning. Yet his claim that the contents of the box were otherwise disturbed is suspicious: he would naturally want to produce some other evidence that the box had been tampered with after it had left his possession."

"It's incredible," I declared, "that a man should attempt a trick that would so certainly and seriously reflect upon himself."

"It would seem so," admitted Bassett, "but, anyhow, the cashier has been suspended pending an investigation. The vault has not been tampered with, apparently, and the directors can't find anything that puts it up to anybody but him. Of course, the police have been called in. That's how I got wind of it."

"I suppose," I said, "I ought to shed what little light I can on the affair."

"It might help."

"But"—I was thinking of the details to which I should have to confess—"I'll wait a day or so. I can't see how the fact that those counterfeits were part of the plunder secured from me is going to help any. It ought to be easier to trace back from the vault than to follow up from here. Anyhow, I don't want to get mixed up in it unless it's necessary."

Bassett remarked that it was none of his business what I did, but I could see that he thought my course rather peculiar. Nevertheless, I held to my decision: I would tell what I knew whenever I deemed it necessary, but, for the present, I was content to leave everything to the title and trust company. It's

facilities were better than mine, and it was busily engaged in finding out what I wanted to know; let it go ahead in its own way.

"But, Bassett," I added, "why should anybody steal counterfeits from me merely for the purpose of substituting them for good money in the company's cash-box?"

"Give it up," replied Bassett.

"Why not take the good money without leaving any counterfeits?"

"Search me," said Bassett.

"And why not take all the money in the box?" I persisted. "Whoever made the substitution could just as well have taken everything."

"That's what makes it look bad for the cashier," said Bassett.

It was very puzzling: I could not keep my mind from the problem, and my business suffered. I even went so far as to scare up a business-excuse for visiting the office of the title and trust company to see if any of the girls and women employed there resembled my midnight visitor, but I gained little satisfaction from this. There were several of her trim figure, but the fact that she had been masked made identification impossible. However, I did learn that no girl or woman had access to the vaults.

The problem had all my waking thoughts that day, and I even dreamed of it that night. The dream was vivid, and the girl with the revolver and the dark lantern was the central figure in it. I thought she came back, turned her lantern on me for one fleeting instant, and then tried the door of the safe. I noted that she turned to me again when she found the safe locked, hesitated a moment, and switched on the electric light.

It was so very vivid that I was not greatly surprised to find myself looking into that same little revolver when I awoke suddenly The light had been turned on, and the girl was there, masked as before. Moreover, her hand was not so wobbly as on the previous occasion.

"That was a shabby trick you played on me," she said.

"What was?" I asked.

"Giving me those counterfeit bills."

"I should think they were as good as anything for your purpose," I contended.

"You don't know anything about my purpose," she retorted.

"I don't," I admitted; "I wish I did."

"I need good money," she said, "and I've come back for it—five hundred dollars this time."

"Did you bring back the counterfeits?" I asked.

"How could I?" she demanded.

"I don't pretend to know," I replied, "but I should think anything possible in your case."

"Well, it isn't," she declared.

"At any rate," I said, "you might tell me how you get in here so easily."

"Perhaps I will," she returned, "when I'm sure that I wont have to come back but I don't care to be diverted from the business of the moment now. I want five hundred dollars in good money."

There followed almost an exact repetition of what had happened on the occasion of the preceding visit. She was as cautious and determined as before, and I had even less chance with her, for I had not replaced the revolver that she had taken away. I had been so chagrined by that affair that a revolver had seemed to me quite a useless possession. As I bitterly reasoned: Why buy something merely for the pleasure of giving it away when you need it most? So I had none, and she got her five hundred dollars, which was about all I had in the safe this time. Then she left as before.

I telephoned Bassett the first thing in the morning.

"Tell the title and trust people to watch their cash-box," I cautioned him.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because I have reason to believe it has been, or will be, tampered with again."

"What makes you think so?" he demanded.

"Never mind my reasons now," I said, "but you get word to them before they open the vault. I can't go into details over the wire."

He grumbled something about my being a good deal of a mystery myself, but promised to see to it.

Then I went out and bought a new revolver, determined to sleep with it under my pillow thereafter. I couldn't explain, even to myself, just what good

it was going to do me, in view of my previous experiences, but I had to do something of the sort as an aid to the recovery of my self-respect. In truth, I was heartily ashamed of the part I had played in the affair so far; at the same time, I realized that a whole armory of weapons would be of little service to me in an encounter with this girl, for I certainly never would use any of them, except as a bluff, and I was convinced that she was desperate enough to shoot if occasion demanded. Nevertheless, my pride demanded some pretense of preparation for another encounter.

It was afternoon before I saw Bassett. I tried to look him up in the morning, but he was out on some business of his own, and a message to the effect that he had followed my instructions was the only word I received.

He was all curiosity when I finally found him, and so was I. He began with "What in thunder—"

"First," I interrupted, "was everything in the cash-box all right?"

"Everything," he replied grumpily, "and I had a hard time explaining why I was so anxious. What did you expect?"

"I thought the counterfeits might be gone."

"Counterfeits!" he roared. "Did you think they were still in the cash-box?"

"Why not?" I asked. "The company still retains them, doesn't it?"

"Yes," he answered, "but not in the cash-box."

"Then look for them!" I cried. "Get down there and look for them as soon as you can!"

"What's the matter with you?" he demanded. "Are you crazy?"

"Never mind about me," I retorted; "I'll explain later, but you find out about those bills now."

"Come with me," he urged.

But I refused on the ground that, being unknown to the company, my appearance in the case would call for explanations that would delay matters. "I'll wait here," I said.

Something of my excitement was communicated to Bassett, and he hurried away. I settled myself to await his return with such patience as I could command, but, fortunately, I had not long to wait. He came back in a cab, the horse galloping.

"The counterfeit bills are gone!" he cried.

The possibility of this had excited me, the certainty of it calmed me. "I thought so," I said.

"They have been replaced with good money," he added.

"I thought so," I said again.

"Look here!" he exclaimed, "you know more about this than you've told!"

"And I know little enough," I maintained.

"You knew that the bills had been taken!" he declared accusingly.

"I suspected the bills had been taken!" I corrected. "I knew that I was robbed of an even five hundred dollars last night in the same mysterious way as before, and the fact that this exact sum was taken led me to think it had something to do with the counterfeits."

"What's the explanation?"

"I don't know."

"I think you're lying to me," said Bassett.

"I've told you the truth."

I had, but not all of it.

"What are you going to do now?" he demanded.

"Nothing just now," I answered. "I'm satisfied to let the company go ahead with its investigation."

"The company," he said, "no longer has a case of robbery against any one; it is almost ready to believe that it never had one, so extraordinary is the whole affair. So far as the company is concerned, there is now only an untrustworthy clerk to be discovered and discharged. The cashier, of course, will be reinstated, as he is clearly not the one."

"Well," I returned, "the name of the clerk is all I want to know, and I don't think the company needs any assistance from me."

Bassett was so disgruntled that he was disposed to charge me with being implicated in the affair. In fact, he declared that it only needed a motive to convince him that I really had a hand in it. "But I can't see where there is anything that you could possibly gain by it," he said bluntly.

"Can you see what anybody else had to gain by it?" I asked.

"No."

"Neither can I."

"But I can see where a man who has lost what you claim to have lost would come to the front and try to do something," he retorted.

"The identity of that clerk is the first thing to be discovered," I argued, "and the company will attend to that."

"Oh, manage your own business your own way!" he exclaimed in disgust, "but I want you to understand that I'm interested in locating those counterfeit bills, and I'm going to find them. I'm entitled to do as I please about that, for it's my affair quite as much as it is yours."

"Good enough," I returned. "When you locate them I'll have a chance for my money, but I think you'll find that your success also depends upon discovering the identity of that clerk. I may break into the game myself when that point is reached."

"You're an incomprehensible idiot," was Bassett's retort, but, nevertheless, he promised to let me know when he located the missing bills.

That promise rather amused me later in the afternoon, for, on the last delivery, the postman brought me an envelope containing those bills. The address was typewritten, and there was no message.

My first impulse was to send them at once to Bassett, but I decided against that. The recovery of the bills would leave him with no further personal interest in the investigation, and I was beginning to think I could not have too many people engaged on the case. I certainly wanted to recover my own money, but, if possible, without disclosing the details of my own experience and it seemed to me that my best plan was to keep Bassett and the company at work. They knew quite enough for the purpose, I reasoned, and their facilities were infinitely superior to mine. And I shall have to confess to a hope that the money might be recovered without involving the arrest of the girl, although that seemed unlikely.

I saw nothing of Bassett for two days, and he had nothing of importance to report when I did see him. He said he had secured no trace of the missing bills, which did not surprise me, and the company's investigation had merely developed the fact that there were three clerks who *might* have been able to tamper with the cash-box. "But there's not an atom of evidence against any one of them," he added. "It's the most mysterious case I ever heard of, and you're not the least mysterious feature of it." I argued that my course was a most natural one, in view of the circumstances, but he was not to be convinced. "You're in the mystery somewhere," he declared, "but I'm going to uncover the whole story before I get through."

"Go ahead," I urged. "I wish you would."

"There you go again!" he exclaimed. "Always holding back yourself, but urging me to go ahead! I wish I could understand you."

"I don't wholly understand myself," I acknowledged.

"I should think not," he retorted; "you need a diagram."

I let it go at that, seeing nothing to be gained by entering into a controversy. Besides, my mental processes did seem to require a diagram. I reasoned, as before, that there was nothing as yet that required me to appear in the matter, but I knew, as I had known all along, that it would be the part of wisdom for me to tell the whole story. So I continued the victim of an unpleasant and unaccountable mental conflict.

I was wrestling with the problem that evening when a lady called to see me. She was a very young lady—a mere girl, in fact—and there was something in her appearance that made me think of the girl with the pistol. When she spoke I knew her to be the same. Indeed, she made no attempt at concealment.

"I thought I would make a more formal call this time," she said.

"I ought to have you arrested!" I exclaimed.

"But you wont," she returned confidently.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Because," she said, "I've come to repay the money I borrowed and tell

you why I borrowed it. I'm sure you'll make some concessions to have your curiosity satisfied."

"It certainly has been a puzzle," I agreed noncommittally.

She took a roll of bills from the little satchel she carried and handed them to me. "I haven't included any interest," she explained, "because it was for such a short time, and, besides, you made me a lot of extra trouble by putting in those counterfeits." I think I was more astonished, although less startled, than when I faced her pistol. "You might ask me to have a chair," she suggested. "I assure you I am quite harmless this time."

Thus reminded of my duty as a host, I immediately offered her a chair. "Of course, I ought to have you arrested," I said, more to myself than to her; "such a daring robbery—"

"Oh, no, no, no," she interrupted; "it was only a loan, and I have repaid it. Besides," she added, "you don't know how funny you looked, and I'm sure you wouldn't want—"

"You're quite right," I interposed hastily. "Tell me why you did it."

"Just to help my husband," she answered.

"Your what!"

"Oh, I'm married," she explained. "It was an elopement, and my father hasn't forgiven us yet. That's why I had to come to you, instead of going to him, when we just had to have some money in a hurry. You see, Tommy was foolish." She paused a moment, evidently finding this part of the story difficult, then went on almost defiantly. "I suppose some people would give a harsher name to it, but he was only foolish: he intended to put the money back, and he knew he would have to put it back. He had a little legacy coming."

"So he helped himself from the cash-box," I remarked.

"Not then. This was two months ago, and there was a package in the vault that contained ten thousand dollars in currency, some securities, and various other documents. There was some trouble over ownership or division of these things, and it was left there—in escrow, I think they call it. Anyhow, they expected it to be settled quickly, but it wasn't for the interested parties finally got into a lawsuit. So Tommy thought he could borrow some money from that package and repay it when he got his legacy."

"Did Tommy speculate?" I asked.

"That's why he wanted the money," she admitted reluctantly; "he had such a splendid tip; but he's never going to do it again. You see," she went on, "the suit was settled out of court unexpectedly, and Tommy heard one afternoon that the package would be opened the next day. That's when he told me about it."

"And sent you here?"

"What! Tommy!" She blazed up indignantly. "He didn't know anything about it. I told him I thought I could get my father to lend it to us, and he let me try that. But I had you in mind all the time. It's neighborhood gossip that you keep a lot of money in the house, and I had heard of it."

"But how did you get in?" I demanded.

She laughed at that. "You have about as much sense as the ostrich," she said. "There are bolts and chains on your front door, but almost any old key will open your back basement door. I came in that way, locked it after me, and left by the front door, Is there anything else you would like to know?"

"Yes," I answered. "I don't see why Tommy had to disturb the cash-box."

"To get large bills," she explained. "Small bills in that package would have aroused instant suspicion. Then, when we found out about the counterfeits, we thought it best to get them out of the way: we hoped that the company would abandon its investigation when it found there was no loss."

I leaned back in my chair to think it over, and I knew that she was studying my face anxiously. "I think," I said finally, "even taking the most charitable view of the case, that Tommy is not a man to hold a position of trust."

"I'd trust him anywhere," she declared defensively; "but," she added, "he has resigned, and we are going to use what is left of the legacy to make a fresh start somewhere else, unless—" She looked at me inquiringly.

"I can do nothing but congratulate

Tommy," I said, "but, for my own peace of mind, I should like to know one thing more. Was I wise or merely a coward that first night?"

"Consider the circumstances," she replied. "Remember the motive and think what failure meant! Would any but a desperate woman have attempted such a thing? You were very wise."

"I feel better," I told her.

Bassett came to me the next day with news that he considered of importance. "One of the title and trust company's vault clerks has resigned," he informed me.

"Resigned or discharged?" I asked.

"Resigned. There's really no evidence against him, but his resignation looks suspicious. You'd better begin to do something if you ever expect to see your money again. He's going away."

"But I haven't lost any money," I said.

"You—you—what?"

"I haven't lost any money."

"You—you— How about the counterfeits?" Bassett seemed to be somewhat dazed.

"I'll return them to you now," I said. "I don't want to be responsible for them any longer."

"Please take me out of this trance," pleaded Bassett. "I'm getting confused."

"It's simple enough," I explained calmly. "I'm a somnambulist, and I must have hidden the stuff away in my sleep. I found it to-day."

"But I saw those counterfeits myself in the company's office," he insisted.

"Quite impossible," I said; "I have them here."

Bassett put both hands to his head, as if to make sure that he had a head. "I don't know whether I'm crazy or you are," he announced finally, "but I'll tell you one thing: it wont be wise for you ever to appeal to me to testify to either your sanity or your good character."

Dismal Smith and Cupid

By FREDERICK FERDINAND MOORE

FUNNY, aint it, how a woman will fall all over a man the minute he puts on a blue uniform and brass buttons and begins to eat government-grub and live according to army regulations," remarked Sergeant Henderson of the the Twenty-fifth United States Cavalry.

"Seen that dream in the military cape that blows up here every day or so and goes walking with Corporal Clancy? She's what I call a tin-type of American beauty—regular Goddess of Liberty out of a school geography. Her father has a livery and feed-stable down in Washington and he's got hack-drivers that could put it all over Clancy for looks and savvy, and they don't tremble like Clancy does when he sees an hour's work staring him in the face.

"Who was Corporal Clancy before he came in the army? Ask me that. He was digging graves in Arlington Cemetery, that's what. But he quit the shovelry at three dollars a day and joined the chivalry of this Yankee Doodle army for thirteen dollars a month, and just because he wears blue instead of brown and has a yellow stripe down his trouser-leg, he can't keep the women away from him.

"You think for one minute of your enlistment that this daughter of a livery-stable keeper would look twice at one of her father's hack-drivers? Employ—ee she'd call 'em. That's the woman of it, and there never was a man since old Adam himself could figure out the why of it.

"Ever tell you about the time Dismal Smith thought he'd get married and settle down to play 'Home Sweet Home' on a ten-cent harmonica? Dismal had been married twice, and neither time took, but they say familiarity leads to attempts, and Dismal was sure game before he got his face scalded."

IT WAS WHEN THE FORTY THIEVES had station in Arizona; same time Haggerty stabbed the Chinese tailor. Dismal had six months and a breakfast to do on his second hitch, when he got a paper through the mail one day named *Cupid's Courier*. It come from somewhere down in Maine, and it was chock-full with pictures of women who wanted to marry an honorable, hard-working man, with a loving disposition, who could appreciate kindness and a good home.

Dismal didn't want to do anything but read that paper. He got a far-away look in his eyes, and commenced to comb his hair regular and use hair-oil, and he sighed from first call in the morning until taps.

He got so he'd shave whether there was an inspection or not, and he went in debt up to his neck to the troop-tailor, and between calls you could find him any day in the poolroom, looking at himself in Scrapy Sam's barber-mirror. It would give a bull-pup the heart-burn to see the way he performed.

It was "Think I got a good hair-cut?" and "Does this blouse set well in the back?" and "Would I look better with a mus-tash or without one?" and "Do I look better in tight riding-breeches or in full ones?" He was just in that stage Crawling Cassidy calls the Blind Staggers of Love. It was something awful! He was picking his teeth, and cleaning his finger-nails most every day, and blowing his canteen-checks for perfumery that smelled more like disinfectant than anything that I could think of. Cassidy said that was what it was for, and Dismal got awful mad about it.

Dismal was rather friendly with me right then, 'cause I owed him eight dollars and a can of saddle-polish. So I wasn't none surprised one day when he hit me for fifty cents; but what did stir up my curiosity was that he blowed the coin for five love-stories. Such stuff as "Her First Love," and "Wife, Widow, or Sweetheart," and "The Juke's Revenge."

I pass it to you, but it was serious, and I could see where Dismal would land in the bug-house and wear his clothes with iron lining for the rest of his life.

Finally, one day, when only he and me was in quarters, I up and lets go at him.

"Dismal," says I, "what seems to be worrying you these days? You don't seem to drink as much as you used to and you don't seem abnormal at all like you used to. You aint made no kick about the grub for as much as a week, and you don't seem none excited about pay-day being so near."

"Windy," says he, "I'm in love."

And he give me a grin that reminded me of a loco coyote I shot once.

"Who is it," says I. "You aint stuck on that half-breed girl in Casey's gambling joint, be you?"

"I don't know who it is," he says, sighing like the bass note in a circus calliope. "I don't know whether it's Number 44,563, or 48,321, or 74,652. All three of 'em look good to me."

I pretty near went through the window at that. There aint no man wants to be sociable with a luny-tick in a room full of sabers and pistols and carbines, even if he does owe the luny-tick eight dollars and don't intend to pay it back. It had me going for a minute, all right, all right.

"You poor, unfortunate man," says I, consoling like, remembering that the best way to handle a crazy man is to give him his own way.

"That's the trouble," he says, running his fingers through his hair. "If I knew which one it was it would make me feel easier. I might pick the wrong one, and when I think of making a mistake, it just makes my heart palpitrate something awful."

"Let it palpitrate," says I. "It will probably feel better if it runs its course, and remember, Dismal, I'm your friend and always will be until death does us part. I sympathize with you, even if I can't say it in words, and you confide in

me and don't have nothing to do with them rude soldiers."

"Windy," says he, "you're a manly man."

"I hope so," says I. "The American cavalry would be in a bad state of decay and not fit for much if I was anything else. Please don't mention the fact in public; it might embarrass me dreadful."

"I have a secret, Windy," says he, after he looked out of the window for a minute.

"Don't you tell a soul," I warned him.

I could see where them eight dollars was mine forever. I wasn't so sure about the saddle-polish, but the money was safer than if it was in the bank.

"I'm in love with three women," says he.

I like to had a double-jointed fit right then and there without malice forethoughts.

"It aint nothing cheap in the secret line," says I, after I'd swallowed my breath a couple of times and got a strangle-hold on the head of my bunk.

"Perhaps you can help me out," says he, looking hopeful.

"Now, Dismal," says I, "there is a limit to friendship, even if you do sleep next to me in barracks. If you think I'm going to marry one of them to pull you out of a bigamy case, I'll pay you what I owe you and you can move your bunk to the other side of the squad-room. I'd rather have Crawling Cassidy sleep here, even if he does grit his teeth in his sleep and put chopped horse-hair between a man's sheets. You don't inwiggle me into no marrying contests, and you can chew that fine and eat it."

"Oh, no—no," says he. "Not that, not that. What I want you to do is to help me to pick out the likeliest one in the bunch. You see, I've got five months and twenty days and a breakfast before I get my buzzard, and I've made up my mind that I'd like to have a ranch or a mine or something like that and settle down and make a home."

With that he fishes *Cupid's Courier* from under his pillow and wets his thumb and turns over a leaf.

"Now here is Number 44,563," says he. "Listen to this: 'Charming widow, twenty-six last May, brunette, large, dreamy eyes, fond of liter-chure and art, plays piano and sings, weight 128 pounds, has five-thousand acre horse-ranch and $90,000 in the bank. Generous disposition. Wishes to correspond with honorable gentleman, need not have any money, much prefer one who has loving disposition and would appreciate home-life. Object, matrimony, no triflers need apply. Address supplied by *Cupid's Courier*.' What do you think of that, Windy?"

"She's married by this time," says I. "That paper is a month old."

"Here's Number 48,321," says Dismal, paying no attention to me. "Listen to this: 'Blonde lady, who inherited seven flats in a large Western city from her father last July, and $50,000 feels very lonesome and would like a companion in life. Weight 113, height four feet and nine inches, pearly teeth and beautiful complexion, sky-blue eyes. Man who is going to share my fortune must be tall and slender, good looking, and a perfect gentleman. Photographs exchanged, tell all in first letter. I mean business. Address supplied by *Cupid's Courier*.' If she was a brunette, I would choose her, Windy, because I like her outspoken, straight from the shoulder way. What do you think?"

"Your wasting your time," says I. "In the first place you are not a perfect gentleman, you are not as good looking as you might be, and you have been in the cavalry so long your legs are bent on a bias so they resemble a bear-trap when its open. You'd look nice with one hundred and thirteen pounds of light complected female dangling on your arm, wouldn't ye, ye big horse wrangler? You let them pearly teeth go, unless you want to blow your finals on dentist bills. Read the next one, Dismal."

"I believe your deceiving me," says he. "You want her for yourself, and I'm no more bow-legged than you be, and I have some shape, which you haven't. Here's 74,652: 'Refined lady, considered very good looking by her gentleman friends. Dark chestnut hair, brown eyes, weight 132, five feet four inches tall, enjoy riding, dancing and skating, fond of good books, church member but don't require religion in husband. Western

girl, has cattle-ranch, several thousand dollars, and an excellent gold mine which has not been worked for years, owing to not needing money. Will send full particulars upon receiving satisfactory letter. Tell me all first time you write. Have never married, but might, if asked by honorable man. If interested, ask me for photo and explain fully. Address, etc."

"That looks more like it," says I. "She don't make no blow about herself, leastways, not so much as the others. She aint worrying her head off about getting married, either."

"No," says Dismal, "she's real bashful about it, but she hints close enough to it so it encourages me. Notice what she says about not requiring no religion in her husband. Would you go after it, Windy?"

"Bust yourself," says I. "I'm no marrying man myself, but it aint for me to stand in the way of no man's happiness, if that's the way his mind runs. It might be better, though, if she was more particular about mentioning her age."

"I'd rather have her leave it out, than to lie about it," says Dismal. "Anyway, it would have cost her ten cents to have put it in—costs ten cents a word for an ad one time in the *Courier*, and I'd rather have the other particulars."

"Oh, it just slipped her mind," I told him. "She wouldn't stop at ten cents—remember what she said about not working the gold mine? She's a bay, too, and is about the right heft and size for you, Dismal, only I wish she'd put in how wide she was, when she was specifying her points."

"Wide," says Dismal. "You aint got no manners at all. Didn't she say she weighed 132? That would make her just about the build of the major's daughter. I think I'll get the troop-clerk to write a letter to her on the typewriter; he'll help me word it."

"Don't you go writing no love-letters on a typewriter," says I. "Besides, you aint got her address yet."

"I can send a dollar with the letter and *Cupid's Courier* will send it to her. Why can't I write the letter on a typewriter and sign it?"

"Because it aint good form. Aint you read the rules on etty-ket in the back of Johnson's pocket dictionary? You'll queer yourself from the start, if you do that."

I told him I wasn't quite so sure about the cow-ranch and the resting gold mine when I found that *Cupid's Courier* was a-getting a rake-off, but you know how it is with a man who is in love. He was so stuck on 74,652 that mess-call never had no effect on him at all. He was in a regular trance, and acted like Crazy Horse Leary before he went dippy.

He was strong on having the troop-clerk write the letter for him until we got a patent love-letter book downtown the next day, with all the nice things any man would want to write to a woman, gold mine and cow-ranch included, and I advised Dismal not to go around the troop telling what he was going to do. If he'd a-told anybody but me, the whole regiment would have been stringing him about it, from the regimental sergeant-major to the cross-eyed piccolo player in the band.

We picked out a real nice letter in the book, and we agreed on the information about Dismal that we thought 74,652 ought to know. He wanted to lie something dreadful about his looks and manners, but I was afraid she would hold me for forgery, or for being a come-splice or something like that, and I had hard work keeping him on the bare edge of what was the truth.

"Dismal," says I, "if you go making yourself out a saint, you'll be in hot water the rest of your life, when you come to live up to it. Don't say you are willing to go to church often enough to be respectable. You leave that out—red-backed hymn-books don't go with your complexion, and you know how you hate a sky-pilot like a rattlesnake. And never mind telling her you are a non-commissioned officer in our country's military forces. You just say you're an officer, and let her take the stripes on your clothes for what they are worth."

The letter started off with "My dearest" and then there was a blank to put the name in. Not knowing what her

name was, we just put her number in. It went something like this:

"My dearest Number 74,652. I take my pen in hand to let you know that I am well and hope this will find you the same. My heart is pining for you and all I can think of, night and day, asleep or awake, is my own dear Number 74,652. Write and tell me that I am soon to see you, and that your smiling face will gladden my poor, lonely heart."

There was a lot more stuff like that and then we started in on some of Dismal's history:

"I was born of poor but humble payrents, and went to school for two years and one summer, getting an excellent education in the primary school of Stoney Gulch, Texas. I am a native of Texas, but am sober and honest and stiddy. Early in life I was called to the colors of our grand army, and pretty much since then have been an officer, as you will see by the picture I am sending herewith. I would like to get married, life in the army not being exciting enough for me. I would also like a cow-ranch and a gold mine. I will have finals of $752 when I leave the army, and am considerable of a cook. Tall and slender but not too much so, very fond of ladies, like mining and ranching. I am in good health, and hope you are, too. Let me hear from you, my dear Number 74,652, and I will write you at full length. Yours until we are married, Edward Clarence Smith."

Of course Dismal wasn't born in Texas at all, but when he enlisted he said he was, and we thought it might be safer to have such details agree with his discharges. His name wasn't Clarence at all, but he thought it might be a good idea to put it in, because it sounded high toned. He kicked some about putting in "grand army" for fear she might think he was a veteran of the Civil War, but I held out and won my point. He wasn't quite sure about mentioning the ranch and the gold mine—said it might sound forward—but he let it go when I told him it might be just as well to remind her that he took notice of them details and would expect to see them before he was roped and throwed by the parson.

He borrowed a dollar off Dutch Hanson and we sent the letter, with a picture he had took right after he got his sergeant stripes. He looked pretty good in the picture, being as the face was some foggy. Dismal had freckles on him as big as ginger-snaps, but the picture-man painted 'em out and took the squint out of his eyes. His hands looked pretty big and you could see the bend in his legs, but he had a saber on him and pair of white gloves, so it looked pretty good, even if it did resemble Dismal, in some ways.

Well, he just worried himself for two weeks, and when he saw the mail orderly coming, he got excited and used to tremble like a shot mule, until he found out there was nothing for him, and then he would wilt right down.

One day the troop-clerk come up in the squad-room and yelled to Dismal there was some mail for him, and Dismal like to broke his neck going down the hall. It was a "Farm scene in Iowa" on a postal-card, that the Kid Trumpeter sent while he was on furlough, and Dismal was that disappointed he wanted to beat up the troop-clerk and half the squad-room, and everybody thought he was crazy and not knowing what was a-eating of him.

He was awful sorry the letter had to go to Maine first and then be sent back West again before he could hear from the bay mining-lady, and he cussed a good deal about the delay, but I told him to be patient, and if he didn't hear in a reasonable time we could try some of the others.

In three weeks the letter showed. He come in the squad-room one day and could hardly speak. He gulped at his Adam's-apple a couple of times and then he whispered to me that he had a letter, but he hadn't opened it yet, so we went down to the stables where we could be alone and busted the envelope.

It was a pretty fat letter, and Dismal was sure that it had some money in it. It was stuck together with red wax that had a double heart and arrow brand on it, and it was postmarked "San Francisco."

There was seven pages, written on both sides on blue paper in pink ink, and it smelled like one of those lung-cure pillows. There was a lock of bay

hair tied with a red ribbon, and a picture of the swellest looking chunk of womankind that ever wrote a testy-money-all to Mrs. Dr. Silvia Winkham, recommending her remedies.

She sure was a middle of the road good-looker. On the back of the picture was wrote: "To Edward, from Jo, with love" and when Dismal seen that, he just groaned for joy, and leaned up against the manger, and asked me to read the letter.

It was a pretty strong letter all right. It had me going myself, and I made up my mind I'd try some of the other numbers in *Cupid's Courier*.

"My dear Mr. Smith," it said. "I am not sure that I ought to write to you without an introduction, but your open-faced letter was so nice and spoke from the heart, that I feel I can trust myself with you. I have read your letter several times, and although I have received a great many letters asking me to get married, I am sure that in selecting you, I have done what is best, don't you think so, Edward, dear."

Dismal groaned again like a sick cow when he heard that, and twisted his mus-tash and looked at himself in a pocket-mirror. I don't remember it all, but it went on something like this:

"I don't know whether I ought to tell you or not, Edward, but can you keep a secret? I have fallen in love with your picture, and I know I will love you dearly." (Dismal looked at himself in the glass again). "Since I put that foolish notice in the *Courier*, I have been working the mine, and it is paying fine, only I cannot trust my superintendent, and I wish we were married, so that you could take charge of it, for I know you must be a very capable man. But you might prefer to remain in the army, and I do like military men so much, so you will have to choose for yourself, providing you think I will suit you after seeing my picture which I enclose." (Dismal looked at the picture and kissed the bay hair). "I am longing to hear from you, and glad that you are not very far away, for Arizona is not very far from California, is it, dear? With a thousand kisses until I hear from you again, I am, Your own Josephine Hedley, as soon as you come to claim me."

I was terrible tempted right there to do away with Dismal in that box-stall, and bury him in the cellar of the commissary, and just answer that letter myself and go up to 'Frisco and pass myself off for Dismal.

He made me read it all over again.

"My luck is changing," said Dismal. "I always suspected I would marry a rich woman. So I can choose whether I'll be a mine superintendent and the husband of the owner, or stay in the army, can I? I'll give you three guesses on what I'll do. Read it once more, Windy," and I did.

Of course we had to frame up something pretty stylish for a come-back, and Dismal promised he'd give me a job as foreman if I'd help him and not squeal on him to the troop, and I was his huckleberry.

I can write a decent letter if I set out to it, being as I was on a sheep-ranch six months with nothing to read but a dictionary, and then I had that patent letter-writer to help out, when it come to the tender places.

We got a check-pass and stayed in a back room of Casey's saloon all night working on that letter. Dismal told Casey he was coming into a fortune very soon, and he hung the barkeep up, good and hard, and Dismal cried a good deal over the last of the letter.

I wrote nineteen pages on the back of a quartermaster's clothing report, which I swiped from Stingy Calkins. We used up as much as a hundred sheets, sort of trying out some things and putting in others, as Dismal's mind worked pretty good along toward the last, and we did better with practice. We used five letters out of the patent book, and jumbled 'em all up and mixed 'em in with stuff Dismal and me made up. It took six cents to send it, and we used a war department big envelope, putting the stamps under where it says there is a fine for using it free, and it looked pretty flashy and important.

We come right out plain and asked her to marry Dismal. I said as how he was very much taken with her picture and was sorry she was lonesome, and worked in a lot of "Jo, dear" which we

was sure she wouldn't mind, seeing it was following her lead.

Dismal wanted me to say he would cave in the face of that mine-superintendent, if he found the greaser was holding out and high-grading, but I thought we ought to make ourselves solid before we showed any temper, and I made him say just as many genteel things as I could think of. He had some pretty nice things to say, too, that he got out of them love-novels he'd been reading.

He got a real, genu-wine lovey, dovey sort of a letter back, in about a week, and another picture of Jo, took without much clothes on her neck and shoulders —kind of lacy looking stuff that you see through, even in the picture. He had a pocket made on the inside of his blouse on the right side—he carried the first one over his heart, around sort of under his arm, so it wouldn't bulge in ranks.

Well, I got corns on my fingers from writing letters to her. Dismal allowed me ten dollars for every letter I wrote for him, and I put it down in a book, he to pay me as soon as the honeymoon was over and he got around to financial matters. He owed me nine hundred and eighty dollars by the time he got his buzzard, and he blowed nearly all his wages for postage stamps, and the post-master wanted to be made third class, his business in stamps was so good.

Dismal took a course in face massidge from the barber, and he had a pretty decent map on him when he was discharged. I don't think any king was ever happier than Dismal was when he blowed out of the post for 'Frisco. He swore he'd send for me to be best man, soon as the wedding come off. He didn't know when it would be, because Jo said they would have to talk it all over when they met, and then he could suit himself.

She was going to meet him at the depot in a hack, and she'd have a bunch of pinks on her, so he'd know her, and he was going to wear a brown sombrero, being in civilian clothes. He traded four pair of shoes and all his stable clothes to the pack-master for the hat, not wanting to break into his finals for that.

I never heard of him for three weeks. Then one muster day he came snooping into the post, looking real sad and half starved, and he went up to headquarters and reported, having re-enlisted in 'Frisco.

Surprised? Yes, considerable. I could hardly believe that it was the same old Dismal what had been discharged and had gone to 'Frisco to be married to a gold mine and a cow-ranch.

"Is this you, Dismal," says I when I met him on the parade ground. "When was you married? You never sent for me as you allowed you would."

"If you say married to me again I'll make you hard to catch," says he, and he was mad as a cinched-up mustang. Wouldn't it surprise you?

He was assigned to the Forty Thieves again, and moved his bunk up from the cellar again and put it alongside mine, real mournful and quiet, and acting like he was going to cry one minute, and the next cussing something dreadful.

There was no way out of it, I couldn't sleep until I found what was wrong. It was easy enough to see that he was broke, but how he come to let her have the coin, was what got me where I lived.

I got him down in the stables and after quite an argument he said he'd tell. I agreed to pay him his eight dollars and tear up the account-book about the letters, and never mention marriage to him again.

"First," said Dismal, "she wasn't near so good looking as her picture was. She took me to a pretty swell house, and blew me off to a French feed, and took me to the theater, and there was considerable silly talk about love and plans about the wedding.

"She said I could stay with her brother John until we decided to get married, and that she would take me up to see the mine the next day, which suited me all right. Her brother John didn't look much like his sister had a gold mine, but I was in love then.

"We got on the train the next day and went up to the mine, some miles out of 'Frisco. It was quite a hole in the ground, and there was about thirty men working with picks and shovels, packing dirt around.

"She said the superintendent was cheating her, and she wanted me to take his place, but not to let on to the men I

was superintendent, because she wanted me to watch 'em.

"We cashed my finals and got a marriage license and we was going to be married Sunday, that being Wednesday. She allowed that it might make talk if I married her without having anything, so she said she would sell me a few shares in the mine at par, and then she could give out as how she had married her superintendent and I was part owner of the mine anyway, and it would look better in the papers. She said she'd give me the money back after the wedding, as I'd have the mine anyway, then.

"I put $745 of my $752 finals in the mine, and went to work with a shovel Thursday afternoon as superintendent, the other plugs not being wise that I was going to marry the owner and had stock in the mine.

"I said something to one of the pick men, and he wanted to know who I was, that I come around there bossing the job. I told him I was the superintendent. He said he knew better, that he was the superintendent himself. Some of the others chimed in and said they was superintendents. I said I owned part of the mine and the others said they did, too. I said I was going to marry Miss Josephine Hedley, and every son of a greaser said it was a lie, that he was the one what was to marry Miss Hedley, and then we kind of turned over and rubbed our eyes and come out of it. We was all part owners and superintendents and all was going to marry Miss Josephphine Hedley, and each and everyone of us was a prize-package of the first water.

"Some of them went down to 'Frisco and tried to make a kick, but it didn't do no good, and a man didn't want to have his picture in the paper and let the world know what special brand of mule he is, so we all pulled our freight and here I am. You go down and marry her if you can. Don't you never say woman to me again as long as you live."

"If you want to start something, just go over and ask Dismal when he married the woman with the gold mine. He aint had much faith in human female nature since that time, and just to *think* of a cow-ranch puts him in convulsions."

The Plaid Cap

By JULES VERNE DES VOIGNES

WHEN Stephen Kroll first ran across Grant Lehman, some kindly, intervening Providence at once arranged for their mutual friendship and reciprocal appreciation. Kroll was twenty-three, ambitious in the "shadowing" line and with some inherent promise of future ability, which Lehman, who was looking for an assistant and secretary, was not slow to remark. What was more natural, therefore, than that after some further Providential preliminaries, in which Lehman had intimated a desire for partnership and Kroll had seconded the motion, they should have hung out their sign "Lehman & Kroll, Private Detectives," opened up offices behind the inscription furnished them on the strength of Lehman's past and Kroll's future reputation, and gone to work!

Their articles of coöperation and division of spoils were ballasted with but one consequential clause. I am going to publish that clause here and now because the mainspring of my story rests on it alone.

It was to the effect that:

> WHEREAS, the said party of the first part, Grant Lehman, had hitherto been seriously handicapped and financially crippled by the acceptance of cases from which there was inadequate pecuniary return, and

WHEREAS, the said party of the second part, Stephen Kroll, had professed his ability to discriminate between and ward off such contingencies, that therefore,

It was herewith agreed upon that said party of the second part, with the party of the first part's coöperation and aid, should faithfully and conscientiously adhere to the performance of said obligation and do all in his power to prevent and discourage fraud and misrepresentation on the part of the firm's clients."

It looked legal.

And it had the further virtue of being religiously lived up to until one day—it was about the middle of June and business was not tremendously rushing.

I

Young Kroll, who was seven years Lehman's junior and not much over the "kid" age on infrequent and unfortunate occasions, burst in upon the senior partner.

There was a young woman below, he said, whom Lehman must see.

"She can't afford to pay much," he struck out defensively. "Hesitated to come to us on that account, she said, as she'd been at several other places and they'd turned her down. I say, Lehman, she's almost crazed with grief. It's too dashed bad!"

"The principles of this firm, Kroll—" began Lehman, taking the matter calmly.

At the end of five minutes' heated discussion over policy, he had Kroll striding angrily up and down the office floor.

The junior member's usually placid, good-natured face was a discomfited red.

"Confound it, Lehman!" he burst out for the third time. "Money isn't everything, is it? Look here, I'll pay the damages out of my own pocket."

Lehman only drummed speculatively on the desk and scowled. He had slipped down in the leather chair until his pipe and his little, bullet-like eyes were the sole prints discernible about him.

"What the devil is the matter with you, Kroll? You haven't a red cent to squander. If we take this case, we'll take it together, as usual. Some special friend of yours—this woman? You said you'd never seen her before."

Young Kroll flushed to the roots of his sprawling tow hair.

"She's a stranger to me, Lehman, but she's young and in a deuced peck of trouble. It's a combination I can't stand!"

"You'll have to learn to!" grunted Lehman, with a sniff that Kroll knew was not a sneer. Lehman had too big a heart for actual cynicism. "Pretty, I suppose?"

"It's her eyes," declared Kroll, earnestly. "They're big and frightened and appealing enough to —"

"It's always eyes!" snapped the senior partner, irritably. "Eyes—eyes—eyes! Look here, Kroll," Lehman faced the younger man and crossed his legs deliberately, "weren't there to be no 'gold-bricks' on our docket? Why, it was you, wasn't it, who was so mortally certain that I was going to ruin myself with such riff-raff unless you took me in hand?"

"Believe it was," confessed Kroll.

Then he lifted his head and stared straight at Lehman's comfortable lounging figure.

"This is *the* exception, Lehman. We've got to take this case; we've got to do it! She's a young girl, too poor to pay much—why, if only because it's such a remarkable case—"

"Remarkable woman, more likely!" growled Lehman, with another sniff. "Oh, well!" He wheeled about to his desk and emptied his pipe. "If you'll promise me that this is the first and last, show her up!"

Kroll went, like a shot out of a cannon.

Lehman fumed a little as he waited. Finally, he tucked his pipe into a drawer and looked up. Kroll was ushering her in.

There were just three things, corroborative of Kroll's information, at which Lehman was surprised. First, she *was* young; second, she was *pretty:* and, third, her eyes were red and distressed enough to have moved even a hardened senior detective.

Lehman motioned her deferentially to a chair. She sank into it in a little

frightened heap of femininity that was disconcerting—and appealing.

"Your name, please," said Lehman; "residence, age, and then your story as quickly and clearly as you can give it. Mr. Kroll, here, will take notes for our reference only."

And Kroll, who was more private secretary, chief clerk, and official stenographer than anything else, took an unobtrusive position where he could keep the girl's face constantly in view without undue discomfiture to her.

II

Her name was Margaret Biscomb, she began in a sweet, quiet little tone that made the ends of Kroll's fingers tingle. She was twenty-five years old, and for the past two years she had held the position of private secretary and stenographer to one Michael D. McHardy, a prominent surgeon in Sabine City. She was unmarried. Her parents were dead. For five years she had been forced to earn her own livelihood.

"And now—your story, Miss Biscomb," Lehman reminded her. "Just as clearly as you can give it."

"There isn't a great deal to tell; that is what makes it all the more mysterious and horrible," she said, her breath coming quick and fast. "I am a poor girl, and this position has been a God-send to me in more ways than one —"

The color flooded her cheeks, and she hesitated confusedly.

"I may as well tell you frankly," she went on.

"A year ago last month, I met a young man, Trevor Hill, who paid some attention to me, and at last asked me to marry him. We became engaged, and were to have been married the last of this week. Trevor was employed as bookkeeper in the offices of the Hinds Commercial Company, in Sabine City. He got a fair salary, and had hopes of promotion. Everybody liked him. He had no bad habits and no enemies that I know of. He was in the best of health and spirits. We had rented a little home in the city, and had everything arranged to go to keeping house at once. And yet, Mr. Lehman, last Tuesday night, at half past five when he quit work, he disappeared, and there is absolutely no trace—not even a note to me—nothing!"

The tears stood in her eyes and trembled in her choked voice.

"It is horrible, Mr. Lehman. I can't believe but that he is dead. And yet, it doesn't seem possible—it doesn't seem possible!"

"Don't give way, Miss Biscomb, please," interposed Lehman, hastily. "There is no reason to believe otherwise than that Mr. Hill is safe and sound, and can be located very soon. Now, if you will answer a few more questions—"

The girl raised her tear-stained face.

"Mr. Lehman," she said, "I must tell you—at once—that I—I cannot afford to pay you what your services are worth. But I—the authorities have done nothing—and I was so discouraged and afraid. I thought maybe that you—"

Lehman felt Kroll's eyes upon him. He cleared his throat.

"You needn't worry about that now, Miss Biscomb. I—we are interested in your case—deeply interested, I may say, and if you will answer questions as explicitly as you can, we will do our utmost to find Trevor Hill."

"Thank you! Oh, thank you!" she exclaimed.

And Lehman pretended to shuffle papers at a great rate, while Kroll gazed the other way.

The interview lasted a full hour. It brought out little more than had already been evidenced in the girl's first statement. Hill had disappeared—completely. Neither his few close friends nor his only relative, a grandmother in Sabine City, knew anything of his whereabouts. There was no motive whatever.

But the firm of Lehman & Kroll undertook the case. It excited Lehman not a little.

After the girl had gone, he smoked through two pipefuls before he spoke. Kroll waited on him with what patience he might.

At last Lehman threw down his pipe.

"Trevor Hill is dead!" he exclaimed.

"Or, if he isn't dead, you and I, Kroll, are two of the biggest fools in the business!"

"What d'you mean?" demanded Kroll, staring.

"Don't ask me now," returned his partner. "I'm going on a little trip, after which I'll be ready to explain myself. But I'll tell you this much: Your little case of gratis sympathy and cooperation is going to turn out one of the biggest swindles in the history of Lehman & Kroll, with Miss Biscomb the chief perpetrator."

Kroll was getting angry again.

"D'you mean to say she lied?" he exploded.

"It's all in the ethics of the thing," answered Lehman, evenly. There was a peculiar little smile on his face. "She told the truth in words and lied in intimation. You can take your choice. What she said was verbatim correct, but it happened that she knew what was going to take place—say, a month ago."

"I don't believe it!" protested Kroll. "You'll find she's told the truth—absolutely. There wasn't anything simulated about *her*."

Lehman's eyes had a dangerous snap in them.

"You'll find, Kroll," he said, still smoothly enough, "that the longer you're in this business, the more you'll cultivate distrust, and leave childlike faith for babes and old women. I think eventually, you'll find my judgment in this case correct."

"And I'll prove to you this afternoon that you were never more mistaken!" declared young Kroll, with a heat of which he was afterwards ashamed enough.

"Well, we'll see," said Lehman, good-humoredly.

From all of which it will be seen that the Trevor Hill disappearance case, as taken by Lehman & Kroll, had for its main issue the *bonam fidem* of womankind —as well as of a woman.

III

Lehman was the first man back to the office at half-past four that evening, and Kroll found him swathed in a scarlet lounging-robe and coddling his biggest pipe, upon his own return fifteen minutes later.

"I suppose you've verified the woman?" he drawled, before the breathless secretary had his hat off.

"Absolutely!" said Kroll, with a note of triumph in his voice. "McHardy, her employer, and a dozen other of her friends, in addition to Hill's grandmother and his associates in the offices where he worked, corroborate her good character and the trustworthiness of the facts in the case."

"Further?" probed Lehman, calmly.

"Well, I've been over the ground as thoroughly as time would permit. Nobody saw this man Hill after quitting work at half past five at the Hinds Commercial Company except—"

"Except —" repeated Lehman, sitting up.

"Except a boy of ten or twelve who was playing around the shops and thought he had seen Hill making down Eighth Street."

"Which was toward the ferry and not on his way home," mused the older man indifferently. But the glow was deepening in his eyes.

"After he had been seen by this boy," continued Kroll irritably, "there's no further trace of him—not the scratch of a trace!"

"You are working on a clew?" inquired Lehman, laconically.

He was leisurely turning over the leaves of a calendar.

"I have something in mind," returned Kroll, thoughtfully, "which may or may not work out. It is plain, of course, that he has met with foul play of some sort. There is positively no motive for his making way with himself."

"Motives," interrupted Lehman, with a lazy spurt of smoke from his long pipe, "do not always grow on the outside of the shell."

"You think," demanded Kroll, flaring up, "that he did make away with himself?"

"I said nothing of the kind, Kroll. I have expressed no decided opinions yet in either direction. However, if you are not feeling too tired," he glanced at

his watch, "I made a curious discovery this afternoon, and I'd like you to look over the ground with me. It is now five o'clock, and the thing can be seen easily before dinner."

He had slipped off his dressing-gown as he spoke, and put on his coat and hat.

"All right," grumbled Kroll with a half suspicious yawn, "although it seems to me, Lehman, that you're letting the usual riff-raff interfere in a case that'll need a good deal of study and hard work before it's cleared up satisfactorily."

"It may possibly give us a start in the right direction," suggested Lehman, modestly.

A twenty-minute ride on the electric brought them in view of the twinkling lights of the Eighth Street ferry in Sabine City.

Lehman led the way to the wharf, where a moment later, with a characteristic grunt of interest, he walked over to a dock-hand and tapped him on the shoulder.

Kroll sauntered up within hearing distance.

"Found anything?" Lehman was asking.

"Not a thing, sor!" exclaimed the man, deferentially. "Not a blamed thing, sor! They've heen a-draggin' three hours now, as long as 't was daylight, but the undertow's powerful here, sor, an' a body 'ud be carried out, I think, sor."

Lehman nodded and turned away.

Kroll stared, but he knew enough to hold his tongue for the present.

"Here's our boat," said the senior partner, and they went aboard.

They took standing positions near the blunt prow and leaned up against the cabin.

Lehman was pointing to a still chugging big touring car in front of the safety chain.

"Last Tuesday evening," he began in a low, unhurried monotone, "at half-past five, just at the rush hour, a peculiar and horrible accident occurred on this boat. I remember glancing through the newspaper-account at the time, though both of us were busy then on the Bishop case.

"The brief facts are these:

"A touring car, of similar proportions and construction to the machine standhere to-night, was driven down Eighth Street at this hour and upon this ferry. It stood precisely on the same spot. In the front seat were two men, the chauffeur and the owner of the auto; in the back seat another gentleman and his wife.

"About twenty-five feet from the opposite slip, the chauffeur got out and cranked his machine. Through some blunder, while he was still bending over at his task, the auto started, broke through the safety-chain, and plunged into the water, dragging the driver with it.

"The boat was stopped almost instantly, a remarkable piece of work on the part of the wheelman and engineer. While the most of the terrified passengers looked on, the gentleman and his wife in the back seat were fished out, and the other man succeeded in holding his head above water until he could be dragged on board. The chauffeur was drowned.

"It is not known who performed the service of rescue, but is presumed that it was one of the deck-hands. On the whole it was an accident with peculiar features."

"Decidedly," agreed Kroll, waiting. He was quite certain there would be more.

Lehman leaned his head against the cabin-wall, closing his eyes.

"Suppose," he postulated, slowly, "that for one reason or another, a man had been standing in front of that touring-car at the time it plunged off. What, in your opinion, are the chances of his being thrown into the water and drowned without the knowledge of a single human being?"

"It could happen, I presume," assented Kroll.

Lehman's eyes were still closed, but his tone had in it a peculiar ring.

"And in such a case, if any clew to the disappearance of the unknown existed, what would it be — in all probability?"

"I should say — a hat," declared Kroll, finding himself in a quandary.

"Or a cap," amended Lehman, opening his eyes.

The ferry was entering the slip. A rush forward began.

"There is no necessity for getting off," declared Lehman, glancing at his watch and suppressing a yawn. "We've seen all that we care to see. The rest can be told." The bell rang and they began to plow the channel on the return-trip.

"On the night of July 24," continued Lehman, after they were well started, "which happened to be Tuesday last, a tall young fellow with blue eyes and a serge suit that matched them came out of the Hinds Commercial Company offices, and walked rapidly down Eighth Street towards the ferry. A small boy saw him going in this direction. He was preoccupied and somewhat nervous, though otherwise in good health and spirits.

"At the foot of Eighth Street he took the ferry, which was not his accustomed route to his lodgings. Upon boarding the boat, he took up his position close to the safety-chain at the prow and immediately beside a large, white touring car. Twenty-five feet from the landing slip, the auto was prematurely cranked by the chauffeur, and a minute later plunged through the chain into the water. Three of the four occupants were saved; the driver was knocked off the deck and drowned. The fifth and unknown man was also swept overboard with the machine and drowned, though nobody was witness to the tragedy, and but one thing was left as evidence. The name of the missing man is Trevor Hill, and this," Lehman jerked a roll of plaid cloth from his coat-pocket, "is the cap he was wearing at the time."

Kroll, dumfounded and speechless, was fingering the crumpled headgear in the light of the run-way.

"But," he began, bewilderedly, trying in an inadequate fashion to dovetail Lehman's story with the possible events of the afternoon.

"Wait!" urged Lehman. "We'll be back in the office in twenty minutes. I ordered dinner sent up there at six, so we could talk this thing over together in privacy."

En route back to the office, Kroll juggled suppositions until his head swam. Lehman, as usual, was resting with closed eyes.

IV

When they opened the door of the office, the savory odors of the dinner floated out.

In another minute, Lehman, in dressing-gown and slippers, was serving, with the desk for a buffet.

"We've thirty minutes or more to get these things out of the way," he announced. "I'm expecting Lovewell at a quarter of seven."

Kroll stopped eating. "Lovewell?"

"Let me start this thing from the beginning," said Lehman, placidly stirring his coffee. "I left the office at 12:30, with a few ideas in my head and a good many to get. My first business was to find somebody who'd seen Hill after quitting work on Tuesday night. That person proved to be a boy—same little fellow you interviewed later. He said he'd seen Hill making for the ferry. It wasn't his usual way home. Why, then? Any unusual purpose or reason? I thought so and made for the ferry.

"On board, I got a deck-hand in the corner, loaded him with cigars, and asked him what happened the Tuesday night before. I didn't know anything had happened. He told me. I went and stood on the same spot. And there it came to me—what might have happened to Hill, had he been standing at such and such a spot. It was the thousandth likelihood that it *did* happen, but it's always my business to take the thousandth.

"It was then 2:30. By three I was ringing at the door of Daniel Lovewell, owner of the wrecked auto. In five minutes I'd explained my errand.

"'Did you notice a young fellow, tall, blue eyes, serge suit, standing beside your auto just before it went off?' I asked.

"His expression told me conclusively that he could have answered the question at once, but he thought a moment before he finally admitted that he had.

"'Did you see this man again at any time after the accident occurred?' I went on.

"'No,' he said; and then, after a moment's hesitation, he brought me this cap.

"'It was floating on the water,' he

explained, rather guiltily. 'I've been so unnerved since the accident that I have neglected to notify the authorities.'

"'Mr. Lovewell,' I said, 'now that you recall the circumstances distinctly, did you pick this cap out of the water, or did you not find it in one of your pockets?'

"He admitted he had found it in his pocket, but had thought he had picked it out of the water, as it was wet.

"'Do you remember what sort of a looking man helped you out?' I wanted to know.

"This wasn't so easy to answer, but at last I got a description that tallied as closely as I cared for with—"

Lehman paused, watching Kroll's rapt face.

"With Trevor Hill, I suppose," said the younger man in a low tone.

"Yes, Hill," Lehman went on. "This was all I cared to know in order to act. I telephoned Miss Biscomb to come to Lovewell's residence at once. I also ordered the channel dragged. The girl came, I explained what I'd discovered in Lovewell's presence. She became hysterical, worked on Lovewell's nerves and he up and offered to settle a sum upon her, as he said he felt responsible for her lover's death. She had given up her position with McHardy a week before, as she expected to be married, and McHardy had filled it. Lovewell was worked up to a greater pitch than ever, but I got in a private word with him and begged him to send no check until I'd seen him again to-night."

Kroll was leaning forward, tensely.

"Lehman," he said, "I know I'm a beastly poor detective, but I'm bright enough to know that you're playing something up your sleeve. I could tell by the tone of your voice, when you asked that deck-hand to-night if they'd found anything of the body, that you *didn't expect it to be found!*"

"And why?" inquired Lehman, innocently enough, though his dark eyes were burning.

"Because," answered Kroll with a slow breath, "you don't believe Trevor Hill is dead!"

"Why again?"

"Two things I've noted in what you've told me—and a dozen others I should have noted, I suppose," said Kroll. "First, Hill went out of his usual route that night—across the ferry—purposely—"

"We'll say it turned out to be purposefully," amended Lehman. His own face was becoming drawn.

"Secondly, Lovewell was rescued, or at least pulled in, by Hill, and the same gentleman put the cap in Lovewell's pocket."

"Precisely!" exclaimed Lehman, smiling. "Now we are getting down to it. Why did all this occur, and what did Margaret Biscomb have to do with it?"

"I don't know," confessed Kroll. "Lehman," he went on disconsolately, "I know I'm mighty poor sort of stuff and all that, but at least give me some chance to clear up this tangle."

"Well, listen," exclaimed the older man, bending down until his eyes were blazing into Kroll's. "The whole thing is a pure, logical, and devilish piece of blackmail!"

Kroll jumped to his feet. But he did not get a chance to say what was on his lips. A knock had sounded on the door, and Lehman opened it upon Lovewell.

"I am on time?" inquired the auto-owner, nervously.

"To a dot," said Lehman.

"My partner, Mr. Kroll," he introduced me, and motioning the newcomer to a chair.

Lovewell was a man well on in the thirties, short and rather stout, but carefully groomed and bespeaking a high-strung temperament—one which is easily imposed upon.

"Mr. Lovewell," Lehman went on, "I have discussed the matter thoroughly with Mr. Kroll, and now I wish to tell both of you gentlemen what I discovered during the last half-hour of my afternoon's travels.

"Immediately upon leaving your home, Mr. Lovewell, I wired an agent of mine in a town twenty miles from here, and he in turn telegraphed a message to Miss Biscomb, signing the name of Trevor Hill. It was delivered to her at her boarding-house, 117 East Michael Street, and I was concealed near enough

when she opened it to assure myself that—"

"That Trevor Hill is still alive!" gasped Lovewell.

Lehman nodded.

"Heavens!" Lovewell's lips were white. "And I've sent her a check for a thousand dollars not more than an hour ago!"

"By messenger?" inquired Lehman, calmly.

"Yes." He turned mutely to the detective. "I'm quick and impulsive," he muttered, dazedly. "The girl had played upon my feelings until I couldn't wait. I sent the check. I didn't dream I was being tricked."

Lehman had not changed a muscle of his face as he leaned toward Kroll.

"Get an officer and a carriage," he directed in a low tone. "I think there's a chance yet."

Kroll was gone like a flash, and Lehman hurried on his street-dress.

"I'll explain as we go," Lehman told the blue-coat whom Kroll brought post-haste.

But at the door they were stopped by a messenger.

Lehman tore open the envelope and scanned its contents under the hall-lamp.

He turned to the officer.

"You can go," he said. "There will be no arrests." And to the other two men, he added: "Come back to the office."

They were seated in their former places before Lehman made known the contents of the letter.

"I took the responsibility, Mr. Lovewell, of closing this matter here and now," he began. "I may as well say it is very much as I expected—and as I hoped. I trust you will take the same view of my lenience, when this letter is read. Here, by the way, is your check."

He passed the slip to the astonished Lovewell, and unfolded the two closely written sheets in his hand.

"It reads in this way," he said:

GRANT LEHMAN,
MY DEAR SIR AND FRIEND:

Let me confess at once this whole miserable business before it is too late for you to help me I hope when you have read this you will be kind, and yet I am afraid Mr. Lovewell will not relent. Trevor Hill, the man I am going to marry, is alive. I know where he is, and I am going to him. We are going to start life all over again, and do as we should.

It was all my fault, Mr. Lehman. I liked fine things, more than Trevor could afford. I didn't care how he got the money, and I used his love for me to egg him on to do this. He feared he would lose me, if he didn't, and he liked to have me be and do what I wanted.

Well, he went across the ferry last Tuesday night purposefully. He knew that Mr. Lovewell usually crossed at that time in his auto. He watched and got on the same boat. He meant to get into an angry conversation with Mr. Lovewell; they would be standing at the edge of the boat. Suddenly, when nearly to the other slip, Trevor would fall overboard. He is a good swimmer. He would disappear, dive if necessary. It would be dark. Mr. Lovewell would be held for murder. I could get money out of him by the scheme we had planned. Then we could go somewhere and *live*.

When the auto actually went overboard it did not touch Trevor. He hauled Mr. Lovewell up, put the cap in his pocket, and disappeared.

That's all. You are clever, and no doubt know all by this time. But please give Mr. Lovewell his check. And be merciful. Give Trevor and me a chance. Let us go away and start over again. I swear it will never happen a second time. I am cured, and Trevor never was bad. It was I—alone. I was tempted because Mr. Lovewell was rich and we were so miserably poor.

Oh, Mr. Lehman, if you can get Mr. Lovewell to understand just how it is, Trevor and I will be grateful to you all our lives. I did not dare to write him, but I believed you would understand and be kind.

Believe me
Your already sufficiently punished friend,
MARGARET BISCOMB.

Lehman refolded the sheets slowly and slipped them back into the envelope.

"The girl made a mistake," he muttered, almost to himself. He looked up. "But sometimes—sometimes I think few of us are little better than weaklings."

His sharp little eyes caught Lovewell's and held them, unflinchingly.

"The question is *now*, do you intend to give her the chance?"

"Yes," said Lovewell, looking away. "After all, I guess Hill must have fished me out."

And Kroll, meeting Lehman's kindly eyes, swore softly.

Stageland

BY CHARLES DARNTON

CARICATURE ILLUSTRATIONS BY HENRY HARMONY

"Salvation Nell," the New Play Written by Mr. Edward Sheldon for Mrs. Fiske Reviewed as One of Three Plays of the Proletariat—William Faversham in "The World and His Wife."

THE play of the proletariat is upon us. Not Lincoln's "plain people" who are everywhere in this broad land of ours, but the outcast poor who are with us in the big cities only, are crying to us to look at their griefs and to "purge ourselves through pity and fear." The tread of "the people marching on" is now heard on the stage, as it was heard by William Morris more than twenty years ago.

Whatever the cause may be, this season has given us three plays in which life's derelicts play the chief rôle and in which the tragic reasons for their waste are brought forward. In each case a young author has chosen this theme. "Regeneration" and "The Offenders" failed because of unequal workmanship, but "Salvation Nell" will probably go marching on. If fine acting and relentless realism count for anything, it ought to become a sister to "The Servant in the House," that other plea to the downtrodden to follow the simple teachings of Christ.

Mrs. Fiske in "Salvation Nell"

IN "SALVATION NELL" the Salvation Army has at last been dramatized. A lad of twenty-two has had the insight and the dramatic sense to grasp the possibilities in an institution whose very life depends on emotional excess and theatrical trappings. Young Mr. Edward Sheldon, whose first play has had the distinction of being produced by Mrs. Fiske, evidently felt that there was something more than salvation to be found in the army of the streets.

Few plays this season have excited more comment and aroused more discussion than this play of the slums. The smugly respectable have been shocked, of course, and many others, with less conventional morality but with too delicate sensibilities, have objected to the "bad taste" of the play. However, as life itself isn't distinguished by exquisite taste and since the grip of Mr. Sheldon's play depends on its lifelikeness, he probably feels that good taste may take care of itself.

Melodramatic "Salvation Nell" undoubtedly is, but there seems to be no final reason why good melodrama should be kept from the Broadway. Mrs. Fiske, at any rate, has always had the courage of her convictions in this respect. She put on "Leah Kleschna" whose plot turned on the lives of thieves and a degenerate. In "Little Italy" she went to the tenements, and now she has not hesitated to go to the slums.

You first meet *Nell Sanders* as a drudging scrub-woman in *Sid. J. McGovern's* Empire Bar where they are celebrating Merry Christmas, in their peculiarly boisterous methods. A drunken brawl, the raid of a questionable resort next door, with one of the inmates finding safety in the saloon, stir your interest in life as it is in "Hell's Kitchen," as this part of New York is called. But the real excitement comes when *Jim Platt* catches a drunken rowdy kissing his girl *Nell*. A blow sends the fellow stag-

gering to the floor, so dangerously hurt that an ambulance takes him off to die, and *Jim* is hauled away to jail hurling maledictions at *Nell* for getting him into trouble.

Nell has stood dazed and gray of face, frozen into horror and here Mrs. Fiske first shows her wonderful power, in the tense pose, the silently quivering lips—when *McGovern*, in his wrath, orders her to get out before she is kicked out. She nerves herself toask timidly, "Couldn't you wait until tomorrow?" but *McGovern* hands her the $4.75 due her and tells her to "git." Here, *Myrtle Odell*, who escaped the police raid, comes to the rescue, and she has almost persuaded *Nell* to go with her to lead an easier, if not a better life, when *Lieutenant O'Sullivan* of the Army, known as *Hallelujah Maggie*, comes thro' the swinging doors. She has tried to win over *Nell* before, but the girl's devotion to *Jim Platt* has always come first. Now, in her despair, *Maggie* finds her opportunity. She begs *Nell* to come with her, and with a sharp cry of utter helplessness, the poor drudge throws herself into *Maggie's* arms. The curtain falls as the Salvation Band goes marching past the door.

MR. HOLBROOK BLINN AS *Jim* IN "SALVATION NELL"

Eight years later, in her clean tenement, *Nell*, now the mother of a sturdy boy, is getting ready to put little *Jim* to bed. *Maggie* comes in to visit and you learn that the other *Jim* is free again, his ten year sentence having been reduced to eight because of good behavior. The visit of *Major Williams* of the Salvation Army serves to bring out that *Williams*, a man of good family who has found his life-work in helping others after "saving" himself, is in love with *Nell* and ready to marry her even after she has told him that she has never been married to the father of her boy. While they are still talking *Jim* lurches into the room, dirty, degraded-looking, with all the marks of his past life and his prison experience on him.

Major Williams leaves them, at *Nell's* request, and Mrs. Fiske, in the patient gesture of rolling back her sleeves, gives silent evidence of the spiritual ordeal before poor *Nell*. *Jim* tells her that he has only just learned where she is, and then he talks of his experience of the past five weeks since his release. He has tried in every possible way to get an honest job, only to be dismissed as soon as his convict-record was discovered. Now he has another plan—and his girl shall go with him to-morrow.

To escape his kiss *Nell* runs off to a neighbor to borrow some eggs for his supper, and after drinking from a little pitcher in the ice-chest, *Jim's* eyes light on the boy's clothes and shoes by a chair. He looks around sheepishly, then tiptoes to the bedroom door, opens it, and listens. The small *Jim* calls for a drink and then gets up to see what is wrong. On discovering that the big man

has drunk his water out of his own little blue pitcher, he objects forcibly, but *Nell's* return brings peace. She asks *Jim* to hold the boy while she gets supper, and the child falls asleep in his father's arms. When the youngster has been put back in his bed, *Nell* tries to get *Jim* to eat, but he insists on telling her she must go with him the next day to Denver. Her questions force from him the truth that he is to join in a diamond-robbery that night and that he plans to live on the results in the West. *Nell's* pleas are in vain — no convict has a chance, and he'll steal only this once and live decently ever after.

Nell's refusal only enrages him, and when, to save him from this crime, she rushes to the telephone to inform the police, he laughs brutally and reminds her that their coming will mean his arrest and return to prison. She breaks down and begs him to give up his part in the robbery, saying she will go back to him if he does. *Jim* seizes her in his arms and kisses her. The kiss brings back the old love that ruined her eight years before, and *Nell* realizes that she has promised to go back — not to save him, but because she loves him and can't help herself. *Jim* declares he will take her with him, but she pushes him from her and calls for *Maggie*. To keep her still, he knocks her senseless. Then he turns down the light and escapes through the window, leaving *Nell* lying on the floor. Presently she rouses herself and seizing the frightened child she forces him to his knees, and the two pray as they "never prayed before" for the other *Jim*.

The last act is an unusually realistic reproduction of a well-known New York slum, Cherry Hill. Tall tenements shut out the sky, the fire-escapes are littered with rags and clothing of every color and variety, and men, women and children scream from the windows and swarm in the streets. A row between an Italian woman and a street-walker over the husband of the former is a dramatic incident in this noisy life. *Myrtle Odell's* visit to *Nell* to talk to her and comment on the big diamond robbery makes you wonder about *Jim's* part in the crime. Later *Jim* himself slouches into view, and *Major Williams* excuses *Nell* from her work so that she may say good-by to him forever. The worn mother and the jailbird, crouching on a tenement doorstep, almost seem to symbolize the fate of these outcasts of life. *Jim* tells her that he didn't join in the robbery after all — somehow his heart failed him — and he asks her again to come with him. She tries to make him understand that she can't go back to him — that she must live as she has been doing and make a decent living possible for their boy; but she promises that no one shall ever take his place.

They talk on and recall the one happy day they had together once when they went into the country; and poor *Jim* brings back to earth the dreams and hopes of those days with the unconscious pathos of his practical comment:

"*Nell*, we couldn't stay here, could we?"

Then *Nell* goes to join the Salvation

MRS. FISKE AS *Nell* IN "SALVATION NELL"

Army group at one corner, while *Jim* slinks into a saloon at the other.

In a plea to her listeners at the street-corner, *Nell* makes a fervent appeal for all who have sinned. Her voice breaks as she tells them that she knows their troubles and sorrows. Her fervid words draw a crowd on whose outer edge *Jim* hangs. He listens to the halting, broken speech of this woman who loves him. When *Nell* "takes up a collection," *Jim* drops his last cent into her tambourine. Something in his face causes *Nell* to give a glad cry, and clasping his hands, she tells him to wait and take her home after the meeting.

Granting the ugliness of the first act, the sudden conversion of *Jim* in the last, and the bare outline of story, young Mr. Sheldon must still be congratulated on his work. He has reproduced life in the slums not only with photographic truthfulness, but he has made his play humanly true. Your heart beats in sympathy for these wrecks; it goes out to *Jim Platt* and the others who "never had a chance." Mr. Sheldon's bold, generous championship may estrange the conventional and his frank exposure of the underworld may shock the prudish, but his play justifies itself.

Mrs. Fiske acts as she has rarely acted, not only with the nervous intelligence that distinguished her in her Ibsen rôles, but with the note of suffering that made her *Tess* memorable. Her absolute simplicity and genuine feeling make *Salvation Nell* one of her best achievements; and her speech, incidentally, is more intelligible than it has ever been.

Mr. Holbrook Blinn's *Jim Platt* is on a dramatic level with Mrs. Fiske's *Nell*. Sodden, degraded, but not utterly brutalized, *Jim* makes you feel sorry for him. His clumsy tenderness with the little boy, his cynical impatience with the world's way of treating the underdog, his foolish, embarrassed smile when *Nell* recalls their one happy day—all these are admirably brought out by Mr. Blinn.

The minor characters are acted with that thoroughgoing fidelity to truth that distinguishes all of Mrs. Fiske's productions, and the scenes with their shifting characters and moving life are triumphs of sympathetic imagination combined with unflinching realism.

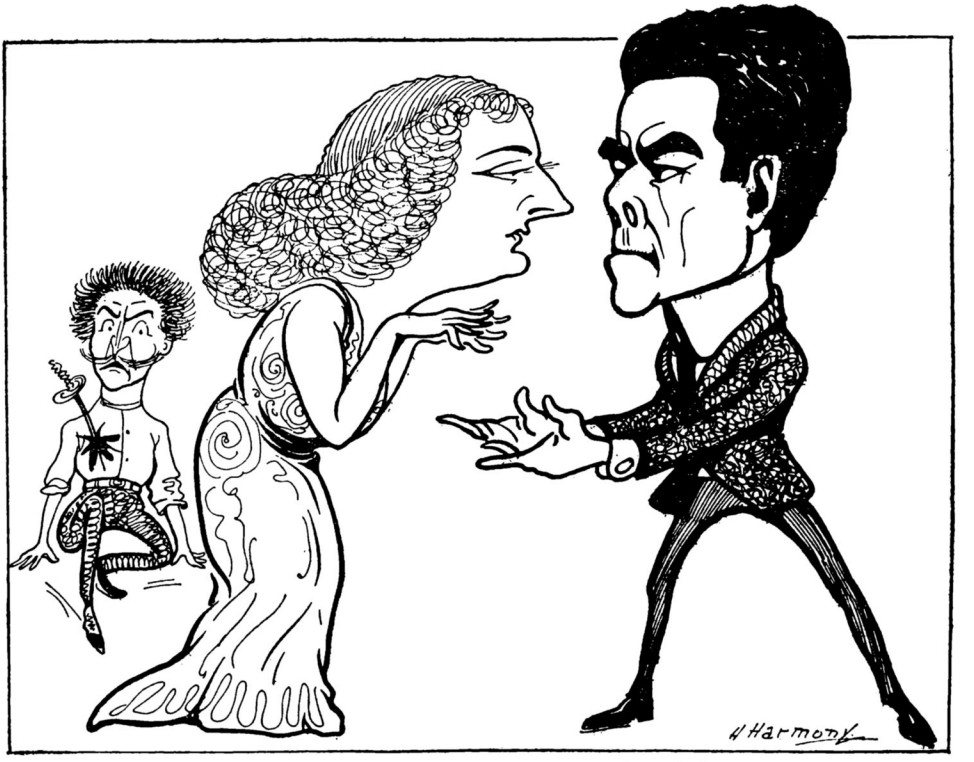
William Gillette's Poor Judgment

WHERE the frank truth of "Salvation Nell" has caused much comment, little has been said of the suggestiveness of Henri Bernstein's "Samson," one of the most unpleasant plays seen in many a day.

Melodrama, but drawing-room melodrama, you find here no less than in "Salvation Nell." The people, all but one, are of that superior French aristocracy that talks much of honor and furnishes so little to the world. *Anne-Marie*, daughter of the *Marquis D'Andeline*, has been married by her mercenary parents to *Maurice Brachard*, a millionaire and self-made man who has risen by his own efforts from the docks of Marseilles to become one of the leaders of the Paris Bourse. Strong physically and mentally, *Brachard* has saved his wife's family from bankruptcy only to be depised by them and hated by her.

At a reception at the *Marquis D'Andeline's*, you learn that *Brachard* must go to London at midnight on business. He offers to take his wife home first, but she refuses, saying she wished to stay a bit longer. She bids him good-by coolly, only to arrange immediately after a meeting with her lover, *Jerome Le Govain*.

Made suspicious by *Elise Vernette*, a cousin of the *Marquis*, and a discarded mistress of *Jerome*, *Brachard* decides to postpone his journey to London that night and await his wife's return at home. At half-past two in the morning, at the *Brachards'* house you learn from the half-dressed parents who have been summoned from their home by the frightened maid, that *Anne-Marie* has not yet returned. and that *Brachard*, after crashing in the door of her room, had gone out again. When *Brachard* returns he begs the family to leave, but at this moment *Anne-Marie's* return stops them all. Pale, disheveled, with hair hanging loose, torn dress, and a bruised arm, the wife looks more like a madwoman than her usual self. When the others have been sent away, she tells her husband of her experiences



"THE WORLD AND HIS WIFE:" H. COOPER CLIFFE AS *Don Julian;* JULIE OPP AS *Donna Teodora;* WILLIAM FAVERSHAM AS *Don Ernesto.*

Jerome, her lover, with whom, however, she had only flirted thus far had taken her to an infamous "resort." She had not understood at first, but when the full disgust of this orgy to which she had been invited had overcome her, she had started out. Someone had tried to stop her, the lights had been put out, she had stumbled over a drunken companion sprawling on the floor, had torn herself away, got into a cab — and here she was at half-past two, filled with loathing of her lover, herself, and life generally.

Brachard's rage knows no bounds. The same fury that made him batter in his wife's door seizes him. He will destroy *Jerome Le Govain*, the man he trusted and helped to riches, even if he destroys all else with him. He orders his agent to cause a panic on the exchange the next day by bringing about a slump in copper, in which all of *Jerome's* funds are invested as well as his own. His revenge is well started—the rest is for the morrow.

The next day, in his suite at the Hotel Ritz, *Brachard* has made a special appointment with his enemy. He induces him to join him at a late breakfast, and the two discuss copper at length. *Jerome* is worried, for he confesses that he has invested not only his own money but has borrowed widely, in order to become a millionaire at one *coup*.

Brachard laughingly reassures him. and sends him to take a nap in the next room, while he turns on the agent who has just hurried over from the Bourse to report to his chief. He even dares to remonstrate—the falling prices are causing the downfall of well-established houses and ruining *Brachard* himself. But *Brachard's* vengeance must be fulfilled. Like Samson of old in his rage he will tear down the house and ruin himself to destroy his enemy.

The slaughter of copper on the exchange goes on, and when his messengers tell him it has fallen more than sixty points, *Brachard* at last tells *Le*

Govain he is ruined. The fury of the younger man, stripped of his fortune, breaks out into taunts to *Brachard* about his wife. At this *Brachard* grips *Le Govain* by the throat, and chokes him into silence. After the struggle they exchange compliments like fishwives, but *Brachard* has achieved his revenge and he lets his victim go without further violence.

The next evening at *Brachard's* home *Anne-Marie's* parents try to induce her to return home, and then to divorce her husband. But now that he is ruined and the government has ordered him off the exchange and out of Paris for a time as a penalty for his reckless "gambling," some strange buried loyalty in the wife comes to the surface. She refuses to go and her parents leave her in disgust. When *Brachard* comes to say farewell, for he, too, expects her to leave him, she tells him of her wish to stay. His strength, his Samson-fury that lead him to ruin himself in order to avenge the insult to her, have won her over. She even loves him now in the fashion the French like to call "feminine," and the two, together, agree to begin life all over again.

As the adapter of "Samson," Mr. William Gillette doubtless disinfected and deodorized it considerably. That much is still left that offends is probably less his fault than Bernstein's, but for the crude English and common-place diction the adapter must be held responsible.

In acting the chief rôle, too, Mr. Gillette is not convincing. Physically and temperamentally unsuited to convey the idea of this huge, hot-blooded man of the people, he substitutes facial contortions and nervous gestures for brute strength. The "great scene" of the physical struggle between *Brachard* and *Le Govain* fails to become impressive in consequence, and indeed some scenes are ludicrously inadequate.

Miss Constance Collier, an actress from England, with little magnetism and less personal charm, carries repression so far in the rôle of the wife as to become dull and uninteresting. Mr. Arthur Byron as *Le Govain* seems thoroughly American, but his work is effective. Only Frederic de Belleville as the foolish old aristocrat is at all in the atmosphere of this thoroughly Parisian play. Miss Pauline Frederick, as the disillusioned *Elise*, is lovely, if out of the picture, and acts with more naturalness than she has ever shown.

Ethel Barrymore as "Lady Frederick"

LETTERS play an important part in "Lady Frederick," the second comedy by the typically English W. Somerset Maugham to be seen in this country. *Lady Frederick* carries a boxful of letters written by the late husband of her arch enemy, *Lady Mereston*, to a dancer who has relieved the monotony of that professionally respectable gentleman's existence; and *Lady Mereston* is in possession of a letter written by *Lord Frederick* that puts a shady complexion on her reputation. The duel of letters is brought about by young *Lord Mereston's* determination to marry *Lady Frederick* and his mother's desperate efforts to save him from what she considers a dubious alliance. *Lady Frederick* doesn't play her letters when the game seems to call for them, but the mother of the infatuated cub risks everything on her trump-card only to be beaten. *Lady Frederick*, in the presence of the youth and his worldly-wise uncle, *Paradine Fouldes*, explains that she wrote the damaging letter to save her foolish married sister from an escapade that threatened to ruin her life. The cub thereupon gives his mother a bitter pill to swallow by asking *Lady Frederick* then and there to marry him. She tells him to come to her hotel at ten o'clock the next morning for his answer.

This brings you to the only real situation in the play. *Lady Frederick* just escapes being an adventuress. Ten years of her life had been embittered by a drunken husband, but he has been decent enough to die at last. You see her at Monte Carlo gambling away every cent she can borrow and up to her earrings in debt. Under the circumstances it is only natural that *Lady Mereston* should regard her with suspicion. The only one who really understands her is *Fouldes*, and there are signs from the first that their earlier ro-

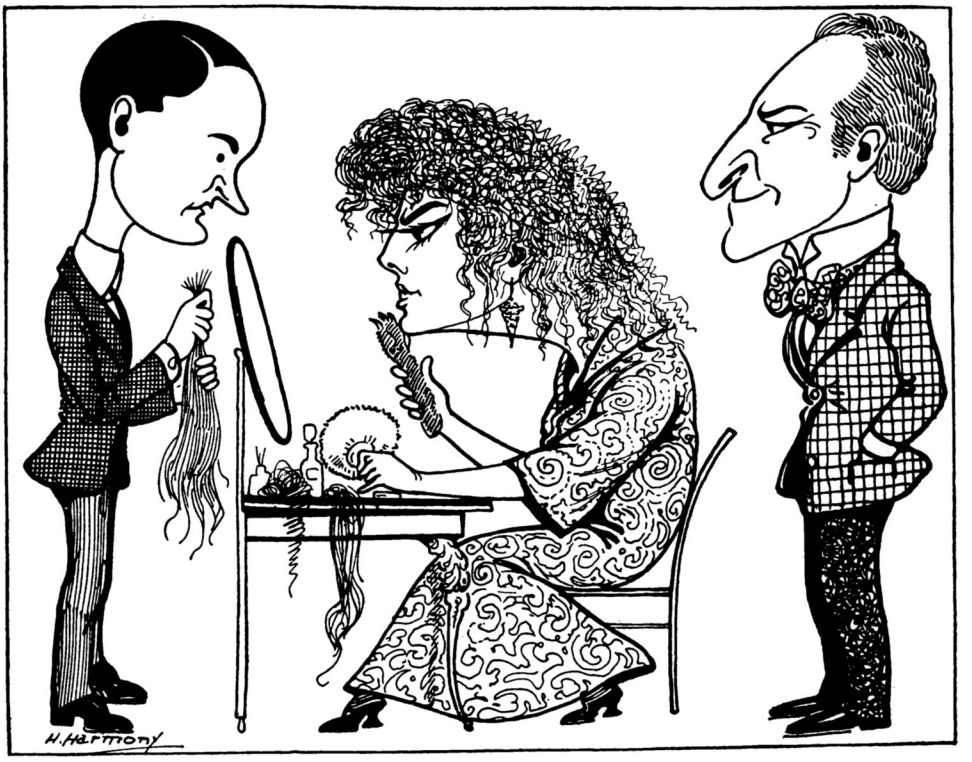
mance will be revived. A third contestant is the socially ambitious son of a money-lender who proposes that she marry him to settle her brother's gambling debts. So milady's life, you see, is anything but dull.

Lady Frederick plans to disillusionize young *Mereston* by letting him see her in all her early morning unloveliness. She comes from her bath in a dressing-gown and with her hair stringing down her face. Then she proceeds to make up before her glass, manufacturing her complexion, reddening her lips, and penciling her eyes, while her young lover looks on more pained than pleased.

As a matter of fact, Miss Ethel Barrymore in the rôle looks so young and charming through it all that the scene loses its point. She never suggests the woman who has to bring back her youth at the toilet-table, nor does she put the necessary touch of Irish on the tip of *Lady Frederick's* tongue. But her personal charm carries her through the play and insures its success.

Mr. Bruce McRae plays *Foulides*—who pays the lady's debts and forecloses on her affections in the end—with his usual sincerity and a touch of cynical humor.

It is as a writer of clever dialogue that Mr. Maugham shines, and the brightness of the lines blinds one to the conventional plot and gives the comedy real sparkle.

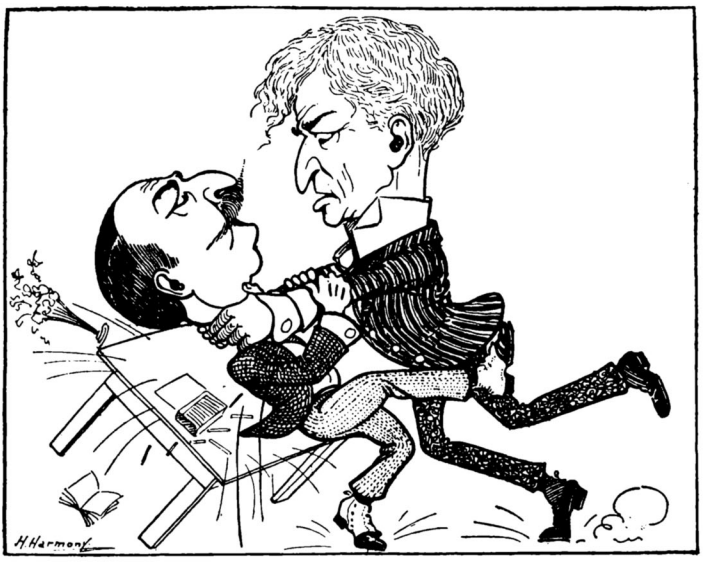


"LADY FREDERICK:" NORMAN THORP AS *Lord Mereston;* ETHEL BARRYMORE AS *Lady Frederick;* BRUCE MCRAE AS *Paradine Foulides.*

William Faversham in a Worthy Play

IN "The World and His Wife," an adaptation by Charles Frederic Niedlinger of the Spanish play, "El Gran Galeoto," by José Echegaray, Mr. William Faversham has produced an interesting play that treats of the harm done by reckless gossip. Echegaray's play has long been known in Europe, and some ten years ago it was first given in New York; but this is the first attempt to make it widely known here.

The story is really a modern version of "Paolo and Francesca" with a suggestion of "Othello." *Don Julian* and



ARTHUR BYRON AS *Jerome Le Govain* AND WILLIAM GILLETTE AS *Maurice Brachard* IN "SAMSON."

Donna Teodora, moving in the highest diplomatic circles of Madrid, have taken into their home *Don Ernesto*, the young son of *Don Julian's* dearest friend who died some time before. The sincere friendship and perfect confidence of these three are marred by the suspicions of *Julian's* brother *Severo* and the ill-timed advice and meddling interference of his wife *Mercedes*. Through gossip and innuendo *Ernesto* leaves the house.

When he is about to leave Madrid some days later, *Donna Teodora*, alarmed at some rumor that she has misunderstood, comes to his rooms to beg him not to quarrel with her husband under any circumstances. As *Ernesto* is at that moment preparing to fight a duel in an empty room on the same floor with a Spaniard who had used *Donna Teodora's* name in a café, he can promise with safety, he thinks, as he is to leave immediately after. But at that moment voices are heard in the hall, and *Teodora* rushes into *Ernesto's* bedroom.

Julian and *Severo* enter, and the former demands the right to fight the duel in behalf of his wife instead of leaving it to a friend. *Ernesto* is forced to yield, and when *Julian* staggers into the room badly wounded, *Teodora* rushes out to help him. Her presence there is as innocent as she herself, but to the eye of her husband, now jaundiced by his brother's nagging suspicions, it is a proof of guilt. "Together! Always together!" he cries, and then is carried fainting to his home.

In the last act slander has done its worst. *Ernesto* comes to say farewell to his friend *Julian*, but he is refused entrance by *Severo*. By chance he meets *Teodora* who is kept from her husband's bedside, also, and the wounded *Julian* hearing their voices, rushes out to see them. He finds them again "Together! Always together!" and with fevered brain accuses them. Then he goes, to die in his brother's arms.

The bitter *Severo* now orders *Teodora* from the house, and then it is that slander forces the two friends to become lovers as they had never dreamed before. *Ernesto* leaps forward to save *Teodora* from *Severo's* hand when he tries to push her out, and crying "If you dare!" denounces him and all the other gossips. *Teodora* and he were friends; now they will go together as lovers.

Mr. Faversham plays the final scene with fine passion and fire, but Miss Julie Opp is uninteresting as *Teodora*.

Some Remarkable Stage-Pictures

"VIA WIRELESS" is more or less mechanical melodrama, with two scenes—one showing the furnace-room of a gun-foundry, the other a ship at sea in a storm—staged with telling effect by Frederic Thompson. The story itself never assumes large proportions, and wireless telegraphy is the real hero.

Lieutenant Sommers of the United States navy has invented a new gun and, incidentally, has fallen in love with *Frances Durant*, daughter of the owner

of the works where it is to be cast. *Edward Pinckney*, manager of the works, is jealous of *Sommers* and plans to ruin his gun. This he achieves the more easily as *Marsh*, a draughtsman at the works, has invented another gun that will be accepted by the government if *Sommer's* gun fails. By working on *Marsh's* ambition and letting a drunken foreman boss the job of giving the gun its tempering-bath, *Sommers'* gun is spoiled. All the other melodramatic adjuncts, such as sowing suspicion between the lovers, an attempt to throw the hero into the furnace, and the cheating of *Marsh* of his bonus by the villain, are crowded into this scene in the foundry, where noise and din and fire and smoke, combine to produce a spinal thrill, rather more than any merely human interest.

Later on, when *Frances*, her mother, and *Pinckney* are in Porto Rico after a cruise, *Lieutenant Sommers* conveniently turns up, only to learn that his gun has exploded, killing four men, and that he is to be court-martialed. *Miss Durant* invites him to return with them on their yacht that he may defend himself the sooner. They start out in a storm, against the Captain's advice, so that *Pinckney* may take a train at the first possible landing-place to get ahead of *Sommers* and prepare his own witnesses.

The yacht is stranded on a reef, and in the wireless room of the steamship *Mongolian* you learn all about it. Crackling, spluttering, bluish white flames are translated by the excited young operator into messages from the sinking yacht, and after a great deal of excitement on the part of the operator the survivors, including all the principal characters, are hauled aboard from small boats.

In the end the *Lieutenant* is cleared and *Pinckney's* plot to ruin the gun is exposed by the questions of a secret-service man and the evidence of *Marsh*, who has been done out of thousands by *Pinckney*. The suicide of this poor tool who can't face a future with the dead and blinded victims of the explosion staring him in the face is the worst dramatic incident of the play. Mr. William B. Mack makes this character stand out vividly. Mr. Edwin Arden is the hero, and Miss Vera McCord plays the girl with simple charm.

MARIE CAHILL AS *Betty* IN "BETTY AND THE BOYS."

Marie Cahill's Dainty Success

IN "The Boys and Betty" Miss Marie Cahill has the daintiest and most charming musical comedy that has come to town in many a day. It gives Miss Cahill the best opportunity that has ever been offered her and she makes the most of it, without once seeming to strive for comical effect. As *Betty* she supports her husband, a worthless musician, while he is busily employed in airing his genius. But when he follows her to Paris where she has opened a profitable little shop, and she catches him making love to a gaudy dancer, she

cuts him off without a *sou* and hurls a flower-pot through the window of the locked shop to let the outside world know what is going on. When a fireman rushes in, she points to the impecunious "genius" and cries:

"Put him out!"

Later on, under the influence of wine, he marries the dancer and to save himself from the consequences of bigamy, he clears out. *Betty* is left to find happiness with one of "the boys," who all along have been her loyal friends and admirers.

With a voice that has learned a new trick or two in the last year, Miss Cahill sings charmingly a number of pretty songs that are a distinct credit to Mr. Silvio Hein, who has written the music for Mr. George V. Hobart's book. In "The Arab Love Song" she scores one of her old time successes. Mr. Eugene Cowles rolls out his thundering bass with good effect, and Mr. John E. Kellerd acts the useless husband with all the seriousness of a "genius."

"Little Nemo" is the second comic supplement production of the season. "Fluffy Ruffles" soon fluttered away, but "Little Nemo," by virtue of Klaw & Erlanger's elaborate scenic display and Victor Herbert's music, will doubtless attract attention as a spectacle, through the holiday season, at least.

The dreams of *Little Nemo*, who always finds himself in his little white bed, in the end, form the subject matter of Mr. Harry B. Smith's book. The Land of St. Valentine is a pretty color scheme and "Won't you be my Valentine?" an equally pretty song. Cloudland offers the first genuine novelty in "Raindrops," a song introducing a splashing group of girls in grayish-blue beads, under tiny umbrellas.

MASTER GABRIEL AS *Nemo*

Here, too in Cloudland, Miss Elphye Snowden distinguishes herself as a golden Weathervane who smiles like sunshine.

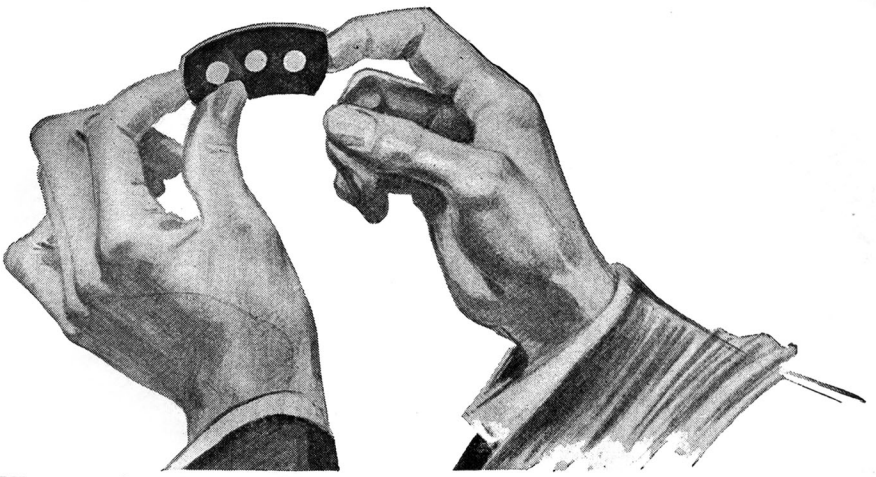
A Dream of the Fourth of July with an army of soldiers marching by is full of spirit and color, and here the music is stirring.

Master Gabriel acts the part of *Little Nemo* with unchildlike assurance but with quick intelligence.

An Agent of the Government

By Clarence Herbert New

In the present issue of THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE appears the first of a new and splendid series of stories by Clarence Herbert New, author of that gripping series, "The International Bureau." In the present series, which will carry the general title "An Agent of the Government," Mr. New has written a group of stories that are among the best THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE has ever offered its readers. Read the first story in this issue: "The Antiraguan Affair," and you'll surely want to read the others.



Flexible Wafer-Like Blade

MAN'S first cutting implement was a piece of flint chipped to a sharp edge.

Ages later he noticed copper and though soft, made his tools of that. Then he found that tin and copper mixed made a harder substance—bronze. The bronze age lasted thousands of years.

Not until what we know as "historic" times did man learn to use iron.

Steel came centuries later.

Man is now perfecting steel.

We are not always aware when history is being made.

The GILLETTE Blade represents a new idea—the first new principle in a razor blade in over 400 years.

Experts from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have been working for five years on a finer steel for the GILLETTE Blade. (*Introduced September 1, 1908.*)

This New-Process Blade is the keenest shaving edge ever devised by the skill of man—a new steel, made to special formula. It takes an edge so sharp, a temper so hard and tough that no cutting implement has ever been known to compare with it.

The GILLETTE Blade is wafer-thin, flexible, with a hard, mirror-like finish, and a marvelous durability.

For certain very good reasons it is impossible to make a piece of steel that will take and hold as fine an edge unless it is wafer-thin and flexible.

There is no other blade in the world as thin or as flexible as the GILLETTE—or that will do the work of the GILLETTE.

There is no razor like the GILLETTE: no handle, no blade like it.

It is the one "safety" razor that is safe—cannot cut the face. It is the only razor that can be adjusted for a light or a close shave.

Standard set, $5.00. On sale everywhere.

New York, Times Bldg.
Chicago, Stock Exchange Bldg.

GILLETTE SALES CO.
Kimball Building, Boston
Factories: Boston, Montreal, London, Berlin, Paris

Canadian Office
63 St. Alexander St.
Montreal

Gillette Safety Razor
NO STROPPING NO HONING

Men Who Plan

Look at these two pictures. They tell, better than words, the story of the value of training—of the difference between the positions of *trained* and *untrained* men. The men who *plan* are the *"salary"* men. The men who *toil* are the *"wage"* men. *To which class do YOU belong?*

You don't have to be a college man in order to command a big salary. You don't have to have a large bank account in order to become an *expert at your chosen occupation.* If you can read and write there is a way by which you can succeed in life through the help of the International Correspondence Schools of Scranton—without stopping work, leaving home or buying a single book. Mark one of the attached coupons to learn how the I. C. S. can help you. Marking the coupon places you under no obligation to incur expense. Then, mark it *NOW.* Thousands of men once in exactly your present position have won success through I. C. S. help. *There's a way for you*—a way by which you can earn more. The Business of This Place is to Raise Salaries. Mark the Coupon.

SALARY-RAISING COUPON

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Box 871-D, Scranton, Pa.

Please explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for employment or advancement in the position before which I have marked X

Bookkeeper	Mechan. Draughtsman
Stenographer	Telephone Engineer
Advertisement Writer	Elec. Lighting Supt.
Show Card Writer	Mech. Engineer
Window Trimmer	Plumber & Steam Fitter
Commercial Law	Stationary Engineer
Illustrator	Civil Engineer
Civil Service	Building Contractor
Chemist	Architec'l Draughtsman
Textile Mill Supt.	Architect
Electrician	Structural Engineer
Elec. Engineer	Banking
	Mining Engineer

Name_____

Street and No._____

City _____ State_____

Some Stories

The I. C. S. is one of the grandest institutions that has ever been established. The instruction I received from my Course enabled me to advance from a position working on a farm at $25 a month to Chief Engineer of the People's Traction Company with a very large increase in earnings.

JOHN G. HIBBARD,
540 West Knox St.,
Galesburg, Ill.

I consider my I. C. S. Course the very best available and would not exchange it for 20 times its cost. At the time I enrolled I was working in a blacksmith shop at a small salary. I have acquired much valuable information from my Course, and I am now in the sign-painting business for myself at an increase of 100 per cent.

W. F. ALVEY,
1112 East 4th St.,
Owensboro, Ky.

When I enrolled in the I. C. S. I was working as a machinist. My Course has helped me very materially and has enabled me to accept a position as Chief Engineer for the City Light and Water Plant and to increase my earnings from $2.75 a day to $125 a month.

T. W. CRISSMAN,
813 North Belvean Ave.,
Hastings, Neb.

and Men Who Toil

Having marked one of the coupons, hand this advertisement to a friend in order that he may mark the other. What the I. C. S. can do for you it can do for any other poorly-paid but ambitious man. Read the stories of success printed below—*then* you'll understand what an I. C. S. training really means.

As proof of the salary-raising *ability* of the I. C. S., a monthly average of 300 students VOLUNTARILY report advancement in salary and position *as the direct result of I. C. S. help.* During October the number heard from was 274. Let the I. C. S. help *you.* Take the first step by marking the coupon to-day. Don't wait a minute—even such a short delay might mean the difference between success and failure—mark the coupon *NOW.* Then see some other ambitious fellow and induce him to do likewise. *Two Successes are Better than One.*

Here is the opportunity. *You* are the man. For a better position, a bigger salary, success instead of failure—*mark and mail the coupon NOW.*

of Advancement

I enrolled for a course of I. C. S. Training when employed as a farm hand. The knowledge received from my course has been of immeasurable assistance in my becoming a Heating and Ventilating Engineer. I now earn over $1400 a year more salary than when I enrolled.

JAMES B. LUND,
214 Baird Ave.,
Chicago, Ill.

I was employed in a wool-scouring mill when I enrolled for my I. C. S. Course. I am now Draftsman for the Lawrence Machine Company and have increased my earnings to four times what they were when I enrolled. The I. C. S. system of instruction is most excellent and thorough.

ALEXANDER CZAJKOWSKI,
545 Essex St.,
Lawrence, Mass.

My Course in the International Correspondence Schools enabled me to pass the Civil Service Examination for position as General Assistant in the Bureau of Fisheries which brought me an increase in earnings of over 100 per cent., which, of course, I owe to the instruction received from your Schools.

LEONARD M. TONGUE,
Steamer Albatross, Sta. D,
San Francisco, Cal.

SALARY-RAISING COUPON

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Box 871-D, Scranton, Pa.

Please explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for employment or advancement in the position before which I have marked X

Bookkeeper	Mechan. Draughtsman
Stenographer	Telephone Engineer
Advertisement Writer	Elec. Lighting Supt.
Show Card Writer	Mech. Engineer
Window Trimmer	Plumber & Steam Fitter
Commercial Law	Stationary Engineer
Illustrator	Civil Engineer
Civil Service	Building Contractor
Chemist	Architect'l Draughtsman
Textile Mill Supt.	Architect
Electrician	Structural Engineer
Elec. Engineer	Banking
	Mining Engineer

Name_____

Street and No._____

City _____ State_____

White Rock

"The World's Best Table Water"

Now ready, 1909 edition of the famous "Richard's Poor Almanack," the hit of 1908. Beautifully bound. and illustrated humorous book. Sent for 10c. Address White Rock, Flatiron Bldg., New York City.

Let me teach YOU

BEAUTY CULTURE

MY FREE BOOK TELLS HOW

hundreds of women who wrote for this *free book* are now earning from

$15 to $35 Weekly

in a refined profession.

You can do the same.

This **free book** tells all about Beauty Culture and how I teach women in their own home—by mail—to become expert operators in

MANICURING
HAIR DRESSING
MARCEL WAVING
SCALP TREATMENT
FACIAL MASSAGE
SHAMPOOING

I also furnish valuable formulas for making Flesh Food, Massage Cream, Hair Tonics, Depilatories, Cosmetics, Etc.

You can start a visiting practice—working by appointment in your patrons' homes, or you can establish a Beauty Parlor in your own home.

This profession offers unlimited opportunity for ambitious women to earn money. The demand for expert operators is growing every day. My students are able to quickly establish a lucrative practice—many of them earn money before they have graduated.

One Graduate says:
Dear Miss King:
Just received my Diploma. I am very proud of it. I will always be thankful to you. I have already earned many times the cost of my instruction. Mrs. Florence Duffy.
836 Iberville Street, New Orleans, La.

Another says:
I want to let you know how thankful I am to be earning money through your wonderful system. The lessons are so easy anyone can understand them. I am earning $10 a week and upwards and working only a few hours a day. Agnes Connolly,
51 W. 91st St., New York.

SEND TO-DAY FOR MY FREE BOOK.

Don't struggle along in uncongenial employment with long hours and small pay. Educate yourself in this profitable profession and learn to do work that has little competition. Isn't it better to spend a few hours a day for a few weeks and qualify yourself to do work that everyone else cannot do? The field for Beauty Culture is large. You will be surprised when you see what a great demand there is for this work in even the very small places.

Write to-day for this Free Book—a penny postal will do.

ELIZABETH KING SYSTEM,
Dept. A.W. No. 117 E. 23rd St., N. Y.

PAY NOW AND THEN

$30 **$3.00 Monthly**

We will send for your approval a genuine ¼ **karat, commercial white, perfect diamond,** in any style 14 karat solid gold mounting, **express prepaid, for $30; $5.00 down** and **$3.00 per month;** or a ⅜ **karat diamond** of like quality for **$60; $10.00 down and $5.00 per month.**

Write today for free catalogue No. Q-34 which tells how to judge diamonds; gives weights with prices.

HERBERT L. JOSEPH & Co.
DIAMOND IMPORTERS
WATCH JOBBERS
217 & 219 State St., Chicago

$3.00 Monthly **$30**

If you are interested in a reliable watch, we offer a **gentleman's** O. F. 12, 16, or 18 size, or **lady's** 6 size, plain or engraved, **20-year guaranteed gold filled case,** fitted with genuine **Elgin** or **Waltham movement at $12.50; $3.00 down, $1.50 per month.** With hunting case **$16.75.**

Remit first payment with order, or have goods sent C. O. D. for first payment.

The "NATIONAL" Spring Style Book and Samples Are FREE

One copy of this Style Book is ready for YOU and will be sent you FREE with the Samples of the new Spring Suitings, if you write for them TO-DAY.

This "NATIONAL" Style Book is the greatest book of fashions ever issued. The "Christy Girl" cover was drawn expressly for the "NATIONAL" by Mr. Howard Chandler Christy and every page is equally as interesting. It is the most beautifully illustrated and fascinating work of fashion ever published. And remember, one copy is for YOU—FREE.

New York Styles Are Greatly Changed

The "NATIONAL" Style Book (sent free) shows ALL the desirable New York Styles—gives you complete, all the changes in fashion for the Spring Season. The complete edition of this Style Book cost $214,782; no expense being spared to make it the most attractive, complete and valuable fashion work in America. One copy of this Style Book is intended for YOU—FREE, only YOU must write for it to-day. We will send it to you postpaid, gladly, but YOU must say it is welcome.

"NATIONAL" Tailored Suits

Made-to-Measure New York Styles $7.50 to $35 Expressage Prepaid

Style Book and Samples FREE

This "NATIONAL" Style Book pictured above illustrates all the New Suits and Skirts for Spring. And any of these handsome Suits and Skirts will be Made To Your Measure in your choice of our 400 New Spring Suitings. A liberal assortment of these Samples will be sent you **FREE** with the Style Book.

You select your Suit from the Style Book. You select your Material from the Samples. We make the Suit to your measure, send it to you with a signed guarantee that it will fit you and please you, or we will refund your money. But more than this. Each "NATIONAL" Suit is made and sold according to

The "NATIONAL" Policy

Every "NATIONAL" Garment has the "NATIONAL GUARANTEE TAG" attached. This tag says: "Your money back if you ask for it."

We prepay all the postage and express charges on all "NATIONAL" Garments to every part of the United States.

In addition to the Made-to-Measure Suits, this "NATIONAL" Spring Style Book shows the following

"NATIONAL" Ready-Made Garments

Millinery	Lingerie Dresses	Plumes	Rain Coats	Hosiery
Waists	Tub Suits	Belts	Muslin Underwear	Neckwear
Skirts	House Dresses	Petticoats	Knit Underwear	Sweaters
Silk Dresses	Kimonos	Jackets	Corsets	Boys' Clothing

Misses', Girls' and Infants' Wear

One copy of this Great "NATIONAL" Style Book is intended for YOU. One copy IS yours—FREE. Will you write for it TO-DAY?

NATIONAL CLOAK & SUIT CO., 246 W. 24th St., New York City

The Best Safeguard Against Cold Weather Dangers!

"RHEUMA-NOT" LEGGINS

TRADE MARK REGISTERED

PATENTED JANUARY 30, '06.

For MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN

PREVENT and RELIEVE

Rheumatism

Light, yet warm as fur.

Perfect fitting, stylish, durable and comfortable.

Made of Pure Australian Wool Jersey, in black only. Healthful, hygienic and easily put on or removed.

Worn over the stocking and inside the shoe.

$1.50

a pair

delivered prepaid anywhere in the U. S. on receipt of the price When ordering mention size of shoe worn.

ROSENWASSER BROS.,

Makers

Dept. 40, 472 Broadway, New York

Descriptive Circular upon request.

Robert O. Law Co.

EDITION PRINTERS AND BINDERS

Estimates Furnished to Out-of-town Printers

FIRST-CLASS WORK
PROMPT DELIVERY

Robert O. Law Co.

121 Plymouth Court,

CHICAGO

Remarkable Invention

AN INSTRUMENT THAT IMPROVES AND STRENGHTENS EYESIGHT

Spectacles May Be Abandoned

Actina is a small instrument that sets up and maintains normal circulation of the blood. It removes congestion and strenghtens the nerves of the eyes—and relieves most forms of eye trouble. It also strenghtens the sight so that glasses can be dispensed with in many cases.

Over 75,000 Actinas have been sold, therefore the Actina treatment is not an experiment. It has been sufficiently tested to prove its merit.

Actina will be sent on trial, postpaid—so that you can try it without any expense. Free, our Treatise on Disease—send for it—it will interest and instruct you. Address Actina Appliance Co., Dept. 310R, 811 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo.

A SKIN OF BEAUTY IS A JOY FOREVER.

DR. T. FELIX GOURAUD'S ORIENTAL CREAM OR MAGICAL BEAUTIFIER

Removes Tan, Pimples, Freckles, Moth Patches, Rash, and Skin diseases, and every blemish on beauty, and defies detection. It has stood the test of 60 years, and is so harmless we taste it to be sure it is properly made. Accept no counterfeit of similar name. Dr. L. A. Sayre said to a lady of the haut-ton (a patient) "As you ladies will use them, I recommend

'Gouraud's Cream'

as the least harmful of all the Skin preparations." For sale by all Druggists and Fancy Goods Dealers in the U. S., Canadas, and Europe.

Ferd. T. Hopkins, Prop'r,
37 Great Jones St., N. Y.

Grow Mushrooms

For Big and Quick Profits.

Ten years experience enables me to give practical instructions that will add $5 to $60 per week to your income without interfering with regular occupation. For full particulars and free book, address

JACKSON MUSHROOM FARM,
3381 N. Western Ave., Chicago, Ill

Army Auction Bargains

Tents -	$1.90 up	Old Pistols - - -	$.50 up
Shoes -	1.25 "	Officers' Swords, new	1.75 "
ARMY SADDLES	3.00 "	Cavalry Sabres	$1.50
" Bridles -	1.00 "	UNIFORMS -	1.25
" Leggins, pr.	.15 "	7 Shot Carbine	3.50

$1.79

U. S. SPRINGFIELD B-L RIFLES

With Blank or Ball Cartridge, 35 cents box of 20.

1907 MILITARY CATALOGUE, 260 large pages, thousands of beautiful illustrations—with 1908 supplement, wholesale and retail prices. Mailed for 15 cents (stamps). 15 ACRES GOVT. AUCTION GOODS

FRANCIS BANNERMAN, 501 Broadway, NEW YORK

SUPERFLUOUS HAIR

Rhodes' New Hair Remover will instantly and perfectly remove undesirable hair from the face, neck, etc., Price **$1.**

FREE TRIAL We are not afraid to have you try this wonderful preparation, and you may do so **FREE.** If you will send us 10c. to cover cost of postage and packing we will send you a trial bottle; not a dollar bottle of course, but sufficient to remove considerable hair and furnish a good test. Address the Hair Specialists,

A. F. RHODES CO., LOWELL, MASS.

RHODES REJUVENATOR RESTORES GRAY HAIR—Makes it Grow—$1.00 bottle

DIAMONDS ON CREDIT LOFTIS SYSTEM

START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT

By making a wise and safe investment. A Diamond is safer and more profitable than a Savings Bank account. You always retain it in your possession. You have the pleasure and prestige of wearing a beautiful and precious gem. Diamonds increase in value from 15 to 20% a year. Savings Banks only pay from 3 to 4% per annum. **Our Grand New 1909 Catalog** now ready for mailing. 1500 illustrations of beautiful Diamond rings, pins, jewelry, watches, etc. The finest Jewelry Catalog ever issued. It's free for the asking. Write for copy today. **Our Prices Are Lowest, Our Terms Easiest.** We make $5 or $10 do the work that $50 does in a cash store. Select from our Catalog the article you desire and we will send it on approval. If satisfactory, pay one-fifth on delivery, balance in eight equal monthly payments. Remember the

LOFTIS BROS. & CO **THE OLD RELIABLE ORIGINAL DIAMOND AND WATCH CREDIT HOUSE. Established 1858.** **Dept. B707 92 State Street, Chicago, Ill.**

LOFTIS SYSTEM makes your credit good by adjusting terms to meet your convenience. Write to-day for 1909 Catalog.

Grube's Method

For Complete Eradication of
TOE CORNS, SOLE CORNS, BUNIONS,
CALLOUSES, SOFT CORNS, HEEL CORNS.
Kills the Seed, Leaves Smooth Skin.

One Drop Corn Remover

ADVISE no cutting with knife.
USE eraser to remove hard part. Rub well.

APPLY "One Drop," covering corn completely to kill seed of the trouble; cover it with tissue paper; peel it off third day.

RESULT a normal smooth skin. Put cotton between toes when soft corns.

PRICE 25 CENTS—At Druggists or sent direct.

When Properly Applied, Gives Relief in 3 Minutes.

EXCELSIOR CHEMICAL COMPANY, 3100 State Street, Chicago.

Units in Our Commercial Apple Orchards

offer an absolutely safe investment and will pay

Large Profits

Our contracts are non-forfeitable and afford

Absolute Protection

in case of inability to continue payments. Each unit you own will pay you an annual income of

$300.00 to $500.00

Units may be bought on payments of

$8.35 Monthly

Half Units.....$4.20
Quarter Units..... 2.10

A Booklet explaining our plan in detail will be mailed upon request.

A. G. HANAUER, Vice-President,
HANAUER GRAVES COMPANY INC.
P. O. Box 1726 **Spokane, Wash.**

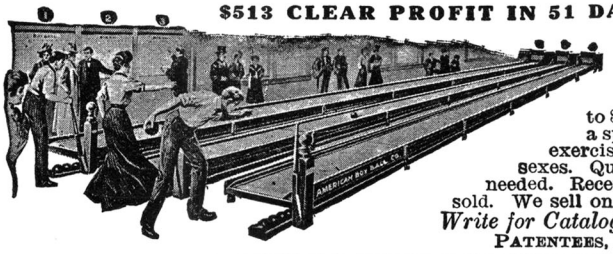
FREE DEAFNESS CURE!

A remarkable offer by one of the leading ear specialists in this country, who will send two months' medicine FREE to prove his ability to cure Deafness, Head Noises and Catarrh. Address
Dr. G. M. BRANAMAN, 1605 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo.

BUILD A $5000 BUSINESS

of your own and escape salaried drudgery for life. 33 cents a day will do it. I will send you "Free Pointers" for a postal. **W. A. Shryer, Pres. American Collect'n Service, 175 State St., Detroit, Mich.**

$513 CLEAR PROFIT IN 51 DAYS FROM AN INVESTMENT OF $150



Is the result from the operation of one American Box Ball Alley in Sullivan, Ind. Why not go into this business yourself? It is the most practical and popular bowling game in existence. It will make big money in any town. These alleys pay from $25.00 to $65.00 each, per week. This is no gambling device, but a splendid bowling game for amusement and physical exercise. Liberally patronized by the best people of both sexes. Quickly installed, conveniently portable. No pin boy needed. Receipts are nearly all profit. More than 3,000 already sold. We sell on payment and our catalog is free.

Write for Catalog. **American Box Ball Company,**
PATENTEES, 1582 Van Buren St., Indianapolis, Ind.

THE BLUE BOOK MAGAZINE'S
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT

RATE:—75 cents per line—cash with order. No advertisement of less than 4 or more than 12 lines accepted.

The March issue will appear throughout the country on Febuary 1st. Forms for this issue will close in Chicago on January 15th, by which time order, copy and remittance must be in our hands.

THE STORY-PRESS CORPORATION, 158-164 STATE STREET, CHICAGO, ILL.

AMUSEMENTS

MOTION PICTURE MACHINES, Film Views, Magic Lanterns, Slides, and Similar Wonders For Sale. Catalogue Free. We also Buy Magic Machines, Films, Slides, etc. Harbach & Co., 809 Filbert Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

WE START YOU in a permanent business with us and furnish everything. Full course of instruction free. We are manufacturers and have a new plan in the mail order line. Large profits. Small capital. You pay us in three months and make big profit. References given. Sworn statements. Pease Mfg. Co., 1037 Pease Bldg., Buffalo, N.Y.

BUSINESS BOOK FREE: TELLS HOW YOU CAN SECURE, the actual working plans, the money-making systems, schemes and short cuts of 112 great, big, business men—to increase your salary—to boost your profits. Book is free. Why not write now? SYSTEM, Dept. 174-4. 151-153 Wabash Ave., Chicago.

WANTED—Man with small capital to take charge of territory for merchandising business: write for particulars. Pope Automatic Merchandising Company, Corn Exchange Bank Building, Chicago.

TO THE MAN WITH A STEADY JOB.—I can add to your salary $5, $10 or $15 each month, whichever you may select. Write me to-day. E. M. NOLEN, Manager, Room 837, 151 Wabash Ave., Chicago.

No one need remain deaf now

for I have invented and perfected a device which fits into the ear without a bit of discomfort.

It is to the ear what glasses are to the eyes—but when worn it can't be seen.

So small you don't know you are wearing it—yet so effective you would miss it instantly.

This device of mine is so constructed that it magnifies the sound waves—then this magnified sound wave is concentrated to the center of the ear drum.

It does what ear trumpets are supposed to do—but it is invisible. You *even forget it* yourself.

You see, years ago I was deaf myself—people had to shout at me. It was so embarrassing that I was avoided.

I doctored for two years—but with no avail, So in sheer desperation I resolved to help myself.

Day and night I experimented with an artificial ear. After years of tedious toil I succeeded.

My efforts were more than repaid, for when I perfected my device so I could wear it myself, my hearing came back. People no longer shunned me. It was marvelous—I could hear as well as anybody.

What I did for myself I have since done for 200,000 others—and

I can make you hear again

Yet what it costs me in years of struggle I let you have for five dollars.

Don't send me the money now—I want you first to read my book. It goes into detail about this wonderful device.

The whole result of my successful experiment—and, how you can have *your* hearing restored, is yours for the price of a postal and a minute to send it.

Write to me personally, Geo. H. Wilson, care of Wilson Ear Drum Co., 1001 Todd Bldg., Louisville, Ky., and ask for my book.

COINS, STAMPS, ETC.

WE BUY U. S. and foreign coins many dates and denominations; premiums up to $5800. Also every kind of used stamps. Particulars free. May be worth many dollars, perhaps fortune to you. Money and Stamp Brokerage Co., 150 Nassau St., E 2, New York.

HELP WANTED

MEN WANTED QUICKLY by big Chicago Mail Order House to distribute catalogues, advertise, etc.; $25.00 a week; $60.00 expense allowance first month. No experience required. Manager, Dpt. 63, 385 Wabash Ave., Chicago.

WANTED—Railway Mail Clerks; Customs Employees; Clerks at Washington. Commencement salary $800.00. No "layoffs" Many examinations soon. Common education sufficient. Preparation free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. A-70 Rochester, N. Y.

"Agents Portraits 35c., Frames 15c., Sheet Pictures 1c., Stereoscopes 25c., Views 1c., Portrait Pillow Tops 50c., English Art Plates $1.00; 30 days credit. Samples and free catalogue. Consolidated Portrait Co., 290-21 West-Adams Street, Chicago."

PIANOS

WING PIANOS BEST TONED & MOST SUCCESSFUL. Est'd. 40 yrs. Recent improvements give greatest resonance. Sold direct. *No agents.* Sent on trial—freight paid; first, last and all the time *by us*—to show our faith in our work. If you want a good piano, you save $75—$200. Very easy terms. Slightly used "high-grades," $75 up—taken in exchange for improved Wing pianos—thoroughly refinished. Send for bargain list. *You should have anyway*—"Book of Complete Information about Pianos," 152 pages. N. Y. World says: "A book of educational interest, everyone should have." *Free for the asking* from the old house of Wing & Son, 363-388 W. 13th St., New York.

POPULAR MUSIC

SONG WRITERS AND COMPOSERS — Send your composition to-day and receive our offer for publishing, arranging composing; and popularizing, by entirely new method One successful composition means fame and money. Send 15 cents for our latest hit. THEATORIUM MUSIC PUB. CO., Ashton Bldg., Grand Rapids, Mich.

DO YOU WRITE SONG POEMS?—A small sum invested with me can make them worth thousands of dollars. I set them to music and publish. Send yours today with stamp, for examination and booklet.
H. KIRKUS DUGDALE,
Dept. V., Washington, D. C.

REAL ESTATE

CASH for your real estate, business or other property, no matter where located. If you want to buy or sell write us at once. NORTHWESTERN BUSINESS AGENCY, Bank of Commerce Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn.

SEEDS

HENDERSON'S SEEDS FREE—To introduce our new 1909 seed catalogue. "*Everything for the Garden.*" (200 pages, 700 engravings, devoted to vegetables and flowers,) we will send *free to everyone* mentioning this magazine and sending 10 cents in stamps the catalogue and our famous 50-cent Henderson collection of flower and garden seeds. Also the pamphlet "The Use of the Feet in Seed Sowing," which the late Peter Henderson considered the most valuable article he ever wrote. Peter Henderson & Co., 35-37 Cortlandt Street, New York City.

TELEGRAPHY

TELEGRAPHY taught at home in the shortest time. Omnigraph Automatic Transmitter combined with Standard Key and Sounder. Sends your telegraph messages at any speed as an expert would. 5 styles $2 up. Circular free. Omnigraph Mfg. Co., 39B Cortlandt St., New York.

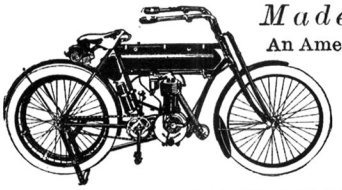
MISCELLANEOUS

EVERYBODY SHOULD READ "SPECIAL SUNDRIES."—A book of original Stories, Jokes, Puns, Plays, etc. Price 30c. Ask newsdealers or address,
JOHN P. MORTON & CO., Louisville, Ky.

HAIR GROWS when our Vacuum Cap is used a few minutes daily. Sent on 60 days free trial at our expense. No Drugs or Electricity. Stops falling hair. Prevents Dandruff. Postal brings illustrated booklet. Modern Vacuum Cap Co., M-460 Barclay, Denver, Colo.

YALE 3½ H. P. 1909 MOTOR CYCLES—$200

Made for men with good red blood.



An American betterment of the finest foreign models. Easy running, powerful, reliable, swift. Its equal at the price does not exist today.

In this great factory—the largest in the United States—we build the famous

YALE AND SNELL BICYCLES

acknowledged the standard of America, and are sole makers of **HUSSEY HANDLE BARS.**

THE CONSOLIDATED PACKAGE CAR—$100

Solves the problem of small deliveries at a profit. A money saver for every sort of retail business. Get posted. Write at once for FREE CATALOGUE naming the vehicle you wish to know about.

THE CONSOLIDATED MFG. CO., 1724 FERNWOOD AVE., TOLEDO, O., U. S. A.

Be a SALESMAN

Earn a good salary, $1,000 to $10,000 a year and expenses. Enter the most pleasant, and best paid profession in the world, where you are paid all you earn, where there is no limit to your earning power. **Be a producer,** the one man the firm must have. We will teach you to be a salesman by mail in eight weeks and assist you to secure a position with a reliable firm, through our

Free Employment Bureau

Hundreds of our Graduates placed in good positions. We always have plenty of good openings with leading firms all over the country. Over 500,000 Traveling Salesmen employed in the United States and Canada. If you are ambitious and want to earn from two to ten times what you now do, our **Free Book "A Knight of the Grip"** will show you how to do it. Write for it today. Address nearest office.

Dept. 110 National Salesman's Training Association,
New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Kansas City, Minneapolis.

"It comes in SECTIONS, not in pieces."

No. 202 **$18.75** Direct from Factory to you. Size 79x30 inches, complete with cushions.

Quartered Oak Davenport, Dealers' Price, **$42**

Don't pay profits to dealers and middlemen—it only adds to the cost, not the VALUE of furniture. If you buy "Come-packt" Sectional Furniture, direct from our factory, you pay but one profit and EVERY DOLLAR brings you a dollar's worth of ACTUAL FURNITURE VALUE.

If Our Goods Do Not Convince You

that we save you half to two-thirds, then "your money back." You do not risk a penny under our new "Come-packt" plan. WRITE TODAY for our free catalog of handsome Morris Chairs, Rockers, Dining Room Furniture, etc., all of Quarter-Sawed WHITE Oak throughout.

SECTIONAL "COME-PACKT" FURNITURE

INTERNATIONAL MFG. CO.
230 Edwin St., Ann Arbor, Mich.

Morphine

A painless, home medicine for the Opium, Morphine or Laudanum habit. Free trial sent on application.

ST. JAMES SOCIETY,
Suite 303, 1181 Broadway, New York

Geisha Diamonds

THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

Bright, sparkling, beautiful. For brilliancy they equal the genuine, standing all test and puzzle experts. One twentieth the expense. Sent free with privilege of examination. For particulars, prices, etc., address

THE R. GREGG MFG. & IMPT. CO.
Dept. 6, 52-58 W. Jackson Blvd. - Chicago, Ill.

A RECORD OF OVER SIXTY-FIVE YEARS

For over sixty-five years MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP has been used by mothers for their children while teething. Are you disrurbed at night and broken of your rest by a sick child suffering and crying with pain of Cutting Teeth? If so send at once and get a bottle of "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" for Children Teething. The value is incalculable. It will relieve the poor little sufferer immediately. Depend upon it, mothers, there is no mistake about it. It cures diarrhœa, regulates the Stomach and Bowels, cures Wind Colic, softens the Gums, reduces Inflammation, and gives tone and energy to the whole system. "Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup" for children teething is pleasant to the taste and is the prescription of one of the oldest and best female physicians and nurses in the United States, and is for sale by all druggists throughout the world. Price, twenty-five cents a bottle. Be sure and ask for "MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP." Guaranteed under the Food and Drugs Act, June 30th, 1906. Serial Number 1098.

SUPERFLUOUS HAIR CURED.

A Well Known Lady Will Send FREE to Any Sufferer the Secret Which Cured Her.

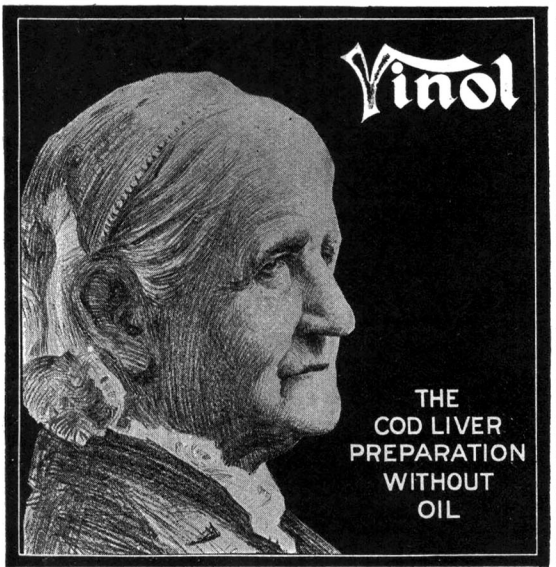
From childhood I was distressed and humiliated by an unwelcome growth of hair on my face and arms. I tried all the depilatories, powders, liquids, creams and other rub-on preparations I ever heard of, only to make it worse. For weeks I suffered the electric needle without being rid of my blemish. I spent hundreds of dollars in vain, until a friend recommended a simple preparation which succeeded where all else failed, in giving me permanent relief from all trace of hair. I will send full particulars free to enable any other sufferer to achieve the same happy results privately at home. All I ask is a 2c stamp for reply. Address, **Mrs. Caroline Osgood, 1932 M Custom House, Providence, R. I.**

FREE TRIAL OF TREATMENT

DON'T WEAR A TRUSS

RUPTURE CURED by STUART'S PLASTER-PADS means a *permanent cure,* and you do away with the painful irritating, truss altogether. No *buckles*—no *straps*—no *springs.* Adheres closely to body, holds rupture *in place* and cures the most obstinate cases. Easily applied—soft as velvet—cannot slip, so cannot chafe. Comparatively *short time* required for *permanent cure.* Treatment is *private,* costs *very little* and does not interfere with work. Has cured thousands. Guaranteed under National Pure Food & Drugs Law. *Write at once* for *free* "Trial of Treatment" and illus. booklet.

Address STUART PLASTER-PAD CO., *Block 119,* St. Louis, Mo.



OLD PEOPLE

Need Vinol because it supplies the very elements required to rebuild wasting tissues and replace weakness with strength

Vinol is a delicious *modern* Cod Liver preparation without oil, made by a scientific extractive and concentrating process from fresh Cod's Livers, combining the two most world famed tonics, peptonate of iron and all the medicinal, healing, body-building elements of Cod Liver Oil *but no oil.* For feeble old people, delicate children, weak, run-down persons, after sickness, and for pulmonary troubles, Vinol is much superior to old-fashioned cod liver oil and emulsions because while it contains all the medicinal value they do, unlike them Vinol is deliciously palatable and agreeable to the weakest stomach.

FOR SALE AT THE LEADING DRUG STORE IN ALMOST EVERY TOWN AND CITY

Exclusive Agency Given to One Druggist in a Place

If there is no Vinol agency where you live, send us your leading druggist's name so that we can arrange with him to carry Vinol.

TRIAL SAMPLE FREE

CHESTER KENT & CO. Chemists Boston, Mass.

Auto Masseur REDUCES

40 DAY FREE TRIAL | NO DRUGS NO EXERTION

So confident am I that simply wearing it will permanently remove all superfluous flesh that I mail it without deposit. When you see your shapeliness returning I know you will buy it. Try it at my expense. Write to-day.

PROF. BURNS 1300 K BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

DEAFNESS CURED

By New Discovery

"I have demonstrated that deafness can be cured." —Dr. Guy Clifford Powell.

The secret of how to use the mysterious and invisible nature forces for the cure of Deafness and Head Noises has at last been discovered by the famous Physician-Scientist, Dr. Guy Clifford Powell. Deafness and Head Noises disappear as if by magic under the use of this new and wonderful discovery. He will send all who suffer from Deafness and Head Noises full information how they can be cured, absolutely free, no matter how long they have been deaf, or what caused their deafness. This marvelous Treatment is so simple, natural and certain that you will wonder why it was not discovered before. Investigators are astonished and cured patients themselves marvel at the quick results. Any deaf person can have full information how to be cured quickly and cured to stay cured at home without investing a cent. Write today to Dr. Guy Clifford Powell, 3952 Bank Building, Peoria, Ill., and get full information of this new and wonderful discovery, absolutely free.

X. Bazin's Depilatory Powder has been the standard for over seventy years. We have many imitators, but there is no substitute for the best.

X. Bazin's Depilatory Powder is sold at all first-class toilet counters, or mailed in package free from observation. Price 50 cents, including postage.

Our name guarantees it.

HALL & RUCKEL

NEW YORK CITY

Makers of Sozodont

DRUG ADDICTION TRIAL TREATMENT FREE

WRITE US TODAY Sent to anyone addicted to the use of morphine, opium, laudanum, or other drug habit. Hundreds of testimonials demonstrate the worth of our painless Home Remedy and prove that the vital principle which it contains restores the nervous and physical systems and removes the cause. Confidential correspondence invited from all, especially physicians having difficult and refractory cases. A full trial treatment alone often cures. Write for it today.

ST. PAUL ASSOCIATION, Suite 821, 46 Van Buren St., CHICAGO, ILL.

for Whooping Cough Croup, Sore Throat Coughs, Bronchitis Colds, Diphtheria Catarrh.

"Used while you sleep."

Vaporized Cresolene stops the paroxysms of Whooping Cough. Ever dreaded Croup cannot exist where Cresolene is used.

It acts directly on the nose and throat, making breathing easy in the case of colds; soothes the sore throat and stops the cough.

Cresolene is a powerful germicide, acting both as a curative and preventive in contagious diseases.

It is a boon to sufferers from Asthma.

Cresolene's best recommendation is its 30 years of successful use.

For Sale by All Druggists.
Send Postal for Descriptive Booklet.

Cresolene Antiseptic Throat Tablets for the irritated throat, of your druggist or from us, 10c. in stamps.

THE VAPO-CRESOLENE CO.,
180 Fulton Street, - - - - New York
Leeming-Miles Building, Montreal, Canada.

DENTACURA

tooth paste cleanses the teeth, hardens the gums and perfumes the breath. It differs from the ordinary dentifrice by destroying the harmful bacteria in the mouth, thus minimizing the causes of decay. Endorsed by thousands of dentists. In tubes deliciously flavored and a delightful adjunct to the dental toilet. Sample and literature free.

Dentacura Tooth Powder is now offered to those who prefer a dentifrice in form of powder. For sale at best stores everywhere. *Price 25c for either.*

DENTACURA CO.,
161 Alling St. - - Newark, N. J.

HOW I TOOK MY WRINKLES OUT

After Facial Massage, Creams and Beauty Doctors Had Failed

BY HARRIETT META

Trouble, worry and ill-health brought me deep lines and wrinkles. I realized that they not only greatly marred my appearance and made me look much older, but that they would greatly interfere with my success, because a woman's success, either socially or financially, depends very largely on her appearance. The homely woman with deep lines and furrows in her face, must fight an unequal battle with her younger and better-looking sister.

I therefore bought various brands of cold cream and skin foods and massaged my face with most constant regularity, hoping to regain my former appearance. But the wrinkles simply would not go. On the contrary, they seemed to get deeper. Next I went to a beauty specialist, who told me she could easily rid me of my wrinkles. I paid my money and took the treatment. Sometimes I thought they got less, but after spending all the money I could afford for such treatment I found I still had my wrinkles. So I gave up in despair and concluded I must carry them to my grave. One day a friend of mine who was versed in chemistry made a suggestion, and this gave me a new idea. I immediately went to work making experiments and studying everything I could get hold of on the subject. After several long months of almost numberless trials and discouragements I finally discovered a process which produced most astounding results on my wrinkles in a single night. I was delighted beyond expression. I tried my treatment again, and lo and behold! my wrinkles were practically gone. A third treatment—three nights in all—and I had no wrinkles and my face was as smooth as ever. I next offered my treatment to some of my immediate friends, who used it with surprising results, and I have now decided to offer it to the public. Miss Gladys Desmond, of Pittsburg, Pa., writes that it made her wrinkles disappear in one night.

Mrs. M. W. Graves, of Bridgeport, Ct., states: "There is not a wrinkle left, my friends say I look 20 years younger. I consider your treatment a god-send to womankind." Mrs. James Barrs, of Central City, S. D., writes: "The change is so great that it seems more a work of magic."

I will send further particulars to any one who is interested, absolutely free of charge. I use no cream, facial massage, face steaming, or so-called skin foods; there is nothing to inject and nothing to injure the skin. It is an entirely new discovery of my own and so simple that you can use it without the knowledge of your most intimate friends. You apply the treatment at night and go to bed. In the morning, lo! the wonderful transformation. People often write me: "It sounds too good to be true." Well, the test will tell. If interested in my discovery please address Harriett Meta, Suite 8, Syracuse, N. Y., and I will send you full particulars.

CUTICURA COMFORT

FOR IRRITATED SCALPS

Warm shampoos with Cuticura Soap followed by gentle applications of Cuticura to the hair roots clear the scalp of crusts, scales and dandruff, allay itching and irritation, destroy microscopic life, soften the scalp skin, stimulate the hair glands and promote hair growth. Cuticura Soap and Cuticura Ointment have become the world's favourites for the skin, scalp, hair and hands.

Sold throughout the world. Depots: London, 27, Charterhouse Sq.; Paris, 5, Rue de la Paix; Australia, R. Towns & Co., Sydney; India, B. K. Paul, Calcutta; So. Africa, Lennon, Ltd., Cape Town, etc.; U.S.A., Potter, Drug & Chem. Corp., Sole Props., 133 Columbus Ave., Boston.

☞Post Free, Pamphlet referred to above

DON'T STAY FAT.

Obesity Quickly and Safely Cured.
No Charge to try the NEW KRESSLIN TREATMENT.

Just Send Your Address and a Supply Will Be Sent You FREE—Do It To-day.

Fat people need no longer despair, for there is a home remedy to be had that will quickly and safely reduce their weight, and, in order to prove that it does take off superfluous flesh rapidly and without harm, a trial treatment will be sent, free of charge, to

This represents the effect the Kresslin Treatment has had in hundreds of cases.

those who apply for it by simply sending name and address. It is called the KRESSLIN TREATMENT, and many people who have used it have been reduced as much as a pound a day, often forty pounds a month when large quantities of fat were to be taken off. No person is so fat but what it will have the desired effect, and no matter where the excess fat is located—stomach, bust, hips, cheeks, neck—it will quickly vanish without exercising, dieting, or in any way interfereing with your customary habits. Rheumatism, Asthma, Kidney and Heart Troubles leave as fat is reduced. It does it in an ABSOLUTELY HARMLESS way, for there is not an atom in the treatment that is not beneficial to all the organs. So send name and address to the Dr. Bromley Co., Dept. 241E, 41 West 25th St., New York City, and you will receive a large trial treatment free, together with an illustrated book on the subject and letters of indorsement from those who have taken the treatment at home and reduced themselves to normal. All this will be sent without one cent to pay in any shape or form. Let them hear from you promptly.

ELECTRO-CREAM takes the hair OUT

Electro-Massage Cream is a new discovery that takes superfluous hair OUT, not merely off. It kills the roots and destroys the growth permanently. Used by ladies of refinement.

Harmless and simple as Cold Cream

Leaves the most delicate skin smooth and unchafed. Special trial tube, 50c., full treatment $2.00 or particulars free, all postpaid in plain wrapper.

ELECTRO-CREAM CO. Box C Detroit, Mich.

ARE YOU TOO THIN?

Would a little more flesh make you more stylish and attractive? Would 10 or 20 pounds more make you better satisfied with your personal appearance?

Would your gowns look better and please you and others more if you were a little stouter?

If so, do you believe anyone can give you the additional weight that you desire?

I PROVE IT FREE

If you write me to-day, I will send you promptly sufficient Dr. Whitney's Nerve and Flesh Builder to prove that it will give you a superb figure with beautiful arms, shapely neck and shoulders, full round bust, and well developed limbs; not for the time being, but permanently. There will not be a penny of charge for this; my experience proves that I can well afford to take all the risk in proving what this Treatment will do. This is a purely vegetable compound and cannot possibly do you any harm but is always of great benefit to the general health. It will positively enlarge the bust from 2 to 6 inches and give a healthy tint to the complexion; the Free Trial Treatment proves this.

If this generous offer overcrowds us it will be discontinued, so don't delay, write to-day to

THE C. L. JONES CO., 163B Friend Building, ELMIRA, N. Y.

Brown Your Hair

"You'd never think I stained my hair, after I use Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Juice Hair Stain. The Stain doesn't hurt the hair as dyes do, but makes it grow out fluffy."

Send for a Trial Package.

It only takes you a few minutes once a month to apply Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Juice Hair Stain with your comb. Stains only the hair, doesn't rub off, contains no poisonous dyes, sulphur, lead or copper. Has no odor, no sediment, no grease. One bottle of Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Juice Hair Stain should last you a year. Sells for $1.00 per bottle at first-class druggists. We guarantee satisfaction. Send your name and address on a slip of paper, with this advertisement, and enclose 25 cents (stamps or coin) nd we will mail you, charges prepaid, a trial package, in plain, sealed. wrapper, with valuable booklet on Hair. Mrs. Potter's Hygienic Supply Co., 713 Groton Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio.

FREE!

This latest style, richly tinted **Wallachian Pillow Top** (back included) free, also our 1909 book of **500** newest **Embroidery Designs—all free** with an order for 6 skeins of **Richardson's Grand Prize Grecian Floss** to work the pillow top. Send 30c for the silk, also embroidery lesson with all stitches numbered.

A remarkable 30c bargain, made to place Richardson's Silk everywhere.

RICHARDSON SILK CO.

220 Adams Street, Dept. 1052 CHICAGO, ILL.

☞ *We also make Richardson's Spool Silk.*

Peter Moller's Cod Liver Oil

is just pure cod liver oil—free from disguise, because none is needed. It is the ***impurity*** or ***adulteration*** in cod liver oil that makes it offensive to taste and smell. The purity of Moller's Oil makes it

Free from Taste or Odor.

It is this purity that makes Moller's Oil so digestible and without that nauseous "repeat"

The genuine is sold *only* in flat, oval bottles, imported from Norway bearing the name of

Schieffelin & Co.

New York
Sole
Agents

Fine-Form

TRADE MARK.

MATERNITY SKIRT

Registered in U.S. Pat. Office

of great interest to

Every Prospective Mother.

Something new — only scientific garment of the kind ever invented. Combines solid comfort and ease with "fine form" and elegant appearance in the home, on the street, and in society. — **Always drapes evenly in front and back** — no bulkiness — no draw-strings — no lacing — no ripping or basting. — **Can be worn the year round.**

Made in several styles, and at prices lower than you can buy the material and have them made at home.

FREE Send for our **Fine Illustrated Book—"Fine-Form Maternity Skirt"**— It's FREE to every woman writing for it. Tells all about these skirts, their advantages, styles, material, and cost. Gives opinions of physicians, dressmakers, and users. **10 Days Free Trial.** When you get our book, if your dealer has not yet been supplied with Fine-Form Maternity Skirts, make your selection of material and style, and we will make the garment to your order. When you get it, **wear it ten days,** and **if you don't find it exactly as represented,** send it back and we will cheerfully **refund every cent** paid. **Other Skirts**— If not in need of a maternity skirt, remember our famous B & W dress and walking skirts will positively please you— **same guarantee**— Illustrated book free. Which book shall we send? Write to-day to

Beyer & Williams Co., Dept. 25 Buffalo, N. Y.

WARNING! To protect you against disappointment we caution you that the **Fine-Form Maternity Skirt** is the only "Maternity Skirt" on the market, as it is the only skirt which can always be made to drape evenly, front and back—all substitutes offered will rise in front during development—a fault so repulsive to very woman of refined taste. No pattern can be purchased anywhere for this garment. Its special features are protected by patents.

GRAND PRIZE CONTEST

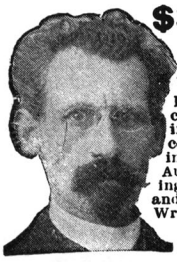
An Unlimited Number of Prizes will be distributed among those who make a copy of this picture. If our Art Director decides that your copy is even 40 per cent. as good as the original, it will win an illustrated magazine **FREE OF CHARGE FOR SIX MONTHS,** showing the work of the most prominent artists of the country.
No Money Required to Win a Prize—It will not cost you a cent to enter this contest. Sit right down now and copy this picture with either pencil or pen and ink. See how well you can do it. If you are a prize winner it will prove you have talent for drawing.

Copy This Picture and Win a Prize

Thousands of people now earning small pay have illustrating ability, but do not know it. If you will send your drawing to-day, we will tell you whether you possess this talent. If your drawing is even 40 per cent. as good as the original, you have this natural ability, and we can start you on the road to a comfortable and independent living, with pleasant, steady and profitable employment.

Correspondence Institute of America, Dept. 224, Scranton, Pa.

Be A DOCTOR of Mechano-Therapy



$3000 to $5000 A YEAR

WE TEACH YOU BY MAIL

Within a short time you can begin practicing Mechano-Therapy, an elevating and highly paid profession for men and women. More comprehensive than Osteopathy. Endorsed by physicians. A fascinating study, easy to learn, either in class, by mail, or both, and equal to college course—an ordinary education and our course of instruction fits you for a professional life. Authorized Diplomas to graduates. Work absorbingly interesting. Vast opportunities for social and financial betterment. Special terms now. Write today for prospectus—free.

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF MECHANO-THERAPY
Dept. 587, 120-122 Randolph St., Chicago

BE AN ACTOR

ACTRESS OR ORATOR

Best paying and most fascinating profession in the world. Our complete and simple course on **Elocution** and **Dramatic Art** by **mail** will in a short time prepare you for the **Stage** or speakers platform. You can earn $25 to $200 weekly. Successful students everywhere. Write for free booklet.

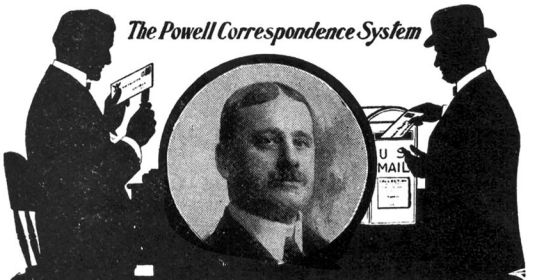
CHICAGO SCHOOL OF ELOCUTION, 1298 Grand Opera House, Chicago.

WHY NOT BE AN ARTIST?

Our graduates are filling **High Salaried Positions.** Good artists **EARN $25 TO $100 PER WEEK** and upwards, in easy fascinating work. Our courses of **Personal Home Instruction** by correspondence, are **complete, practical.** Eleven years' successful teaching. Expert instructors. **Positions guaranteed competent workers.** Write for **Handsome Art Book, Free.**

SCHOOL OF APPLIED ART (Founded 1898.)
N108 Gallery Fine Arts, Battle Creek, Mich.

The Powell Correspondence System



I CAN DOUBLE YOUR SALARY

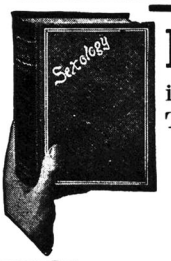
IF YOU EARN LESS THAN $25 A WEEK

I can double your salary or income by teaching you how to write catchy, intelligent advertising.

My System of Instruction by mail is the only one in existence that has the hearty indorsement of the great experts and publishers, and I am anxious to send my Prospectus, together with the most remarkable facsimile proof ever given in the history of correspondence instruction, if you are interested. I will show you how to earn from $25 to $100 per week. One graduate fills $8,000 place, another $5,000 and any number earn $1,500.

But send for free Prospectus.

GEORGE H. POWELL,
1134 Metropolitan Annex, New York



IGNORANCE of the laws of self and sex will not excuse infraction of Nature's decree. The knowledge vital to

A Happy Marriage

has been collected from the experience of the ages, in

SEXOLOGY

(Illustrated)

By William H. Walling, A. M., M. D.

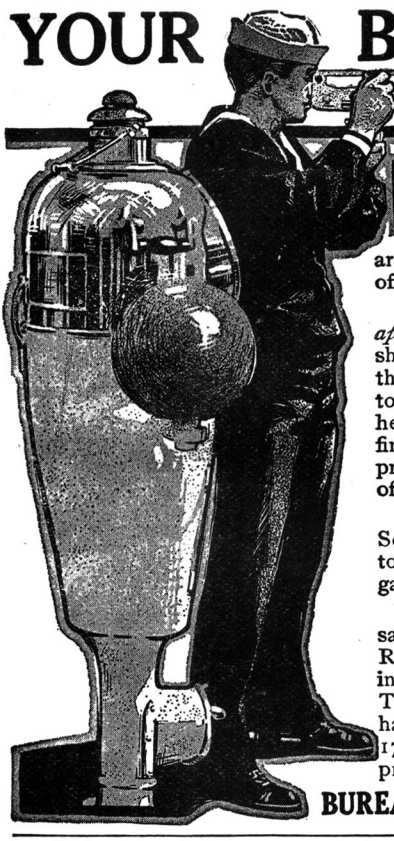
It contains in one volume:
Knowledge a Young Man Should Have.
Knowledge a Young Husband Should Have.
Knowledge a Father Should have,
Knowledge a Father Should Impart to His Son.
Medical Knowledge a Husband Should Have.
Knowledge a Young Woman Should Have.
Knowledge a Young Wife Should Have.
Knowledge a Mother Should Have.
Knowledge a Mother Should Impart to Her Daughter.
Medical Knowledge a Wife Should Have.

"Sexology" is endorsed and is in the libraries of the heads of our government and the most eminent physicians, preachers, professors and lawyers throughout the country.

Rich Cloth Binding, Full Gold Stamp, Illustrated $2.00
Write for "Other People's Opinions" and Table of Contents.

Puritan Pub. Co., **Dept., 149 Phila., Pa.**

YOUR BEST INTEREST



YOU must satisfy yourself and the Recruiting Officer that it is to your best interest to enlist in the Navy. Recruiting Officers decline to enlist young men if, in their judgment, the applicants are likely to become dissatisfied for any sufficient reason during their terms of enlistment.

The Navy, in other words, wants young men of good character who will *appreciate* the opportunities in the Service. The recruit who gets ahead, shows ambition and saves money, is a credit to the Service and is worth the cost of training and schooling, even though he decides, after four years, to return to civil life. Some of the world's best records in gunnery are held by young men from 19 to 23 years old. Many young men serving their first terms as seamen, artificers, engineers, or electricians, have become more proficient and have saved more money than if they had remained outside of the Navy.

The Department does not wish to urge any young man to join the Service, but for your own good and that of the Navy, it strongly urges you to thoroughly investigate the question. The majority of those who investigate enlist, and the majority of those who enlist are well satisfied.

It is hard to find in the Navy a young man who feels he has made a sacrifice by enlisting. A great many voluntary letters are received by Recruiting Officers from Bluejackets referring in the highest terms to the interest they find in their work; and their progress confirms their words. These letters are occasionally printed in booklet form and copies may be had by applying. Consult the nearest Recruiting Officer, if you are between 17 and 35 years old, regarding pay, requirements, duties, opportunities for promotion, etc. Ask anyone in the Navy or write to the

BUREAU OF NAVIGATION, Box 47 Navy Dept., Washington, D. C.

RIDER AGENTS WANTED
in each town to ride and exhibit sample 1909 model. *Write for Special Offer.* FINEST GUARANTEED 1909 Models **$10 to $27**
with Coaster-Brakes and Puncture-Proof tires.
1907 and 1908 MODELS **$7 to $12**
ALL OF BEST MAKES.....
500 Second-Hand Wheels
All makes and models, good as new
Great Factory Clearing Sale. **$3 to $8**
We **Ship on Approval** *without a cent deposit, pay the freight* & allow **10 Days' Free Trial**
TIRES coaster-brakes, parts, repairs and sundries, half usual prices. **DO NOT BUY** till you get our catalogue and offer. *Write now.*
MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. W14, CHICAGO

Army Auction Bargains

Tents -	$1.90 up	Old Pistols - - -	$.50 up
Shoes -	1.25 "	Officers' Swords, new	1.75 "
ARMY SADDLES	3.00 "	Cavalry Sabres	$1.50
" Bridles -	1.00 "	UNIFORMS -	1.25
" Leggins, pr.	.15 "	7 Shot Carbine	3.50

$1.79

U. S. SPRINGFIELD B-L RIFLES
With Blank or Ball Cartridge, 35 cents box of 20.
1907 MILITARY CATALOGUE, 260 large pages, thousands of beautiful illustrations—with 1908 supplement, wholesale and retail prices. Mailed for 15 cents (stamps). 15 ACRES GOVT. AUCTION GOODS
FRANCIS BANNERMAN, 501 Broadway, NEW YORK

$3.000 TO $10.000 A YEAR
IN THE REAL ESTATE BUSINESS

We teach you by mail every branch of the Real Estate, General Brokerage, and Insurance Business, and appoint you
SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE
of the oldest and largest co-operative real estate and brokerage company in America. Representatives are making $3,000 to $10,000 a year without any investment of capital. Excellent opportunities open to YOU. By our system you can begin making money in a few weeks without interfering with your present occupation. Our co-operative department will give you more choice, salable property to handle than any other institution in the world. **A Thorough Commercial Law Course FREE to Each Representative.** Write for 62-page book, free.
THE CROSS COMPANY, 2201 Reaper Block, Chicago

Do You Hear Well?

The Stolz Electrophone—A New, Electrical, Scientific and Practical Invention for those who are Deaf or Partially Deaf—May Now be Tested in Your Own Home.

Deaf or partially deaf people may now make a month's trial of the Stolz Electrophone at home. This personal practical test serves to prove that the device satisfies, *with ease*, every requirement of a perfect hearing device. Write for particulars at once, before the offer is withdrawn, for by this *personal test* plan the *final* selection of the *one completely satisfactory hearing aid* is made easy and inexpensive for every one.

Mrs. C. Lidecka, 238 12th Ave., Maywood, Ill., wears an Electrophone. Less conspicuous than eye-glasses.

This new invention, the Stolz Electrophone (U. S. Patent No. 763,575) renders unnecessary such clumsy, unsightly and frequently harmful devices as trumpets, horns, tubes, ear drums, fans, etc. It is a tiny electric telephone that fits on the ear and which, the instant it is applied, *magnifies* the sound waves in such manner as to cause an *astonishing increase* in the *clearness* of *all sounds*. It overcomes the buzzing and roaring ear noises and, also, so constantly and electrically exercises the vital parts of the ear that, usually, the natural **unaided** hearing itself is gradually restored.

What Three Business Men Say.

The Electrophone is very satisfactory. Being small in size and great in hearing qualities makes it preferable to any I have tried and, I believe, I have tried all of them. M. W. HOYT, Wholesale Grocer, Michigan Ave. and River St., Chicago.

I got so deaf I could not hear with my speaking tube and was advised to try the Electrophone. After fifteen years of deafness, discomfort and worry, I now hear perfectly at church and at concerts. W. R. UTLEY, Sales Mgr., S. A. Maxwell & Co., Chicago.

I have now used your Electrophone over a year, and know that it is a first-class, scientific hearing device. Without it people have to shout directly in my ear to make me hear. With it, I can hear distinctly when spoken to in an ordinary tone. Best of all, *it has stopped my head noises*, which were a terrible aggravation. LEWIS W. MAY, Cashier, 100 Washington St., Chicago.

Write to, or call (call if you can) at our Chicago offices for particulars of our personal test offer and list of other prominent endorsers who will answer inquiries. Physicians cordially invited to investigate aurists' opinions.

Stolz Electrophone Co., 1599 Stewart Bldg., 7th Floor, Chicago.
Branch Offices: Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Seattle, Los Angeles, Pittsburg, Indianapolis, Des Moines, Toronto.
Foreign Office: 82-85 Fleet St., London, Eng.

Ever-Ready 12 Bladed Safety Razor $1 Complete—

We **GUARANTEE** with a guarantee that returns you your money after trial—that the new **"EVER-READY"** 12-Bladed Dollar Safety Razor will shave you best of all safety razors. This means $5.00 ones, and it goes with lesser priced sorts without saying.

We issue the broadest, squarest guarantee ever offered with a razor. We prove our assertion.

Each **"EVER-READY"** Blade is *best*—separately tested, separately wrapped—(see illustration)— and critically perfect. There can be no better blade—even though other makers charge considerably more for their blades.

There are twelve (12) **"EVER-READY"** Blades in each dollar set, as well as handsome **"EVER-READY"** silver nickeled safety frame—nickeled handle and blade stropper, all compact and attractively cased. You could shave blindfolded without cutting or scratching your face.

You can buy **EXTRA "EVER-READY" BLADES** at your dealer's or he will get them for you—**10 for 50c.** You can strop **"EVER-READY"** blades, or exchange 10 dull ones for 10 new ones upon payment of 35c. See how economical the **"EVER-READY"** is.

Sold by Hardware—Sporting Goods—Cutlery—Department Stores—Jewelers and Druggists throughout America and the world. Ask any local dealer.

Mail orders prepaid upon receipt of $1.00.

AMERICAN SAFETY RAZOR COMPANY, INC.

320 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

London—38 Holborn Viaduct.
International Distributing Co.,
Montreal, Canada.

Extra Ever-Ready Blades—10 for 50c.

Photo Dollar Outfit, Opened.